

Articles / Sunkarsay (Tamgaly complex)

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New touristic route by the Early Turkic art Rock art of Sunkarsay (Tamgaly complex).



Fig. 1. The scheme of the route by petroglyphs of Sunkarsai

Petroglyphs of the gorge of the Tamgaly (Tanbaly) were open by Semirechensky group of the Southern Kazakhstan Expedition of Academy of Sciences of Kazakh for the Soviet Socialist Republic under the leadership of Anna Georgiyevna Maximova in September, 1957. Further A. G. Medoyev, A. N. Maryashev, A. E. Rogozhinsky and other researchers were engaged in studying of monuments of the Tamgaly. By the resolution of the Government of RK of October 14, 2003 it was created the State historical and cultural and natural Reserve-Museum of "Tamgaly", authorized in protection and presentation of a monument. On June 30, 2004 "Petroglyphs of an archaeological landscape of the Tamgaly" were included in the list of world cultural heritage of UNESCO.

The Tamgaly Natural Boundary is widely known by unique petroglyphs the most valuable of which are concentrated in a small picturesque canyon, in the mouth of the gorge. Five main rocky massifs (groups I-V) with petroglyphs of different historical eras here, and also other monuments that located farther from the gorge which are dated from the Bronze Age till the Modernity. Annually Tamgaly complex visiting by large number of tourists from the different cities of Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, other CIS countries and foreign countries. However the space intended for survey (in the ratio with the available resources with a total area of 3 800 hectares), is absolutely small. Guests can see only the main petroglyphs on five groups of petroglyphs and also some burials of the Bronze Age. Meanwhile scales of excursion by Tamgaly complex can be increased repeatedly.

It is well-known that Tamgaly is the big complex of archaeological monuments representing huge scientific interest which it is the fullest, in comparison with other monuments of Zhetysu region. These sites characterize the development of spiritual and material culture of the population of the region in the wide chronological range, that continued for more than three millennia. It is recognized, some kind of the "bright flashes" characterizing progress in various spheres of history of mankind took place on a joint of scientific disciplines or in the past, at contacts of societies with various cultures. Petroglyphs of Tamgaly which main part was carved on rocks of the gorge in the Bronze Age, mark similar flash of the graphic culture which reflected changes in the religious and mythological sphere of local population. In spite of the fact that the nature of these cultural interactions isn't clear yet, it is possible to speak with confidence that at that time the territory of Chu-Ile Mountains served in the shortest way from the Central Kazakhstan to the upper lands of Chu River Valley, roads to the countries the consuming copper and bronze from this mining region where opened. This way was especially brisk during the Middle Bronze, but also later the environment of low Chu-Ile Mountains which were favorably differing from the semidesertic plain adjoining from the North to Tien Shan Mountains attracted nomads of the Early Iron Age and Middle Ages. However petroglyphic art of the Tamgaly has, certainly the local roots that are traced in development of local tradition in which, Tamgaly – important and bright, but nevertheless only one of stages of development of petroglyphic art. It is considered that the tradition of (cultic representations) petroglyphic art gained special development in the historical societies which didn't have writing. By our opinion,

its development stops (is sharply slowed down) in the societies getting a state system, with giving of religion of the official status, with construction of temples, by architectural canons, issued by religious painting. Especially this process amplified with adoption of monotheist religions by the population.



Fig. 2. Carving images of animals, Bronze Age, the sign- tamga Early Turkic time

However completely the tradition of rock art in Central Asia doesn't die till now. Here everywhere, including in the Tamgaly, the separate images dated with the Late Middle Ages up to the XX century are meet. It characterizes continuation of tradition of creation of rock carvings at the population living in an environment of ancient petroglyphs and wishing to leave and the trace in this series of certificates of time; outlook of the artists who left similar images were related to artists, left the main image subjects of the Tamgaly. Including, the new route will reflect also these noticeable differences between a large sanctuary of the Bronze Age on which the main route is laid, and to one of congestions of petroglyphs of the periphery of the Tamgaly where there are some subjects and signs of the Early Turkic time when man-made temples were already known, but were used also the natural.



Fig. 3. The image of the horse riders with banners, the Early Turkic time

Today the great interest is represented the rock carvings of the medieval period located not in the central part of the Tamgaly Gorge, but on its periphery. Relevance of studying of the Early Turkic subject increases against what need of development of a new route "Petroglyphic art of the Early Turkic Era" was realized by museum's stuff. There is no doubt that it will be demanded a range of public. Besides it can vary: from pedestrian to automobile, routes and can be from 30 and up to 50 kilometers long (depending on a type of the used transport). At the first stage it is supposed to develop a new route in the small gorge (located North), which was earlier carrying the name of IV "otchelok" (the small gorge), and now call – "Sunkarsay" (on one of the brightest

scenes represented on its rocks – hunting with a falcon). The main part of petroglyphs of Early Turkic Time sharply differs from rock drawings of other eras, first of all in the pronounced ideology. Alexey Nikolaevich Maryashev for the first time defined the Early Turkic layer of petroglyphs of Zhetysu exactly by petroglyphs that present in Sunkarsai Gorge characterized by the special graphic style, repertoire of images, chronology.



Fig. 4. The hunting scene of the horse rider with the bird. The Early Turkic time

First of all, it is the riders that bearing Turkic banners with accompanying symbolics: bunchuk, head of a wolf or another animals. Scenes with hunting were often represented, besides the manner of the image of these scenes repeats and on some other monuments. The particular interest is caused by the Early Turkic epigraphic, Early Medieval Turkic signs (tanba), other typical attributes of the Early Turkic world. Besides, the medieval drawings executed in atypically Early Turkic manner, in a certain measure imitating images of the early periods which dating demand further studying meet.

Medieval petroglyphs of Tamgaly sites differ from petroglyphs of all other historical eras by special repertoire and the art originality inherent in petroglyphic art of nomads of the Early Turkic time (VI-XII centuries). During the period of addition of huge steppe empires by the main character of petroglyphic compositions there is a horse rider – the standard-bearer, the archer or the heavy armed soldier. If for the ancient artist the image of an animal had paramount value, now the accent is displaced on the anthropomorphous hero and his military attributes – a battle flag, the weapon, equipment of a horse.

The thematic content of the new touristic route by the central part of the Tamgaly Gorge consists of the archaeological complex formed by about one hundred monuments occurring at different times – settlements, burial grounds, ancient stone quarries, petroglyphs and cultic constructions (altars) dated in a wide interval from the middle of the XIV-XIII centuries BC till the boundary of the XIX-XX centuries AD.





Fig.5. The carved image of sign – “tamga”, belongs to the Early Turkic times

Many of known settlements of the Tamgaly are the multilayered monuments containing the cultural remains of several historical eras. There are seven burial grounds of the Bronze Age (Tamgaly I, II, IV-VII, Karakuduk II) which are grouped mainly along the main valley on the right and left river banks of Tamgaly are known in the territory of the Natural Boundary. The cult constructions (altars) are very rare and important monuments indicating preservation in traditional culture up to the beginning of the XX century of the sacral importance of places with petroglyphs.

Therefore the highlights demanding attention when carrying out future excursion it is unconditional continuity of habituating of the Natural Boundary of the Tamgaly and allocation of cult character of its center. As confirmation of that the prayerful inscription can serve, most likely, of the Manichean person that belongs to the IX-X centuries, and also the image of the radiant beam deity on group of petroglyphs V. The appeal to similar things, arrangement of additional emphases on them will allow to strengthen of the "Early Turkic component" when carrying out excursion on the central natural boundary, to connect it with a new route which will become logical continuation of the first.



Рис. 6. The image of the tamga, sign of the Early Turkic Epoch

During the process of creation of the new excursion in the Tamgaly developers relied on experiment of the organization of a tourist route by the central part of the Reserve- Museum which was embodied in due time by design group of research production J "Monuments of Material Culture". Then, in 2002 this group took urgent measures for preservation of the central part of a n which was spontaneously used by tourists from the middle of the 1990-th. In general, the excursion route created then oper. visitors access to the main sights of the Tamgaly, keeping thus a natural landscape.

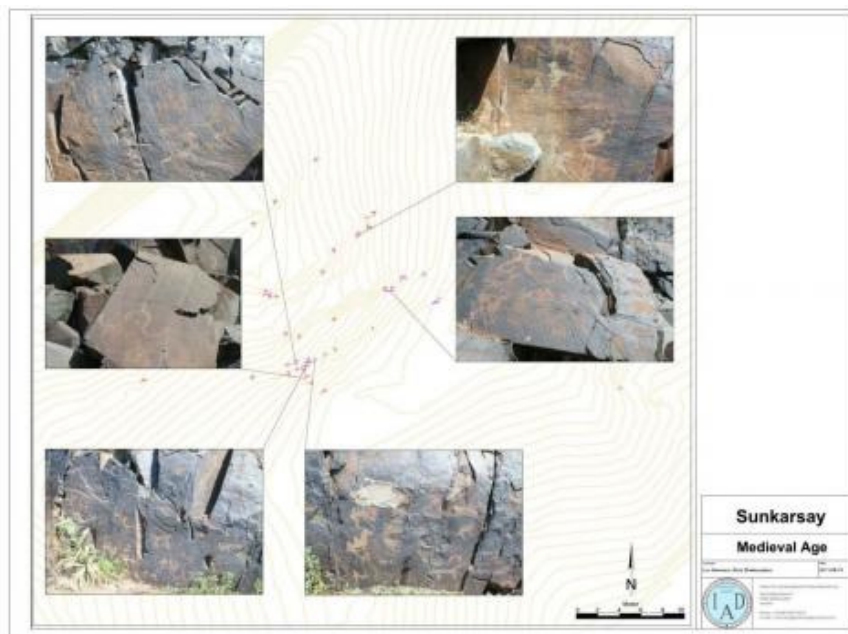


Fig. 7. The scheme of petroglyphs of Sunkarsay on topography

The new touristic route across Sunkarsay is urged to be a positive example on the basis of which further will be created tourist routes of the Tamgaly and to develop management of similar natural historical and cultural monuments in and outside Kazakhstan.



Fig. 8. General view of Sunkarsay Gorge

Author: B. Zheleznyakov

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Кыдаiberdy Uly

Телефон: +1-727-231-0101

Email: info@almatyregion-tour.kz

Факс: +7-727-258-0207

