

Ancient art on the rocks of Kazakhstan

Traditionally, all images on a stone from the most ancient times (Paleolithic) up to the Middle Ages, except for at what authentically there is well developed system of signs, can be called petroglyphs. There is absolute definition to them. Petroglyphs are primitive cave rock hewn paintings and later, for example, on special set stones, megaliths or “wild rocks”. Such monuments are not located in one place, but widely spread on our planet. They were found in Kazakhstan (Tamgaly), in Karelia, in Spain (Altamira Cave), in France (Fon-de-Gom caves, Montespan, etc.), in Siberia, on Don (Kostneki), in Italy, England, Germany, in Algeria where recently were open and made a splash around the world large multi-color lists of a plateau Tassili n'Ajjer in Sahara, among desert sand.

Generally they images of animals — deer, bisons, boars, wild horses; among there are animals which do not exist nowadays, like mammoths and saber-toothed tigers. Contours of human figures and the heads, to be precise, ritual masks can be found only occasionally. Later, in the Neolithic era, scenes from life of a primitive tribe — hunting, battles, dancing and some obscure ceremonies began to appeared. Such compositions are approximately dated in the 6th-4th millennia BC. The earliest images where “portraits” of animals prevail, belong to the upper Paleolithic time, another word, forty of them were created twenty thousand years ago.

At the end of the 20th century the domestic petroglyph study gains new steam in the research petroglyphic images and turned on qualitatively new level. It is connected to the territory of the modern independent young Kazakhstan since ancient times people aimed to leave through some message for descendants. The majority of monuments of petroglyphic art (petroglyphs) which belong to the bronze and Iron Age are already found and published. Thanks to absence of techno-genic influence on the most part of the territory of Kazakhstan the set of monuments which are studied by experts remained.

Petroglyphs of Kazakhstan – magnificent monuments of primitive and medieval art. Specifics of the Kazakhstan relief, feature of breeds of the stone composing a massif caused a wide dissemination of petroglyphs. In the territory of Kazakhstan there is an archaeological complex of the Tamgaly well-known for the whole world. In 2004 it was included into the list of the World cultural heritage of UNESCO. The Tamgaly – a monument which is in 170 km to the northwest from Almaty, in mountains Anyrakay where found the slots fine rock paintings which indeed are read by a sacral place for petroglyphs of Kazakhstan. Here it is possible to meet about 5000 petroglyphs which conceal in themselves interesting riddles of last time. The composition of petroglyphs of the Tamgaly is unique, and analogs him aren't present in a pattern anywhere. The complex near the village of Karabastau of the Zhambylsky region of Almaty region is located. In 2003 on this place the State museum open-air is created.

Petroglyphs of Kazakhstan – magnificent monuments of primitive and medieval art. Specifics of the Kazakhstan relief, feature of breeds of the stone composing a massif caused a wide dissemination of petroglyphs. In the territory of Kazakhstan there is an archeological complex of the Tanbaly known for the whole world. In 2004, it was included into the list of the World Cultural Heritage of UNESCO. The Tamgaly – a monument which is in 170 km to the northwest from Almaty, in mountains Anyrakay, where were found the rock paintings, which indeed considered as a sacral place for petroglyphs of Kazakhstan. There you can find 500 petroglyphs, which conceal many interesting riddles of last time. The composition of petroglyphs of the Tamgaly is unique and there are no analogs to it nowadays. The complex located near the village Karabastau of the Zhambyl district of Almaty region. In 2003, the State Open-Air Museum is created there.

The first who started study petroglyphs among archeologist was Anna Maximova. According to her statement, the time when the first petroglyph was plotted was the Bronze Age, in 1958 the archeologist wrote about it in republican scientific magazine “Vestnik nauk”. Later archeologist like Z.Samashev, A. Maryashev, A. Rogozhinsky and others began their research on the complex. The archeologist Alexey Rogozhinsky set time of plotting petroglyph, following the results of scientific researches he came to a conclusion that period of writing of petroglyphs covers time from Bronze Age to the 13th-14th centuries of our era.

In the Tamgaly in the fourth group there is a so-called 118th plane, which length – six meters, height – four meters. In the plane figures, different in the composition, are put: six-headed beings with a trunk of the person.

In the Tamgaly in the 4th group there is a so-called 118th flatness, its length 6 meters and height is 4 meters. Different figures, like six-headed creatures with a body of man, are plotted on that flatness.

Now we will compare these petroglyphs to the description of images of six sons of Ogyz kagan. The first son Ogyz kagan was called Sun – the person from the head of whom the sun rays were raising was depicted on the first petroglyph. Thus, it is the image of Ogyz’s son – the Sun. In the second petroglyph the person, whose head correspond to a figure of the full moon, therefore, the second son of Ogyz – the Moon. On the third petroglyph on the head of the person there are small stars, thus, the third son of Ogyz – the Star. On the fourth petroglyph there is a figure of the person whose head corresponds to the sky character, respectively, this figure of the fourth son of Ogyz – the Sky. The head of the fifth person on the petroglyph is round, which means the concept “high”, thus, on this petroglyph the figure of Ogyz’s son – the Mountain is depicted. On the sixth petroglyph there is an image of the person whose head under an inclination reminds the sea, thus it is the figure of sixth Ogyz’s son – the Sea is depicted.

Below these figures it is possible to see images of 12 dancing people. According to the legend, Ogyz kagan divided the territory into 12 districts, thus, 12 persons, which represent these districts.

One of important petroglyphs in Tanbaly in 1960 during transportation into the museum of the city of Almaty was broken. Its height was 3 meters. The archive photo of this figure is remained. In a legend “Ogyz-name” there is description of Ogyz kagan: “His feet were like bull’s feet, the body like bear’s, all body is covered with hair”. If to compare this description to the lost petroglyph, likeness to the description of appearance Ogyz kagan will be for 100% and therefore it is possible to say that Ogyz kagan is figured on the petroglyph.

According to the history, the name of Ogyz kagan’s mother was – Ai kagan. In Tanbaly’s petroglyph there is an image of Ai kagan, this petroglyph was found and restored by the archeologist A. Rogozhinsky.

In Tambaly, there is the image of the woman in all growth, and there are image of women in labor. According to the legend, one woman is the mother of Ogyz Ai kagan and other two women are two wives of Kagan. It is well-known that runic alphabets are related to ancestor of the Kazakh people, it is witnessed by Orkhon monuments. In the Tambgaly there are runic texts. The texts from five letters in the fourth group have been remained. If read these texts then according to the 13 version of the runic alphabet which is approved by scientist of the world, the word “neret” or “naret” will be turned out. It is possible to assume that this messafe of Ogyz Kagan was addressed to his descendants and people, as words are imprinted one the right side from a rock drawing of son of Ogyz and located on the flatness which has forms of books’ pages. Thus, it is an order the sense of words should be compared to words Ogyz Kagan. The word “naret” means “abundance”, and the poem contains the broad understanding of this concept, therefore, on a rock painting he wanted to wish abundance to the people.

Tamgaly – one of the most interesting memorial resorts in the republic. In the territory of the Tamgaly monuments from Bronze era to the Middle Ages were recorded. Petroglyph studies assume that this place was taken by sacral value for the ancient population. In addition to rock drawings there are burial grounds and cult places. The monument was opened and probed in 1977 by archeological expedition of Academy of Sciences of KAZSSR under the leadership of Anna Maximova. On a dark surface of rocks there are images of deer, bulls, horses, mountain sheep and other animals, also anthropomorphous images.

The sun-headed anthropomorphous creatures take a special place in a complex of petroglyphs of the Tamgaly. Unfortunately, today, the rock on which depicted these creatures, is exposed to serious corruption. Generally, on the territory of Kazakhstan petroglyphic art is very various and rich. The most known centers of graphic petroglyphs located in Semirechie. The history of study and research of

these monuments is quite long, but they still remained unknown. Today, in Semirechne more than 50 monuments where concentrated many petroglyphs are open. Along with large opening, there are thousands of small petroglyphs in different gorges. These petroglyphs are occurring at different times, most their part can be related to the Bronze era. The figures executed in animal style are located separately from others, more ancient images. The first data about petroglyphs of Semirechie were collected by Ch. Valikhanov. He researched and copied images in Chulaktau's mountains, images of Buddhist sacred in the natural boundary of the Tamgaly – Tas on the River Ili and their texts.

The further study of petroglyphs of Semirechie is connected to formation of the Turkestan club of fans of archeology, 1856. N. Pantusov carried the major part of the work at the end of the 19th century. He discovered petroglyphs in mountains Bayan-Zhurek, in Chulaks Mountains, on the River Kurta in Terekta gorge, etc. In the 30th of the 20th century, the study of Semirechie was continued by expedition of Academy of Sciences of the USSR under the leadership of A. Bershtam. Being guided by the analysis of style and plots, he developed dating of petroglyphs which is used today.

In 1957, the big congestion of petroglyphs in the natural boundary of the Tamgaly in 174 from Almaty was opened. In 60s petroglyphs were found not only by archeologist, but also by local historians, travelers and tourists. Many new petroglyphs were opened by P. Marikovskiy. On materials of rock paintings he described fauna of ancient Kazakhstan. In 80s the expedition led by the Kazakh National Pedagogical University named after Abay found a large congestion of petroglyphs in mountains Eshkiolmes, and also continued study the Tamgaly. The researches were carried out in Chulak, the Dzungarian Alatau and Chu-Ili Mountains. The Kazakh-French expedition began its work in the late eighties within the program of UNESCO. The task of expedition is release of full case of petroglyphs of Kazakhstan.

In every districts of Semirechie there are special centers of rock art –the largest monuments as by number of petroglyphs as well as richness of plots, on perfection of style and technique of plotting of figures on rocks. For Western Semirechie it is a sanctuary of Tamgaly, for Northeast – Eshkiolmes and Bayan-Zhurek. Around such sanctuaries there were more small-sized congestions of rock drawings. All these places have invaluable value and unique values narrating about history of our ancestors.

Bakytzhan Nisambekov

Literature:

1. I. Strelkova “Valikhanov”, “ZhZL” series, 1990;
2. P. Marikovsky, “Figures on rocks of the southern and central regions of Kazakhstan”, Almaty, 2004;
3. A. Maryashev, A. Goryachev, “Rock drawings of Semirechie”, Almaty, 2002;
4. A. Medoyev, “Engravings on rocks. Sary-Arka, Mangyshlak”, part 1, “Zhalyn” publishing house, Alma-Ata, 1979.
5. “Veter stransvii” magazine, №3, 2007, <http://www.veters.kz>