

## OPEN AIR MUSEUM

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**Abstract**

The article notes that in the Navoi region, the Sarmyshsay gorge, which has preserved 7 thousand years of history, contains more than 10 thousand unique stone inscriptions, described landscapes, places and settlements of the Stone Age, remains of ancient tombs and irrigation networks, ruins of an ancient village, the charming nature of the gorge, its study of natural and cultural heritage

**Keywords**

rock inscriptions, steps, exhibits, endemics, petroglyphs, irrigation networks, archaeological site, tourists, ruins

**Музей под открытым небом****Аннотация**

В статье отмечено, что в Навоийской области Сармышайское ущелье, сохранившее 7 тысячелетнюю историю, содержание в нем более 10 тысяч уникальных каменных надписей, описанные пейзажи, места и поселения каменного века, остатки древних гробниц и оросительных сетей, руины древнего села, очаровательная природа ущелья, его изучение природного и культурного наследия

**Ключевые слова**

на скальные надписи, ступени, экспонаты, эндемики, петроглифы, оросительные сети, археологический памятник, туристы, руины

**Abstract**

The article notes that in the Navoi region, the Sarmyshsay gorge, which has preserved 7 thousand years of history, contains more than 10 thousand unique stone inscriptions, described landscapes, places and settlements of the Stone Age, remains of ancient tombs and irrigation networks, ruins of an ancient village, the charming nature of the gorge, its study of natural and cultural heritage

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**Introduction.** In our country, unique archaeological monuments from various historical periods have been found, among which Sarmishsay, which preserves a history of 7 thousand years, is a blessed land that has preserved more than 10 thousand unique rock inscriptions to our time, and still attracts researchers and tourists with the content of these inscriptions and the landscapes they depict .

**Research object**. In Sarmishsay, Stone Age sites and settlements, ancient tombs and remains of irrigation networks, and old village ruins have been preserved, dating from the Stone Age to the Middle Ages. In Sarmishsay, Stone Age sites and settlements, ancient tombs and remains of irrigation networks, and old village ruins have been preserved, dating from the Stone Age to the Middle Ages. As a result of many millennia of tectonic movements, quartz and granite layers have compressed shale rocks, resulting in mountain folds in a belt structure. Their attractive appearance attracts attention.

Another aspect of Sarmishsay that attracts people like a magnet is its fascinating nature. The gorge, especially with the arrival of the blue sky, acquires a unique beauty. This place is home to more than 650 species of plants belonging to 62 families, 27 of which are endemic and medicinal plants[1].

More than 200 archaeological sites from various historical periods have been discovered in this gorge, including Stone Age sites, workshops, mills, mines, ancient and medieval village sites, mound tombs, burial mounds, and rock paintings.[2]

There are about 200 archaeological sites in the Sarmyshsay Gorge, the crowning glory of which are rock paintings. The Sarmyshsay Gorge consists mainly of shale, granite, and fine-grained sandstone rocks[3]. The surface of these rocks is smooth, most of them have large layers, and are light brown, brown, and dark brown. Therefore, our ancient ancestors who lived here left their mark on the rocks. If we look at the examples of fine art in the Sarmyshsay Gorge, we can see how strong the potential of our ancient ancestors was in this regard. That is why some researchers also call the gorge the "Magic Mirror Gorge".

According to historians and archaeologists, the rock paintings were inseparable from life, that is, they reflected part of the life of people of that time. These paintings mainly depict animals that were considered "symbols of power" such as leopards, panthers, cheetahs, and tigers, which were expressed in the visual art of the Scythian-Sak Massagetae, which is called the "Animal Style".

hunting processes, which were valuable for primitive hunters, belonging to the "feline" family, which lived mostly along rivers and in forests, and the images of people wearing different styles of headdresses and various rituals belonging to the "players" group are skillfully depicted. Currently, the animals here include wolves, foxes, lynxes, badgers, mountain goats, argali, wild boars, hares, wild cats, gazelles, and ermines; birds include eagles, falcons, partridges, buzzards, and various poisonous and non-poisonous snakes and other poisonous insects.[4]

In addition, the rock paintings depicting "heavenly horses" will not leave anyone indifferent. These paintings allow us to assume that in ancient times this place was one of the most developed areas for horse breeding.

The oldest of the petroglyphs - images on the rock in the Sarmishsay Gorge, according to archaeological research, date back to the Neolithic and Bronze Ages BC. The oldest ones date back to the 6th-4th millennia BC, that is, to the Paleolithic era, and they reflect the stages of human activity and encompass the experience accumulated over hundreds of years, from the development of hunting to animal husbandry.

Scientists have established that life in the Sarmishsay Valley began several thousand years ago, that is, from the Middle Paleolithic era, as we know from archaeological finds. In our opinion, some of the hunters and fishermen of the Kaltaminor culture who lived in Kyzylkum in the Neolithic era settled in Sarmishsay. Along with hunting, they gradually established cattle breeding here. This is evidenced by more than 4,000 petroglyphs found in Sarmishsay. Archaeologists have studied them in 15 groups. Each group is classified according to how many drawings and inscriptions there are, what their content is, when these drawings were created, and what the drawings provide information about the activities of people at that time. The ancient paintings on the monuments are somewhat rough and crushed, while the images from the Scythian period are extremely delicate, indicating that they were drawn with some kind of sharp-edged steel or iron tool.[5]

"Sarmishsay" State Museum-Reserve Since 1970, the history of the cultural heritage of Sarmishsay has been thoroughly studied by scientists of the Institute of Archeology under the Academy of Sciences of Uzbekistan, Khojanazarov M., Kabirov J.[6]. The scientific results achieved have been published in numerous newsletters, catalogs, scientific pamphlets and textbooks, and are used as one of the important sources in studying the history of our country.

On June 27, 2003, the Ministry of Cultural Affairs of the Republic of Uzbekistan, the Republican Council for Spirituality and Enlightenment, the National Commission of the Republic of Uzbekistan for UNESCO, the Republican National Television and Radio Company, the Republican Uzbek Museum Foundation, and the Navoi Regional Khokimiyat held an interdepartmental seminar on the topic "Museums of Uzbekistan in the 21st Century" at the Navoi Regional Museum of Local Lore. The minutes of the seminar adopted an interdepartmental resolution on "The establishment of the Sarmishsay Natural Archaeological Complex Museum Reserve, based on the rare complex monuments of our country with a five-thousand-year history, Sarmishsay Petroglyphs", and the preparation of proposals for including the Sarmishsay Petroglyphs Complex in the UNESCO World Cultural and Natural Heritage List".

On September 15-24, 2003, at the international scientific conference "Monuments of Central Asian Rock Art: Public Participation, Management, Conservation, Documentation" held by UNESCO in Kazakhstan, Uzbek scientists presented papers on the topic "History of the Sarmishsay Cultural Heritage".

On September 23, 2004, the Navoi region governor issued a decree No. 172 on holding an international scientific and practical conference in Navoi region on the topic "New methods of protection, study and management of the natural and cultural heritage of Sarmishsay".

On September 23, 2004, the Navoi region governor adopted a resolution No. 193 "On the establishment of the Sarmishsay Natural and Archaeological Complex Museum Reserve, the designation of the museum's protection zone and regulation of its use."

On October 8-16, 2004, an international scientific conference and field seminar on the topic "New methods of protection, study and management of the natural and cultural heritage of Sarmishsay" was held in the city of Navoi and the Sarmishsay Gorge in cooperation with the National Commission of Uzbekistan for UNESCO, the Ministry of Cultural Affairs of the Republic of Uzbekistan, the Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Uzbekistan and the khokimiyats of Navoi region.

On June 4, 2005, an exhibition of photographs of petroglyphs from the Sarmishsay Natural and Archaeological Complex Museum Reserve was presented at the exhibition "National Parks of Uzbekistan, Ecotourism and Sustainable Development" organized by the ECOSAN International Foundation for Ecology and Health in Tashkent.

, a photo exhibition of petroglyphs from the " Sarmishsay Natural and Archaeological Complex Museum Reserve" was presented at the Republican Museum Festival held in the Fergana region ahead of the 2000th anniversary of the city of Margilan [7].

From February 5 to 12, 2007, Uzbektelefilm filmed the natural resources and cultural monuments of the Sarmishsay Natural and Archaeological Complex Museum Reserve to create a film on the theme "Between Two Rivers." The film was broadcast on Uzbekistan TV.

From April 16 to 19, 2007, Uzbektelefilm filmed the natural resources and cultural monuments of the Sarmishsay Natural and Archaeological Complex Museum Reserve to create a film on the theme of "Sacred Places." The film was broadcast on Uzbek TV.

On May 22-26, 2008, a photo exhibition of petroglyphs from the "Sarmishsay Natural and Archaeological Complex Museum Reserve" was presented at the Republican Museum Festival held in Tashkent on the eve of the 2,200th anniversary of the city of Tashkent.

On May 26-31, 2008, a presentation of the "Sarmishsay Natural and Archaeological Complex Museum Reserve" was held at the international scientific conference "Central Asian Petroglyphs - Inclusion in the Transboundary System of the World Heritage Candidate List" organized by UNESCO in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan.

In October 2009, in order to prepare an issue dedicated to Navoi region based on the project of the creative group of the Fund Forum's "Jannat Makon" magazine, materials were prepared on the Sarmishsay Natural and Archaeological Complex Museum Reserve, along with the creative work being carried out in our region.

From April 17 to 21, 2010, the creative team of OOO "Terra Group" filmed interesting footage based on the cultural monuments of the Sarmyshsay Natural and Archaeological Complex Museum Reserve to create a film about many historical and architectural monuments of our region[8].

In April-May 2010, the Uzbektelefilm team filmed a film titled "Sarmishsay Rock Photos" based on the materials of the cultural monuments of the Sarmishsay Natural and Archaeological Complex Museum Reserve. The film was broadcast on an international channel at 12:15 a.m. on September 3.

In May 2010, at the initiative of the regional administration, a project was launched to build a tourist base and a "Visit Site" on the territory of the Sarmishsay Natural and Archaeological Complex Museum Reserve, based on modern, developed, international museological experience and existing laws and regulations.

An International Scientific Conference on the Scientific Study, Preservation and Promotion of Central Asian Rock Art was organized in Samarkand in cooperation with UNESCO on September 6-10, 2010. On September 8, conference participants visited Navoi region to study the Sarmishsay Natural and Archaeological Complex Museum Reserve and held a field seminar[9].

On January 26, 2011, a collection of documents entitled "Sarmishsay Rock Paintings" was presented to the UNESCO World Heritage Center[9].

From 2004 to 2011, foreign and local tourists have been constantly visiting the Sarmishsay Natural and Archaeological Complex Museum Reserve and providing them with museum services.

In March 2011, a book album titled "Navoi: Ancient Past, Bright Future" was published. This book album features many photographs from the Sarmishsay Natural and Archaeological Complex Museum and describes its history and description in three languages, Uzbek, Russian, and English[10].

Today, the Sarmyshsay petroglyphs are recognized not only in the republic, but also worldwide as the most precious cultural monument left by our ancestors, and they bring us pride. It is also worth noting that since 2002, scientific research has been conducted on the Sarmyshsay cultural monuments in collaboration with the Institute of Archaeology under the Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Uzbekistan, the international organization UNESCO, and the Norwegian Ministry of Environmental Protection's Directorate of Cultural Heritage, Anne-Sofie Huygen and Knut Helskog.

**Conclusion** . All monuments in Sarmishsay are in their natural and historical places, having withstood the tests of nature and man for centuries. Respect for historical monuments, enriching our knowledge about them is a factor in preserving our cultural heritage, in particular

the Sarmishsay Gorge. Our government is carrying out a number of works to preserve our natural and cultural monuments and pass them on to future generations in their original state, and such works, in turn, are of great importance in increasing the tourist potential of our country, further increasing the interest of foreign tourists, and demonstrating and promoting our rich cultural heritage, national crafts, customs and traditions.

Indeed, Sarmishsay is not only a priceless monument of nature, but also an art gallery of special value as a unique resource for studying human civilization and enjoying its unique masterpieces.

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