



## **REVIEWS OF CENTRAL ASIAN ROCK ANALYSIS (On the example of Zarautsoy rock paintings)**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*New stone paintings were found in the streams around the Zarautsoy rock paintings. These stone paintings are characterized by bronze and iron periods. This proves that Zarautsoy rock paintings are ancient.*

**KEY WORDS:** *Zarautkamar, Zarabog, Gadoytopmassoy, Shalkonsoy Uzbeksoy, Karabogsay, Qizilolma, Dara, trap, Middle Ages*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Among the examples of cultural heritage created by the peoples of Central Asia, rock paintings are the most valuable sources, which are works of historical art inscribed on stone. To date, the location of more than 300 rock paintings in the Central Asian region has been identified and recorded. About 180 of them are located in Uzbekistan. Nevertheless, of all the rock paintings found in Central Asia, the most ancient and uniquely vital work of the Zarautsoy monument still deserves attention and recognition.

### **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

Zarautsoy art monument became known to science in 1939. In the study of Zarautsoy

I.F.Lomaev, G.V.Parfyonov, A.Yu.Roginskaya, A.S.Kirillov, A.A.Formozov, A.P.Ivanova, V.K.Sandul, Sh.Ismoilov and A.Kabirov M. The Khojanazarovs did a great job. Zarautkamar Cave is located at the level of Zarautsoy on the slopes of Kuhitangtog and is part of the mountains in the south-western part of the Gissar mountain range. It is located in the northeastern foothills of Kohitangtog, 110 km northwest of Termez in the Sherabad district. Zarautsoy is administratively part of the Surkhan State Reserve in Sherabad district. It is located 30 km northwest of Sherabad, Surkhandarya region, 5 km south of the village of Zarautsoy Kizilolma, and its altitude is 2000 m above sea level. (Figure 1)



In 1940, the Moscow-based *Vestnik Drevney Istorii* described it as the first find in Central Asia of ancient beautiful rock paintings. The documents of the expeditions conducted during the Second World War (1943, 1945) examined 264 photographs in 26 belts. G.V Parfyonov, who conducted research in Zarautsoy, initially identified and described 48 different figures. G.V Parfyonov determined the age of the small bull figures found in the lower chamber as the Madeleine period of the Upper Paleolithic. G.V Parfyonov tries to prove that the main paintings of Zarautsoy are the product of the work of Paleolithic artists. A.Yu. Roginskaya also supports his views. Even the participant of the expedition, the artist A.Yu. Roginskaya, originally published a pamphlet "Zarautsoy" in Russian in 1950. Zarautsoy's paintings are the product of Stone Age art, a rare example of rock art in natural color. There was a debate in scientific circles in Moscow about the period of creation of the color image of Zarautsoy. Zarautsoy rock paintings contain interesting images: images of people wearing masks. Of the 25 people pictured, 19 are people wearing masks. The masks had wide conical caps and an ostrich look.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Researchers who have studied these images have different interpretations. Hunters used wild spruce blankets to encircle wild bulls grazing in the pine forests and then shoot them. A. Kabirov notes that in the past, when masked people approached an animal during a hunt, in order not to frighten them,

they tied the animal's skin on it and a horn on its head and entered its image. Some tribes still use hunting as their main occupation. A similar scene can be witnessed in Zarautsoy. Between Zarautsoy's paintings the interior is covered with dots. The image of the circle can also be interpreted as a trap. In 1964, AA Formozov tested samples of minerals of the Zarautsoy River in a color similar to ancient paintings near the cave and examined them in the laboratory of the Institute of Geology of the USSR Academy of Sciences in Moscow. The paint consists of quasi-sulfur and ferruginous cement with a high iron content of 24-32%. A.A. Formozov expresses the reasonable opinion that the bows and dogs in these paintings could not have existed before the Mesolithic period. AP Okladnikov also agreed with the above opinion that the presence of arrows in these hunting scenes is a Mesolithic period. Indicates that it is possible. After all, the bow and arrow rose to the level of the main weapon of hunting in the Mesolithic. AA Formozov noted that the oldest paintings of Zarautsoy are typical of the Mesolithic, Neolithic and Eneolithic periods.

In 1970-1980s, Uzbek archaeologists such as J. Kabirov, M and The Khojanazarovs conducted research in Zarautsoy. The latest research documents (photographs, images and copies of records) were conducted by Khojanazarov. Khojanazarov identified 8 caves instead of 27, as previously done by Formozov, Khojanazarov identified 3 groups that differed in color, repertoire and style in Zarautsoy and stated that they corresponded to the Mesolithic and Bronze Ages. From ancient times the



Zarautkamar cave and its surroundings have been associated with religious ceremonies. Before hunting, our ancient ancestors worshiped these Zarautsoy rock paintings, Zarautkamar cave was considered a sacred place. In 2015, another important innovation was made in the study of the history of primitive art in Surkhandarya. Sh.B. Shaydullaev and The Uzbek-Czech international archeological expedition led by L. Stancho who has found new stone paintings near the village of Zarabog, 10 km from the mountainous Zarautsoy in the Sherabad district. As a result of our research, in 2015-2019, near the village of Zarabog from 7 streams: Gadoytopmassoy, Tapaqiyasay, Kayritsay, Karabogsay, Kampirtepasay, Shalkonsay and new paintings engraved on stone from the



Uzbeks. These rivers connect the villages of Karabakh, Kayrit, Shalkan, Kampirtepa and Qiziloma. Zarautsoy starts from Kohitangtog and leads to Karabakh village. It flows from Karabakh to the Sherabad River. In spring, the river is flooded. In 2 streams near Zarautsoy, new rock carvings were found. Uzbeksay is located in the south-western part of Zarautsoy, 1 km away. Starting from the Uzbek village of Kyzyloma, It is connected with the village of Zarabog and the Karabakh mountains. Karabakh is located in the same stream as Zarautsoy. Zarautsoy starts in the big mountains and ends in the hills. Karabakh starts from the hills and goes to Maidonsay. The pictures found in Karabakh show more pictures of mountain goats. (Figure 2)



New paintings found in the streams of the Zarautsoy area indicate that the Zarautsoy rock paintings are ancient. As for the chronology of Zarautsoy rock paintings, they are paintings from the Mesolithic to the Middle Ages. The reason is the pictures drawn in each period. If we pay attention to the articles of Z. Jasieviks and A. Rozvadovsky, Zarautsoy tried to prove that the rock paintings belong to the Middle Ages by connecting them with ethnography. True, there may be ethnographic similarities, but pictures painted with red pigment are different. For example, we can see that the pictures of the hunting ceremony are ancient.

Pictures are drawn here in each period. Medieval Arabic writing and paintings can also be found in these paintings. Based on the above information, we can conclude that Zarautsoy rock paintings serve as an important source in the study of the history of primitive art in Central Asia.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion we can say that it is time to re-examine the Zarautsoy rock paintings on the basis of modern requirements. After all, the last expedition was carried out in the 70s of the last century, and the main work consisted of copying from pictures to

transparent paper. Today, however, sensitive and extremely powerful electronic cameras have emerged. Lights, on the other hand, allow you to re-take photos, discover new images that were previously unknown. In modern laboratories, we can analyze images painted with stone and red pigment, but also add more precision to its period. New stone paintings were found in the streams around the Zarautsoy rock paintings. These stone paintings are characterized by the Bronze and Iron Ages. This proves that Zarautsoy rock paintings are ancient.

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