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THE MUSEUMS OF THE CAVE TERRITORY COMPLEX OF KUNGUR ICE CAVE: HISTORY AND CONTEMPORANEITY

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Abstract. The article represents the history of unsuccessful attempts to organize museum services to visitors of the famous Kungur Ice Cave (Perm Krai) throughout the 20th century, as well as the current state of tourist activity in the cave complex.

Key words: Kungur Ice cave, karst, museum, infrastructure, cave territory, improvement

The Kungur Ice Cave is a famous monument of nature of Perm Krai [3]. Its annual attendance varies between 100-200 thousand tourists. Thanks to the selfless efforts of the first guide and keeper A.T. Khlebnikov, the cave is a popular object of inbound tourism today and definitely has a great scientific value. At the same time, the town authorities (both in the pre-revolutionary and the Soviet period) did not give the cave a proper attention since they did not expect that in the future it would become a real brand of Perm Krai. As a result, the development of the cave infrastructure throughout the 20th century was slow and mainly spontaneous.

Meanwhile, there is a multifaceted infrastructure having a serving and enlightening nature near the majority of sightseeing speleological objects. Museum expositions on a modern technical level, with the use of modern building, design and information technologies make up an essential part of it. They are called upon not only to carry out information and educational functions, but also to influence the distribution of tourist flows. What was the process of landscaping at the entrance to the famous Kungur cave?

In the first half of the 20th century, in fact there was no accomplishment of territory. The cave had no asphalted access roads. The excursion base was located on the opposite bank of the Sylva River, in the village of Berkutovo, in the house of A.T. Khlebnikov. He guided tours at any time of the day, and visitors could always stay there for a night and have a meal (bread, milk, eggs) free of charge. Only in the late 1930s at the entrance to the cave a two-storey wooden Tourist House was built. In 1948 that building also housed the Kungur karst-speleological station (laboratory) of the Moscow State University, and the Kungur Museum of Local Lore. There was a potato field instead of a modern park at the entrance to the cave.

Modern landscaping of the cave territory was founded by the Kungur laboratory workers. In the 1950s, they laid out alleys and flower beds, put a number of park sculptures and placed benches. To the left of the entrance to the cave there was a large round veranda for visitors waiting for the beginning of the excursion. In the summer it was used as a lecture hall. In the Tourist House there was a buffet. In 1955 the Kungur Museum of Local Lore moved from the territory of the cave complex of Kungur Ice Cave to the center of Kungur. Since that time, several attempts have been made to organize a "cave" (geological, speleological) museum at the Cave.

The Kungur laboratory managers and workers clearly understood the need of such a museum as they were in charge of tour service for visitors to the cave until 1969. Many mentions of the "cave museum" are found in the archival documentation of the laboratory. Working in different parts of the country, the Kungur laboratory workers (E.P. Dorofeev, L.I. Krapivin, V.S. Lukin) gathered a significant collection of geological and mineralogical samples. However, the financial, material, and technical capabilities of the laboratory in this sphere were not enough to found a museum. The main problem was the lack of a suitable building, as well as the workload of the laboratory workers with current economic and scientific work. In addition, none of them had any experience of museum work.

A new tourist complex "Stalagmit" (May 25, 1983) gave a new impetus to the development of the cave territory. There were summer cafes, souvenir kiosks, a luggage room, a toilet. The head of the Kungur excursion bureau, G.N. Nikitina, and the director of the laboratory V.N. Andreichuk, could manage to get an exhibition hall in "Stalagmit". E.P. Dorofeev and V.N. Andreichuk's geological samples were exhibited there. But the museum had no official status, accounting work was not carried out. All those things determined a short existence of that museum project, as well as the loss of most exhibits.



In the 1990s, all infrastructure developed in the Soviet times fell into decay. The number of cave visitors in the mid-1990s fell to the 1960s level. V.N. Andreichuk's plan to restructure and modernize the cave territory complex, which included the construction of a permanent museum exposition in the laboratory building at the entrance to the cave, was not realized. V.N. Konev, who headed the temporary directorate of the projected national park "Sylvensky", tried to reanimate the idea in the early 1990s, but the shortage of funds and the uncertain situation around the park in general did not allow him to realize it. Thus, during the twentieth century, the "cave" museum of Kungur cave could not be founded.

The situation changed in 2005, when the head of the Kungur laboratory O.I. Kadebskaya managed to persuade the director of the Institute of Mining A.I. Krasnoshtein to organize a specialized museum near the Kungur Ice Cave. After overhaul in two halls on the ground floor a new museum of karst and speleology named in accordance with the specialization of the laboratory was open. Now in one hall there is an exhibition of rocks and minerals, in the other hall a stationary exposition tells about karst and caves [4].

The plan of themes and expositions was developed by D.V. Naumkin in 2005, and today (with minor changes) it has been embodied in the stationary exposition of the museum. Its meaning is obviously valuable for all participants: the local residents (Kungur area is the territory of caves and other karst phenomena) and for tourists (the formation of an objective picture of karst because most newcomers face this phenomenon for the first time). Visiting the museum exposition is a logical end of a tour of the cave where tourists receive some information about karst and karst processes.

The Karst and Cave Museum is a classical academic museum. Mineralogical and paleontological samples, karstic rocks, secondary mineral formations of carbonate, gypsum and salt caves are widely used for its design. Models and interiors (the office of the head of the laboratory V.S. Lukin) are also used there. In addition to the museum exposition, there is a small lecture hall with modern demonstration equipment. At present, the departmental Karst and Cave Museum has become a demanded element of cave infrastructure, its attendance is comparable with the attendance of municipal museums in Kungur (up to 40 thousand visitors a year). The idea of organizing a "garden of stones" with large samples at the entrance to the Museum remains unrealized.

Other museums of the cave territory complex are also departmental; they belong to LLC "Stalagmit-Excursus" that has carried out excursion activities in the cave since 1969. Today, one of the most popular and completed museum projects has become the ethnographic complex "Ermak's Village", located in the park at the entrance to the cave [1].

The territory of the park was not used in tourist activities for a long time. It was abandoned and overgrown for more than ten years. Since 2006 the embodiment of the project developed by N.N. Kozlova has been realized. The project gives tourists some ideas of the history of settlement and development of Perm Kama region, the peasant way of life and occupations of the rural population in the 18–19th centuries. In the park there is a chapel, watchtowers, peasant huts and a shaman's hut, numerous art objects. To tell the truth, "Ermak's Village" is an interactive project, where almost everything can be held and touched. In workshops visitors can cook porridge, make grain-dolls or a salted dough articles.

In 2014, celebrating the 100th anniversary of the excursion in the cave, the Kungur cave opened a small museum of the history of visiting the cave in the hall of the hotel "Stalagmit" on the 4th floor [2]. The lack of genuine exhibits (the excursion bureau has never done museum work) was filled in with talented copies (for example, the icon of St. Nicholas, once stood in the grotto of Cross/Krestovyi). Unfortunately, at present the museum has been disbanded because of fire safety requirements.

Another promising, but "mothballed" museum project "Perm in Kungur" is dedicated to the promotion of the paleontological heritage of the cave territory. It requires considerable investments. So, today it is unclear whether it will ever be implemented. In many respects it depends on the potential organization of the geopark in Kungur area, since this territory has a rich paleontological past of the Permian Age.

Thus, even today the development of the museum component of the cave infrastructure of the Kungur cave has a significant unrealized potential and opportunities for further development. A constant stream of cave visitors will ensure the payback and even profitability of such projects.

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