

THE HISTORY OF THE FORMATION OF THE FUNDS OF THE STATE MUSEUM OF HISTORY OF UZBEKISTAN

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Abstract:

This article discusses the history of the formation of the funds of the State Museum of History of Uzbekistan, one of the largest museums in Uzbekistan today. It covers the existing collections from the time of the museum's establishment to the present day, as well as several collections that were active for a period but were modified or discontinued for various reasons.

Keywords: History, archaeologist, find, artifact, exhibit, coin, numismatics, ethnography, botany.

Introduction

In the XX-XXI st centuries, the processes of globalization in world museology have made the collection, preservation, and exhibition of museum objects—an important part of cultural heritage in developed countries—a pressing issue. Understanding one's own history and culture more deeply, as well as passing it on to future generations, has become crucial for nations around the world. Museums of history and archaeology play a leading role in showcasing the uniqueness of these objects and presenting them to the public. Today, it has become essential to study the experiences of developed countries that have transitioned to using digital technologies throughout the process—from the acceptance of archaeological finds into museums to their exhibition. Implementing these practices has emerged as a significant task.

The integration of our republic into the global community has led to significant changes in scientific, cultural, and historical thinking in recent years. In particular, extensive reforms are being carried out to search for historical roots in the ancient settlements of the people and to create an international image for museums. Indeed, "The preservation, study, and transmission of historical heritage from generation to generation is one of the most important priority areas of our state policy." [1, 29-b]. This is considered a key factor in demonstrating our millennia-old history and culture through the acceptance, preservation, scientific study, and exhibition of artifacts in museums.

Museum collections are a compilation of artworks, historical items, archival documents, and other valuable objects that are stored and displayed in museums. We will briefly highlight the history of some collections from the State Museum of History of Uzbekistan, which was established as the first museum in Uzbekistan under the name of the Tashkent Museum.

Today, it has over 350,000 historical artifacts. The formation of the collections of the State Museum of History of Uzbekistan has a unique history. Starting from January 1, 1877, the museum began operating with a total of four departments: a) natural history and archaeology, b) numismatics, d) ethnography and technology, and g) agriculture [2, 1].

In the natural history department, in addition to skins of wolves and leopards, there is a collection of 85 birds presented by Kolpakovskiy, a variety of insect collections, live snakes, and a herbarium



of Tashkent plants collected by I.I. Krauze. In the zoology department, which was not fully organized at the time, there was initially an entomological collection of more than 100 beetles and insects (collected by V.F. Oshanin and A.I. Vilkins). [3, 11].

In the relatively small mineral department, one can find various fossilized stones and other petrified materials brought from different regions of Central Asia, as well as oil, sulfur, salt, various rock types and minerals, iron, copper ore, and other samples. The collections in this department were sourced from Tashkent, Fergana, Jetisu, Kyzylkum, and along the Amu Darya river.

In the agriculture department, there were collections of grain crops and samples of local agricultural plant seeds, materials related to beekeeping around Tashkent, a complete collection on sericulture, and dendrology samples.

The activities of the Tashkent Museum during the years 1876-1880 can be highlighted separately. This is because, during these years, the museum's collections expanded with various items related to numismatics, ethnography, geology, and other fields. As a result of the accumulation of collections, guidelines were developed to expand exhibitions and organize the departments to a certain extent. The geography and anthropology departments were separated, while the combined department of technology and ethnography was divided into industrial and ethnography departments.

It should be emphasized that the museum directors appointed by the regional administration were often not related to the field and did not understand the essence of the museum and its collections. As a result, many items donated to the museum went missing. Furthermore, the museum building was not suitable for storing and processing exhibits. By the end of the 1880s, due to the cramped conditions of the building, it became impossible to categorize and arrange the items in the necessary order [4, 12].

The lack of a suitable building and funding for processing museum materials made it impossible to re-passport the exhibits. In 1883, due to the absence of alcohol necessary for preserving various animal specimens, the museum decided to abandon these collections. The museum was often closed and did not receive visitors.

At that time, the museum's collection contained 3,200 exhibits, distributed among the following departments: approximately 200 in the zoology department, 700 in the agriculture department, 1,300 in the mineralogy department, 700 in the industrial department, nearly 200 in the ethnography department, and 100 archaeological finds and small coins in the archaeology department. Additionally, there were items found during excavations at the ancient Afrasiab fortress located in the Samarkand region. [5, 5]. By 1886, the number of museum items had increased to 4,000. In 1886, E.F. Kal prepared the initial catalog for some items in ethnography, numismatics, and archaeology. In 1889, N.A. Mayev compiled the catalog for the zoology collection [6, 13].

In 1903, a military historical department was established, where photographs of generals and officers who actively participated in the conquest of Central Asia, as well as samples of products from industrialists in Turkestan, occupied a central place [7, 41].

Until 1907, the collection of exhibits for the museum was primarily based on items brought in by the local population, meaning that there was no separate archaeological expedition for the



museum. Practical work began in 1907. In 1908, the zoology department was the first to start organizing expeditions.

By the first quarter of the 20th century, the established departments in the museum were clearly differentiated, forming a total of eight departments. In a resolution approved on August 29, 1919, the tasks of these departments were outlined [8]. Let's briefly discuss the objectives set for these departments.

1. The History Department was responsible for collecting manuscripts and printed works related to the history of the Turkestan region, created by both local and European authors. This included maps, illustrations, paintings, various artifacts from both local and European origins, as well as sculptures and busts of officials. Additionally, the department collected firearms and other items related to the military sector. From this department, the Geography and Numismatics departments were later separated.
2. The Ethnography and Anthropology Department was responsible for collecting the ethnographic map of Turkestan, various types of utensils used by the local population for their needs, clothing and other household items from the period before the invasion of Turkestan by Tsarist Russia, creating a model of the houses where the local pastoral population wintered, gathering examples of oral folklore such as legends and tales, collecting photographs of some of the populations living in Turkestan, as well as images of various carpets, textiles, patterns, inscriptions, petroglyphs, and samples of folk medicine. Additionally, the department was involved in collecting local artifacts, items related to religious ceremonies, ancient graves and cemeteries, pottery, and bones, as well as gathering statistical data on births and deaths in the community.
3. The Archaeology Department was responsible for conducting excavations at ancient settlements and fortresses, as well as developing measures for the preservation of ancient archaeological sites.
4. The Botany Department is responsible for creating scientific and exhibition herbariums, focusing on specific plant species, establishing a productive dendrology collection (the study of trees and shrubs), and organizing a nature reserve around Tashkent.
5. The Department of Vertebrates is responsible for collecting classes of animals that are not present in the museum but exist around Tashkent. This includes identifying and gathering species with distinct characteristics. In carrying out these tasks, special attention is given to fish living in the rivers and lakes of Central Asia.
6. The Department of Invertebrates has been engaged in collecting harmful and beneficial invertebrate organisms.
7. The Geology Department is primarily engaged in identifying ores, minerals, and solid materials found mainly in mountains, as well as endangered plant species. It also works on geological, crystal, mineral, and paleontological collections, as well as creating maps and landscape types of useful minerals.
8. The Industrial Department encompasses all types of industry. It was involved in collecting samples of products manufactured in the factories and plants of the Turkestan region, as well as the tools used by artisans.



Notably, each department consisted of two parts: the first included items displayed in the exhibition for visitors, while the second contained items kept in storage, which were also used for scientific activities.

In 1920, expeditions organized to study the Konigut Gorge and to collect plants in the Chinoz district and the Maydantosh River valley were of particular significance. Under the leadership of D. N. Kashkarov, an expedition conducted in Talas Olatov in 1922 resulted in the discovery of new and previously unknown species of small mammals and birds. As a result, the Turkestan Museum (now the State Museum of History of Uzbekistan) acquired a collection of 320 skins, horns, and other exhibits. [9, 65].

At the end of 1921, after the museum was transferred to the jurisdiction of Turkkomstar, its activities entered a new phase. By 1923, specific tasks were assigned to the museum. Accordingly, several changes were made to the structure of the exhibitions. The number of rooms allocated for the museum exhibitions increased to 18. By 1923, the number of exhibits exceeded 30,000. [10]. Between 1921 and 1925, valuable materials were collected as a result of geological and paleontological expeditions. A paleontological expedition sent to the village of Galkino, located in the Chimkent district, gathered a large collection of fossils from ancient fish, insects, and plants. A similar expedition was organized to Qorator, which further enriched the museum's collections. In 1933, an expedition conducted along the Norin River and Issyk-Kul resulted in the museum's collections being supplemented with over 150 valuable and rare specimens, including bird skins and insect species. An entomological expedition in Jetisu collected a rich collection of more than 3,000 invertebrate specimens. An ichthyological expedition working in Issyk-Kul brought several hundred specimens of various types of fish to the museum. [11, 30].

The poor condition of the museum's material resources and the loss of collections led to the downsizing of departments. As a result, agricultural collections were transferred to the agricultural museum, and mineralogical collections were given to the mining museum. After that, only the exhibitions of the ethnography, numismatics, and archaeology departments remained. However, even in these departments, several parts were missing.

Numismatic fund. The numismatic fund was initially part of the archaeological fund. In February 1919, one of the best buildings in the city—the former residence of the Turkestan General Governor, the White House—was turned into a museum. New exhibitions were created and displayed there. The departments of zoology, ethnography, archaeology, and numismatics were launched. Previously, the small numismatic collections were stored in the archaeology department, and most of the coins lacked documentation [12, 212]. After numerous collections seized by the Extraordinary Investigative Commission from General I. Poslavskiy were handed over, the quantity of coins increased significantly, leading to the establishment of a new numismatics department. Today, the numismatic fund of the State Museum of History of Uzbekistan holds over 100,000 coins [13]. The fund includes coins from almost all state formations of ancient and early medieval Central Asia. From a chronological perspective, they cover a period from antiquity and the early Middle Ages to the present day. The main part of the numismatic collection consists of coins related to states that emerged after the Arab conquests. There are numerous coins from the Samanid and Qarakhanid dynasties, as well as some coins from the Khwarezmshah and Chagatai dynasties.



As of today, the numismatic fund ranks second among museum collections in terms of the number of items. Coins serve as a written historical source that can provide information about themselves without the need for documentation. According to brief information published in the "Turkistanskiy Vedomosti" newspaper (1877-1896), the museum's collection initially included 800 antique coins and over 2,000 coins from the Middle Ages. The first description of the collections of the Tashkent Museum and the Turkestan Archaeological Society (TAHT) was carried out in 1900 by N.P. Ostroumov and I.P. Annichkov.

Collectors have played a significant role in the enrichment of the numismatic fund, one of whom is collector Akrom Asqarov.

When discussing numismatic collectors, it is also worth mentioning the Samarkand collector Mirza Abdulla Bukhori, who sold N.I. Veselovskiy 1,202 items, including 11 gold coins, 77 silver coins, 951 bronze coins, 18 seals, and six stones depicting humans, animals, and other objects. [14, 49].

The numismatics department was headed by numismat F.F. Augent [15, 8]. B. Augst (Augent) worked at the Tashkent History Museum until he returned to his homeland in 1917. One of his most important contributions was compiling the "Catalog of Coins of the Turkestan People's Museum," which existed in the Tashkent Museum in 1919. Later, he added an "Appendix" to this catalog, including coins received from June 1921 to October 15, 1921. On December 19, 1928, M.E. Masson entrusted the collection to O. Schmidt, and in 1929, O. Schmidt handed it over to Turdi Mirg'iyosov.

In the subsequent years, the numismatic collection continued to be expanded.

Ethnography fund. One of the "old" collections that experienced various difficulties during the establishment of the State Museum of History of Uzbekistan is the ethnography collection. The first expedition organized by museum staff took place in 1906-1907 and was conducted specifically by the ethnography department. As a result of this expedition, several interesting ethnographic items were discovered, including cloaks, headwear, shirts, footwear, and more. The ethnography collection was extremely rich in scientifically compiled collections. The contributions of M.S. Andreyev, the head of the ethnography department at the Central Asian Museum, an ethnographer, linguist, and Iranian studies specialist, were invaluable in acquiring these treasures. Academician M.S. Andreyev of the Academy of Sciences of the Uzbek SSR emphasized the necessity of preserving items that were essential for life but were gradually disappearing, stating that "every minute is precious in the collecting work, as with each passing day certain items that may never be found again continue to be lost" [15, 146]. In 1922, M.S. Andreyev collected a collection of "bov" (traditional Uzbek outer garments) from the Tashkent region. In 1924, he gathered over 200 items of clothing, dishes, wooden objects, and various dolls in eastern Bukhara. In 1925, under his leadership, an expedition was organized along the routes of O'ratepa, Rishton, Isfara, Chust, Konibodom, and Fergana. The collection included a large group of pottery products totaling 200 items and various dolls.

In 1927, an expedition led by M.S. Andreyev conducted scientific research along the upper banks of the Zarafshan River, in Yang'ob, Qorategin, Darvoz, Shug'non, and Eastern Pamir. As a result, 336 items were collected, including many examples of Tajik folk crafts and beautifully crafted pottery items. Additionally, the places and times of the found items' production were identified,



as well as the names of artisans, along with patterns from several hundred local fabrics that were previously unknown.

In the following years, T. Mirg'iyosov and Sh. Inog'omov, along with M.A. Bekjonova, studied the life of some nomadic Uzbeks in the Kashkadarya region. In 1927, the museum organized an expedition to study the life of Uzbeks in the Tashkent district led by M.F. Gavrilov, bringing back 125 different items. [16, 35].

In the 1920s, significant attention was given to the Ethnography Fund for several reasons. Firstly, with the advent of socialist culture, there was a risk of the indigenous population's customs and certain household items disappearing. Secondly, the museum needed to reflect not only the culture of our region but also the ethnography of all the peoples living in Central Asia. The third necessity for revisiting this section was its very unsatisfactory state. In this regard, the opinion of the prominent ethnographer and scholar M.S. Andreyev, who was later appointed as the head of the section by the Turkkomstaris decision, is noteworthy: "Currently, the ethnography section of the museum consists of a random collection of various artifacts that distract the audience and are not very numerous." [17, 146].

The preparation for the opening of the new scientific ethnography section began in 1922 and was completed in 1927. Its foundation was made up not only of newly collected materials but also partly of old collections.

In 1923, some samples of products from the Turkestan handicraft industry were donated to the museum. In May 1927, 272 items were acquired from the treasury of the former Khan of Khiva. In 1924, 1,102 items were received from state valuables. The museum's collections were regularly replenished. By 1930, the ethnography collection contained 8,913 items, the archaeology collection had 6,871 items, and the numismatics collection included 21,176 items. [18, 165].

Until the 1990s, the control of several funds at the State Museum of History of Uzbekistan was in the hands of a single treasurer. This situation, due to the lack of scientific staff or the shortage of responsible personnel, led to a significant decline in the management of the collections. However, as a result of the reforms implemented in the 1990s, several funds were established, increasing their number to eight. Below are the names of the currently active funds and the number of items stored in each: 1. Archaeology – 75,681, 2. Numismatics – 103,631, 3. Ethnography – 17,896, 4. Sacred items – 19,527, 5. Artistic works – 1,582, 6. Documents – 123,226, 7. Weapons – 481, 8. Rare books – 5,469 [19, 47-b].

Among these funds, the most recently established one is the "Rare Books" fund, which was formed in 2020 from the unique books stored in the library of the State Museum of History of Uzbekistan. This fund contains over 5,400 books on various topics. The book fund continues to be regularly updated.

To date, the State Museum of History of Uzbekistan has undergone nearly 150 years of development. The main pillar of the museum is its funds, and it is crucial to fulfill tasks such as replenishing and preserving them. The museum's funds have sometimes merged and at other times been separated based on the circumstances and time. During the several relocations that the museum has undergone, significant damage was caused to the museum's objects. Some items even became unusable. Additionally, due to the limited space of the existing building, it was not possible to accept unique artifacts specially prepared for international exhibitions.

Despite several negative circumstances, the museum's potential has continued to grow. Several



expeditions have been organized, resulting in a regular replenishment of the museum's collections with new items.

Despite the difficult conditions, the dedication of the long-serving staff and their love for their work have ensured that the items preserved in the existing funds have reached us over many years. Further developing international scientific connections in archaeology, history, and museology not only contributes to our spiritual and cultural enrichment but also enhances our country's political reputation in the world and increases our tourism opportunities. This, in turn, undoubtedly plays a significant role in the development of our nation's economy.

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