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| Research Article

The History of the Establishment of the First Museum in Bukhara

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Abstract: This article examines the history of the establishment of the first museum in the city of Bukhara and analyzes the socio-political and cultural factors that led to its emergence. Through a study of the early activities of the museum, the processes of collecting and preserving historical monuments, archaeological findings, and samples of cultural heritage are explored. In addition, the article highlights the role of the museum in the cultural life of Bukhara, as well as its significance in the formation and development of the field of museology. Based on the history of the first museum's activities, particular attention is paid to issues related to the preservation of national cultural heritage and its dissemination to the broader public.

Keywords: monuments, manuscripts, cultural heritage, museology, historical heritage, museum, archival documents

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Introduction:

Bukhara has long been recognized as one of the major cultural, scientific, and spiritual centers of Central Asia. The tangible and intangible cultural heritage formed in this region over centuries has reflected the historical memory, worldview, and spiritual values of its people. At the beginning of the twentieth century, as a result of socio-political and cultural transformations in Bukhara, the need to preserve and display historical monuments, manuscripts, and archaeological finds became increasingly pressing. It was within this context that the issue of establishing the first museum in Bukhara came to the forefront. This article explores the emergence of the first museum in Bukhara, the conditions surrounding its establishment, and its role in the city's cultural life.

Today, the preservation of historical and cultural heritage and its transmission to future generations is regarded as one of the key factors of societal development. From this perspective, studying the history of the establishment of the first museum in Bukhara is of particular relevance. Museums serve as essential cultural institutions that safeguard the historical memory of the people, promote scientific research, and foster patriotic values among the younger generation. An analysis of the activities of the first museum makes it possible to gain a deeper understanding of the stages in the formation of museology in Bukhara, the directions of cultural policy, and attitudes toward historical heritage. This, in turn, has both theoretical and practical significance for the improvement of contemporary museum practices.

Literature Review and Methodology:

The issue of the establishment of the first museum in Bukhara has been the subject of scholarly research by such scholars as N. Yuldoshev, R. Almeev, Sh. Khayitov, A. Boltaev, O. Ravshanov, Sh. Juraev, and others. Based on primary sources and archival documents, some researchers argue that the museum was initially opened in the Kukaldash Madrasah, while others maintain that it was located in a building near the Lyabi Hauz complex, specifically in the former Russo-Chinese Bank building (now the Art Museum). In addition, K. Rakhmonov and other researchers have put forward the view that museum activities also began at the Sitorai Mokhi Khossa Palace.

Results and Discussion:

A group of local intellectuals—Abdurauf Fitrat, Muhammad Siddiq (Hashmat), Sayyid Muhammad Nasiriddin Tura, Sharifjon Makhdoom (Sadr Ziyo), and Mirzo Salimbek, among others—initiated efforts to study and preserve buildings and monuments damaged during the Red Army assault by establishing the Tarikhi Anjuman Society. As a result of the society's short-term activities (1920–1924), systematic research was undertaken on Bukhara's history, topography, architecture, and its tangible and intangible heritage, thereby laying the foundation for the development of local historical studies in Bukhara.

On 17 September 1920, in accordance with a decree of the Council of People's Commissars of Bukhara, the Department of Historical Antiquities was established under the Ministry of Education with the aim of collecting antiquities and works of art related to regional culture.

In the process of establishing a museum in Bukhara, on 16 February 1922 the Committee for the Protection of Ancient Monuments, Art, and Nature of Central Asia (Turkomstaris) was entrusted with the task of founding a museum in Old Bukhara. The proposed museum was to consist of departments of zoology, biology, mineralogy, ethnography, archaeology, Muslim paleography, numismatics, and industry [1].

As a result of the effective activities of the Department of Historical Antiquities and the factors mentioned above, the first museum was subsequently established by Professor Musa Saidjonov on 8 November 1922 in a cell of the Kukaldash Madrasah (Fig. 1). A significant contribution to the establishment of the museum was made by Fayzulla Khojaev, Abdurauf Fitrat, Musa Saidjonov, and Qori Yuldosh Polatov [2]. Initially, the museum began its activities with three departments: archaeology, zoology, and ethnography [3]. In the museum's initial exhibition, which consisted of five rooms, a total of 168 items were displayed; this number later increased to 300 exhibits, and the museum was visited by approximately 6,000 visitors. An article devoted to the details of the opening ceremony of the first museum in Bukhara was published in a 1922 issue of the Bukhara News newspaper.

According to the report, on Wednesday, 8 November, the museum building was decorated both externally and internally, and the ancient artifacts were arranged in places appropriate to their significance. Guests invited to the opening ceremony began to arrive at noon, and a banquet table was prepared for them in the main hall. An orchestra was performing music on one side of the hall. Among the distinguished guests were Ota Khoja, Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars, members of the government, as well as the representative of Russia, Funshtein, accompanied by his associates [4].

After the large building that had housed the Government Inspection Office (the supervisory and auditing authority) was vacated following the third congress, the Department of Education deemed it suitable and decided to convert it into a museum. Once the antiquities held by the education authorities were transferred there, the museum was officially opened.

Figure 1. The first museum in Bukhara located in the Kukaldash Madrasah

At the opening ceremony of the Bukhara Museum, one of the teachers, Nazir Afandi, took the floor and proposed naming the museum the "Qori Yuldosh Museum." Aminjon Polatov was appointed as the director of the museum.

The establishment of the first museum in Bukhara marked an important stage in the cultural life of the city. It fulfilled a significant role in the preservation, scholarly study, and public presentation of historical monuments and rare artifacts. Through the activities of the first museum, a foundation was laid for the systematic collection and protection of Bukhara's rich history and cultural heritage. This process subsequently contributed to the development of a network of museums and to the formation of museological traditions. Thus, the establishment of the first museum in Bukhara represents an important historical experience not only for the cultural life of that period but also for contemporary museum practice.

From the early years of the Bukhara People's Soviet Republic (BPSR), particular attention was paid to the development of museum activities in Bukhara. The period of 1922–1924 constituted the initial stage in the history of the Bukhara Regional Studies Museum, during which the museum institution emerged in Bukhara as a means of representing social and cultural life.

"Sredazkomstaris" addressed all Komstaris bodies with the following directives:

to conduct "Uzbek studies" (regional or local studies) in the provinces in conjunction with the fields of ethnography, anthropology, and terminology studies, and to actively promote this work specifically in three provinces—Khorezm, Bukhara, and Fergana;

to give special attention to ethnography and to collect valuable and rare objects for the ethnography departments of museums, thereby preventing the risk of their loss;

to establish anthropology rooms in museums and create the necessary conditions for their continuous operation;

to develop the field of terminology studies, to interpret museum exhibits through this discipline, to record exhibits under the names by which they are known in the local language, and to employ terminology studies in documenting the history of the artifacts [5].

Conclusion:

In conclusion, during the first quarter of the twentieth century, the state paid particular attention to the study of regional history and the development of museum activities. The emphasis placed on history, archaeology, terminology studies, and ethnography within museum work contributed significantly to the advancement of museum practice. Museum collections were enriched with new exhibits, while the systematic collection of artifacts, the simultaneous documentation of their

histories, the organization of broader and thematic exhibitions, and the establishment of cooperation with museums in other regions marked the beginning of a new stage in the development of museology.

The establishment of the first museum in Bukhara represented a major milestone in the city's cultural life. It played an important role in preserving historical monuments and rare artifacts, promoting scholarly research, and presenting cultural heritage to the public. Through the activities of the first museum, a solid foundation was laid for the systematic collection and protection of Bukhara's rich historical and cultural heritage. This process later contributed to the expansion of a network of museums and to the formation of museological traditions. Thus, the establishment of the first museum in Bukhara constitutes an important historical experience not only for the cultural life of that period but also for contemporary museum practice.

The first museum established in Bukhara occupied a significant place in the city's scientific and cultural life. Through its activities, historical sources were systematically collected, creating a reliable basis for scholarly research. Moreover, museum exhibitions enabled both local residents and visitors to become closely acquainted with Bukhara's centuries-old history. The experience of the first museum subsequently facilitated the establishment of new museum institutions and the formation of museological traditions. Through the activities of the initial museum, the foundations of museology were laid, and this process continues to retain its relevance today. Therefore, the study of the history of the establishment of the first museum in Bukhara is of considerable scholarly importance for the preservation and development of national cultural heritage.

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