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ANALYSIS OF ARCHIVAL SOURCES ON THE HISTORY OF THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A MUSEUM IN SHAKHRISABZ

Abstract. *This article is devoted to the history of the formation of the museum and museum-reserve operating on the basis of a concept specializing in the history of Uzbekistan in the 2,700-year-old city of Shahrissabz, which is included in the UNESCO World Heritage List. The chronological scope of this study covers the period from the beginning of the XX century to the beginning of the XXI century. Archival materials related to the political, cultural, and scientific processes of both Soviet Uzbekistan and independent Uzbekistan serve as the primary basis for revealing the historical processes of the institution's formation.*

The main objective of this study is to introduce to the wider public archival documents concerning the initiatives undertaken after the Second World War to establish new museums in Uzbekistan, documents demonstrating that these initiatives were subordinated to ideological objectives, and sources concerning the individuals who participated in this process. At the same time, the article highlights scholarly research on the museum's activities and the contributions of individuals involved in its development during the period of Uzbekistan's independence.

The study employs a comparative analysis of archival materials, newspapers and journals, expedition reports, and the results of various scholarly studies to examine the nature of historical processes and the factors influencing their development. It analyzes newly identified sources concerning the efforts to establish a museum in Shahrissabz between 1946 and 1970, as well as the stages of the museum's development and information about its founders during the period from 1996 to 2025.

Keywords: *Shahrissabz Museum, Cultural and Educational Committee, agitation, "Hudjum" Factory, Uzkomstaris.*

INTRODUCTION

Following the collapse of the former Soviet Union, 5 independent states emerged in Central Asia. One of them is Republic of Uzbekistan, which possesses a 3,000-year-old historical stage of statehood and certain cities within its territory have made a worthy contribution to the civilization of the world's peoples. The city of Shakhrisabz, which is 2,700 years old, is considered one of these cities. Today, Shakhrisabz is one of the 15 administrative territories of the Kashkadarya region of the Republic of Uzbekistan. In 2000, it was inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List. Museums play a major role in showcasing to the peoples of the world the features that led to its inclusion in the list. From this perspective, studying the history of museums in Shakhrisabz and the processes of museumization is considered highly relevant.

Based on the existing problems, the historical evolution of the museums formed in the city of Shakhrisabz was selected as the object of research.

The matters considered as the subject of research include historical documents related to heritagization, scientific articles, research reports, and the chain of events in historical processes.

The purpose of this research is defined as studying the history of museumification processes in the historical center of Shakhrisabz city.

Based on this objective, the task of the research involved examining, through various sources, the efforts aimed at the museumification of the region during the Soviet period between 1940 and 1990, the scientific research conducted in the territory during the 20th and 21st centuries and its significance in museum formation, as well as the history of the establishment and development processes of museums in the region during the post-independence years. A failure to clarify these issues would lead to confusion in the chronological events of the social and cultural processes within the historical center of Shakhrisabz city – which is considered “World Cultural Heritage” – and result in inaccuracies when highlighting the development of events aimed at the cultural preservation of the region.

Studying and analyzing the history of the process of turning sites considered World Cultural Heritage into museums in Shakhrisabz, using archival materials, as well as the scientific research conducted in the region and its results, will eliminate the aforementioned problems.

Research results show that although the initial museum activity in the region of Shakhrisabz was established in 1996, various processes in its formation in the foundations of museumification of the historical center remain among the topics that have not been fully studied based on sources.

LITERATURE REVIEW

One of the initial studies on the historical processes of Shakhrisabz is dedicated to the cartography and ethnographic characteristics of the neighborhoods in the historical center of the city, which can be found in the research conducted by O. Sukhareva. However, this study did not pay attention to aspects related to the issue of museumization of the historical center (Sukhareva, 1958). Starting from the 1940s and 1950s of the 20th century, M. Masson and G. Pugachenkova published several of their scientific hypotheses regarding the preservation of sites in this region (Masson, Pugachenkova, 1953).

Many researchers have studied the history of the region by dividing it into ancient, antique, and medieval periods. Academician A. Sagdullayev and Professor R. Suleymanov studied the archaeological monuments belonging to the ancient and most ancient periods, researching the social, economic, and political relations in the region from the development of human civilization to the emergence of statehood (Sagdullayev, Suleymanov, 1998). Some artifacts found in the results of their research have taken a place in the collection of the Shakhrisabz Museum. Today, they continue their research on the museumification of archeological monuments of southern Uzbekistan.

Likewise, monuments belonging to the ancient period and the Middle Ages were researched by Professor Z. Usmanova and N. Stolyarova. These studies examined the archeology and construction structure of the monuments, which are located in the city center and are primarily considered monuments of the Temurid period.

However, scientific attention was not paid to their conversation or the management of historical architectural heritage (Usmanova, Stolyarova 1987).

The research of Doctor of Historical Sciences N. Khushvakov is dedicated to the archeological characteristics of the city, the chronology of museum collections, and sources related to the history of ancient Kesh during the ancient and early medieval

periods. However, in his research, the development of events aimed at the heritagization of region during the Soviet period remains overlooked (Khushvakov. 2023).

Similarly, Doctor of Historical Sciences A. Raimkulov is also one of the scholars who engaged with the archeology of the historical center of the city of Shakhrisabz. As a research objective, he focused his attention urban culture of Southern Sogd (Raimkulov, 2017).

Furthermore, researchers such as R. Suleymanov, A. Raimkulov, N. Khushvakov, B. Mamadiyev, and M. Hasanov conducted archeological excavations at the monuments of the city's historical center. Based on their research, they acquired collections of major decorative applied arts and pottery specimens that replenished the funds of Shakhrisabz Museum (Suleymanov, etc. all; 1996). In recent years, the work of creating museum exhibitions based on the museum artifacts collected as a result of this research was carried out under the leadership of N. Khushvakov. As a researcher, he himself also participated in archeological studies of the monuments in the historical center of Shakhrisabz during the years 2012-2013 (Anarbayev A.A, Khushvakov. N, Saidov.M , Sandiboyev. A. 2013).

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The research materials include documents preserved in the National Archives of Uzbekistan in Tashkent, reports from the Institute of Archeology in Samarkand , as well as scientific articles , periodicals, and newspapers published as a result of various archeological and ethnographic studies. Information regarding the history, archeology, ethnography, and architecture along with data on source study and historiography, was obtained by utilizing method of analysis, comparison, and architectural-archeological analysis.

In the course of this research , the method of analyzing archival sources of scientific inquire was used to study the formation and key stages of the museum. Furthermore, the development status of the museum across different periods was comparatively analyzed through the method of source comparison. The reliability and scientific significance of the sources in studying the history of the museum establishment were demonstrated using the source analysis method. In this process, the first stage was carried out in 2025,

during which archival sources from the territories of Karshi and Shakhrisabz, along with scientific report from the Samarkand Institute of Archeology, were selected. In the second stage, in 2026, central archive documents in Tashkent were analyzed.

In addition, face-to-face dialogues were organized with individuals who conducted scientific research, and live interviews were conducted regarding the events and incidents of the process.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The theoretical research returned the following results: Throughout its history, the region has passed through various historical eras, such as the influence of the Achaemenid Empire in the 6th – 4th centuries BC, the invasion of Alexander the Great in the 4th century BC, its incorporation into the Arab Caliphate by Qutayba ibn Muslim in the 8th century AD, the Mongol Empire as a result of Genghis Khan's invasion in the 12th century, the era of the Timurid Renaissance which reached its peak in the 14th-15th centuries, the influence of the Russian Empire at the end of the 19th century, and the totalitarian system of government of the Soviet state in the 1920s. The term “Shakhrisabz” began to be applied to the region from the second half of the 14th century, specifically after the formation of the Empire of Amir Temur. During this period, the term “Kesh” was also in use. At the end of the 14th century and the beginning of the 15th century, extensive construction work aimed at urban development, local communication, and defense potential was carried out in the territory of Shakhrisabz by Amir Temur and his descendants. As a result, a defensive wall equal to 5.6 km was built around the city center (Usmanova, Stolyarova, 1987), along with the Aksaray palace complex and various sepulchers (Clavijo, 1990); by the time of Ulugbek, additional mosques khanaqahs (hospices) were constructed.

The city became one of the famous medieval centers crossed by the branches of the Great Silk Road. However, due to political crises in subsequent periods, inter-neighboring wars within the emirate and khanates, clashes with the Russian Empire, negligence toward national historical monuments resulting from the political ideologies of the Soviet era, and harmful natural factors, many monuments in the region suffered damage.

In the initial years after Uzbekistan achieved independence, there was a shortage of local specialists dedicated to preserving the historical landscape of the region. Generally speaking, the economy capabilities of the state – which had been independent for only 1-2 years – were insufficient to implement large – scale projects. For this reason, attempting to preserve the historical monuments themselves based on existing capabilities, while individual buildings compatible with the living conditions of the local population appeared around them, was a naturally developing phenomenon.

However, since the beginning of the 20th century, scientists conducting research in various fields within the region have put forward their views in their memories, monographs, and various articles on monuments, archeological cultural layer, ethnographic sources, and art samples (Kun, 1880; Masson and Pugachenkova, 1953; Kabanov, 1948; Mankovskaya, 1977; Sultanov, 1990; Vohidov, 2024).

According to data, one of the first archeologists to study the Kashkadarya region was S.K.Kabanov (born in Belarus in 1909), who collected several archaeological collections during his archeological activities in the Kesh-Shakhrisabz regions (Lunina, 1987). He came to Uzbekistan in 1933 after completing his studies and worked from 1933 to 1941 as a scientific researcher for Uzcomstairs (The Committee for the Preservation of Historic, Cultural and Artistic Monuments of Uzbekistan), and as a scientific worker of the Uzcomstairs branches in Khiva, Shakhrisabz, and Bukhara. During those years, he participated in the repair and restoration work carried out on medieval historical and architectural buildings in the city of Shakhrisabz.

Throughout his career, he was also engaged in recording the archeological monuments of the region. It is possible to consider S. K. Kabanov as a person interested in the activities of the first museums in Kashkadarya. This is because he initiated the repair and restoration of historical architectural buildings in Shakhrisabz – specifically, the conservation of “open-air museums” - and is one of the prominent scholars who contributed to the preservation of certain artifacts down to our day. His autobiography also notes that he worked at the Bukhara Regional Museum until he was drafted into World War II. Starting from 1945, he worked at the Institute of History and Archeology of the Academy of Sciences of the UzSSR and led archeological research in the Kashkadarya region. In 1953, he defended his candidate dissertation on the topic

“Nakhshab in the III-VIII Centuries Based on Archaeological Materials”. He published more than 50 scientific articles and several monographs. It should be noted that these studies, scientific articles, and monographs have not lost their significance today in relation to the study of Kashkadarya, particularly the territories of Shakhrisabz.

It is known from history that in the 1920s-1990s of the 20th century, museums in the country were shaped primarily based on “concepts” established by the former Soviet government, which operated against Islamic traditions and the administrative system of the khanate era. This was done by collecting religious books-manuscripts, prayer rugs, embroideries, and suzanes from madrasas and mosques, as well as confiscating private collections that had been preserved and cherished as family heritage for centuries, declaring them state property; museum funds were formed on this basis. The following archival source also confirms our views on instilling Soviet ideological views into the minds of the people. In letter No. 1379, written on September 14, 1948, by Yaroshevsky, the head of the cultural and Enlightenment Committee, to Gulomov, the deputy chairman of the Council of Ministers of the Uzbek SSR, information was provided regarding measures related to collective farm activities and cotton harvesting in the country’s agriculture. It reflects the task of involving museums in these activities and developing propaganda by organizing agitation brigades and agitation vehicles for them (Central State Archive of Republic of Uzbekistan, 1948).

During the Soviet era, the museum in the Kashkadarya region existed only as a regional studies museum in the city of Behbudi (the name of the city of Karshi in 1927-30), as found in the research of N. Sodikova (Sodikova, 1975).

The beginning of the issue of establishing a museum in Shakhrisabz dates back to the Soviet era, starting with a brief informative report about the establishment of a regional studies museum in the city of Shahrisabz in the 1946 issue of the newspaper “Kashkadarinskaya Pravda” (Newspaper “Kashkadarinskaya Pravda”, 1948). The report mentioned that the regional studies museum in Shakhrisabz would be located in one of the historical buildings and aimed to display handicraft products. These proposed ideas, however, bring to light certain inconsistencies regarding the history of the museum. In the course of this research, documents from the Shakhrisabz State Archive covering the years 1946–1950 were studied, but no information was found regarding the operational status or activities of the museum.

When examining the documents of the National Archives of Uzbekistan in Tashkent, the following sources concerning the establishment of a museum in Shakhrisabz in 1946 were encountered: Resolution No. 925 adopted on July 19, 1946, by the Council of Ministers of the Uzbek SSR and the Central Committee of the KP(b)Uz recorded, for the first time in history, a decision regarding the establishment of a museum in the city of Shakhrisabz (Central State Archive of Uzbekistan, 1946). Based on this document, a small announcement titled “A Museum in Shahrissabz” was published in issue No. 714 of the newspaper “Kashkadarinskaya Pravda” dated August 7, 1946. It provided information about the issue of organizing a regional studies museum in Shakhrisabz. However, subsequent research indicates that the issue of establishing this museum remained only on paper.

Another document from this archive belongs to December 18, 1948. It preserves a reply letter from A. Tadjiyev, the deputy head of the Directorate of Affairs of the Council of Ministers of the Uzbek SSR, to Y. Smirnov, the head of the State Staff Commission under the Council of Ministers of the Soviet Union. Attached to it is a report by Yaroshevsky, the deputy head of the Committee for Cultural and Educational Affairs, titled “Information on Museums Restored and Re-established in the UzSSR” (Central State Archive of the Republic of Uzbekistan, 1948). This “Information on Museums Established and Restored in the Territory of the UzSSR” highlights the planned establishment of 3 new museums: the History Museum of Tashkent, and the district museums of Jizzakh and Shakhrisabz. It is evident from these sources that the execution of the above decisions regarding the establishment of a museum in Shakhrisabz was not implemented even by the end of 1949. In the text of the document, Yaroshevsky justified the need to establish a museum in the region as follows:

(Translation: “...Shahrissabz District Museum. First of all, the necessity of establishing a district museum in Shahrissabz is explained by the need to create a new center for local lore (regional studies) and cultural-educational work here. This is because this district of the Qashqadaryo region is considered one of the relatively culturally backward areas in the republic, and there is a demand to strengthen cultural-educational efforts here. Secondly, Shahrissabz has a very rich history. Establishing a center for local lore here will greatly assist in studying the history of Uzbekistan, especially the era of Amir

Temur and the Timurids. Particularly in this region, which is the birthplace of Amir Temur, there are still many monuments related to history and archaeology that have not been fully studied. Thirdly, Shahrisabz is famous for the development of folk applied arts, especially embroidery, and is also of great ethnographic significance. Establishing a museum of local lore in Shahrisabz serves to collect, study, and preserve ethnographic materials, because this heritage has not yet completely disappeared". Furthermore, when archive documents from subsequent years were studied, no sources were found regarding a museum operating in Shahrisabz.

In the schedule of museum reports dedicated to the work completed in 1974 and the plans for 1975, developed by L. Fomina, head of the Directorate of Cultural and Educational Organizations under the Ministry of Culture of the UzSSR, the names of 17 museums were listed, but the name of this museum was not mentioned in the said list (Central State Archive of Uzbekistan, 1975). Although the term "Kashkadarya Region Museum of Local Lore" appears in this document, it should not be confused by considering it as the Shakhrisabz Museum. It was the museum located in the city of Qarshi.

Perhaps during those years, a museum was not established in Shakhrisabz, but instead, the "Exposition of Products" of the Shakhrisabz "Khujum" artistic goods production factory, which was established in 1928, might have been set up as an ethnographic exhibition. The reason we say this is that interest in this type of craftsmanship grew relatively high in the region after the items prepared by the team—which consisted mainly of women in Shahrisabz—including the "Shahrisabz iroqi duppi" (skullcap or tyubeteika), were awarded a "gold medal" at an exhibition organized in the city of Montreal and also in Japan (Babajanov, Kolbinsev, Mankovskaya. 1988). Following this success, it became a custom to put an iroqi skullcap on and present gifts to honored guests coming to Shahrisabz, state leaders visiting the republic, and members of various delegations. However, during this period, an official museum in the true sense of the word did not open or operate in Shahrisabz. Another reason for saying this is that in the scientific activities of scholars such as B. Zasipkin, Y. Gulomov, M. Masson, G. Pugachenkova, and M. Kabanov, who participated in expeditions to Shahrisabz several times as representatives of Uzkomstaris between 1920 and 1960, no records whatsoever

regarding this matter were mentioned. Yet, they belonged to the ranks of scholars who conducted serious research in studying collections related to antiquities and cultural heritage monuments.

By the 1980s, the first ideas began to form regarding the museumification of the Aksaray complex, built as the residence of Amir Temur, which is considered the citadel of the city of Shahrisabz (Babajanov, Kolbishev, Mankovskaya 1988). Furthermore, the necessity of museumification was mentioned in scientific studies where the historical architecture and archaeology of the region were investigated (Sultanov, 1990).

The issue of establishing a museum in Shahrisabz was realized only in 1996, after the Republic of Uzbekistan gained independence. This museum, named the Museum of the History of Material Culture Named After Amir Temur, was established in the building of the Chubin Madrasah, located in the historical center of Shahrisabz, as a result of the efforts and patriotism of a group of local intellectuals. One of the individuals who showed dedication in the creation of the museum was the archaeologist Nabi Khushvaqov, who became one of the main figures in the establishment of this museum (Khushvaqov, 2011). Serving as the director of this museum for nearly 30 years, he spared no effort in forming the museum funds, creating expositions, and training qualified personnel in the museum field. He constantly participated in archaeological research conducted in the region and succeeded in increasing the museum fund by displaying most of the found artifacts in the museum (Suleymanov, Raimqulov, Khushvaqov etc al., 1996).

By 2016, large-scale construction work of communicative importance carried out in the historical center of Shahrisabz and its projects were executed without mutual agreement with UNESCO's national and regional commissions. As a result, damage was caused to the historical part of the city, which led to Shahrisabz being included in the list of endangered World Cultural Heritage sites by UNESCO (UNESCO, 2016). As a result, as one of the initial measures by the government to eliminate these shortcomings, a decision was made in 2019 to establish the Shahrisabz State Museum-Reserve of a new type on the basis of the Museum of the History of Material Culture Named After Amir Temur (Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan, 2019).

The activities of these museum departments were directed toward preserving, conserving, and broadly presenting to the public all monuments of historical importance

within the 280-hectare territory of the historical center of Shahrisabz. Today, the territory of the historically designated areas based on UNESCO requirements, the historical center of Shahrisabz, and its protection zone are considered the territory of the newly established Shahrisabz State Museum-Reserve. It preserves more than 36,000 artifacts from the Ancient period to the 20th century in its funds. It is engaged in conservation and scientific study activities of 18 historical architectural monuments, 2 archaeological sites, as well as 1 Neolithic period rock art site.

Since 2019, the Shahrisabz State Museum-Reserve has been fulfilling the task of preserving the history of the city, its cultural relations, historical figures, architectural monuments, and concepts of material and immaterial heritage recognized by UNESCO, while simultaneously presenting them to local and foreign tourists.

Conclusion. The results of the conducted research show that the efforts related to establishing a museum in Shahrisabz trace back to the years following the end of the Second World War. During the research, unstudied sources related to the history of the museum were uncovered. Furthermore, the individuals directly involved in the formation of the museum, the research that established the foundation of the museum, and the processes of collection accumulation were highlighted based on sources.

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Annexes

O 'z.M.A. P-837, R-37, Y-6026.

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