

# The Role of the Samarkand State Museum-Reserve in the Preservation and Musealisation of Cultural Heritage Monuments

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**ABSTRACT:** The article describes the history and current state of museumization of cultural heritage objects in Samarkand region, as well as the role of Samarkand State Museum-Reserve.

**KEYWORD:** State Museum of Cultural History of Uzbekistan, museum history, research work, monuments registration, museumization, museumization project, museum-reserve collapse, new museums, monuments preservation problems.

## Introduction

The Samarkand State Museum-Reserve is one of the largest museum-reserves not only in Uzbekistan but also in the Commonwealth of Independent States. It comprises the State Museum of the History of Culture of Uzbekistan, the Local History Museum of Samarkand Region, the Samarkand-Afrosiab Museum, the Mirzo Ulugbek Museum Complex, the Sadriddin Ayni House Museum, the Khoja Abdulaziz Abdurasulov House Museum, the Mahmudkhodja Behbudiy House Museum. Museum of Friendship of Peoples and Religious Tolerance, Great Silk Road Museum, Museum of the History of Uzbek-Chinese Relations, Memorial Museum of the Son of Ergash Djumanbulbul, Museum of the History of Ishtikhan District, total of 13 museums, including the Science Museum and Museum of the History of Pakhtachi District. The complex of mausoleums of Amir Temur, the Mosque of Amir Temur (Bibi Khanim), the Mausoleum of Imam al-Motrudidi, the Mausoleum of Ruhabad, the Mosque of Hazrati Khizr, the Tomb of Char Chinor and the Mausoleum of Hoja Daniyori are among eight architectural monuments.

The museum collection contains over 236,000 artefacts relating to the history of Central Asia and the rest of the world. These consist of some 70,000 archaeological objects, more than 40,000 numismatic objects, more than 20,000 works of art, more than 80,000 documents, some 3,000 manuscripts and more than 10,000 natural objects. The museum-reserve was created on the basis of the State Museum of the History of Culture of Uzbekistan by Decree No.397 of the Council of Ministers of the Uzbek SSR dated May 26, 1982 [1].

Museum-reserves were created mainly in the former Soviet state. This structure is organized on the basis of museums of a particular area and is a kind of open-air museum that includes architectural, historical and natural monuments that are important for the preservation of the historical, cultural and natural heritage of a country or region. Museum-reserves are organised on the basis of museologisation of areas, complexes and individual monuments of history, culture and nature. The status of a reserve includes special methods of protection and use of the territory and objects included in it. The first reserve in Russia was created in 1922 on the basis of the museum "Pushkin's corner" (now "Mikhailovsky"). Since the end of 1950th officially was

given the status of "museum-reserve". In the future on the base of museologization of the city and regional museum collections, architectural monuments and ensembles there will be created several museum-reserves. The first museum-reserves in Uzbekistan were created in the 1980s of the 20th century. These are the museum-reserves of Samarkand, Bukhara and the Ichan Castle (Khiva).

The establishment of the Samarkand State Museum Reserve undoubtedly played an important role in the preservation of cultural heritage sites in Samarkand. The importance of museumisation of cultural heritage monuments in this area of work is incomparable. In this article, the history and current state of museumisation of cultural heritage objects in Samarkand Province, and the role of Samarkand State Museum-Reserve will be shown.

### **Main body**

The Samarkand State Museum-Reserve was established on the basis of the State Museum of the History of Culture of Uzbekistan, which is part of it. This museum is the largest museum within the museum-reserve. Let us briefly describe the history of this museum in order to complete the research.

The State Museum of the History of Culture of Uzbekistan is one of the first museums established in Uzbekistan; a number of studies mention that it was established in 1874 [2].

An article by orientalist M. Rostislavov "On archaeological research in the Zeravshan district" gives information about the first collections of the museum. [3] According to the article, Major Borzenkov, a former chief of Samarkand district, carried out excavations in Afrosiab in 1874. The excavation yielded glass vessels, jugs, bumps, pipes, and other ceramic objects. This collection and the objects collected from the excavations carried out in Afrosiab in 1873 started the formation of the museum's archaeological collection. [4]

In 1883, by order of Turkestan Governor-General M. Chernyaev, the bulk of the museum's archaeological, numismatic, ethnographic and manuscript collection was sent to the Tashkent Museum. The rest of the museum's collection was then housed in the building of the Statistical Committee. In the city of Samarkand, progressive members of society understood the importance of giving a historical centre such as Samarkand its own museum. Thanks to their efforts, in 1896 the museum was officially opened on the premises of the Statistic Committee. [5] In the intervening period the museum was given different names.

In 1911, a special building was constructed for the museum and the museum was named the Samarkand City Library-Museum. In 1920 it was called the Local History Museum, and in 1930 it was reorganized as the Central State Museum of Uzbekistan. In 1937, it was again called the Regional History and Local History Museum. [17]

In 1945, by decision of the republic's leadership, the museum was renamed the Republican Museum of the Culture of the Uzbek People, and in October 1955 it was renamed the Republican Museum of the History of Culture and Art of the Uzbek People. Uzbekistan. [4]

Taking into account the great contribution of the Museum of the History of Culture and Art of Uzbekistan to the development of museum affairs in the Republic, the museum was awarded the 1st category by a decision of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan on August 9, 1968. [4]

By Decree No. 343 of the Government of the Republic, dated 21 July 1969, the museum was given the title of State Museum of the History of Culture and Art of Uzbekistan as one of the country's main museums. At the same time, the museum was entrusted with the scientific and methodological supervision of regional museums. [4]

As a result of the extensive research carried out in this museum, the Samarkand State Museum-Reserve was established on its basis. After all, the museum staff had done a lot of work in the field of registration, conservation and scientific research of archaeological, architectural and monumental monuments in the region since the 1930s. In the 1930s, for example, I. A. Sukharev compiled a list of all archaeological monuments of the Zeravshan Oasis, specifying their geographical location. A scientific commentary was written on each of these monuments. [9] M. Yusupov compiled a list of all architectural and monumental monuments in Samarqand city and districts in 1940-50s. [19] In 1952-1959, employees of the Samarkand Museum signed an agreement with the relevant officials responsible for protecting archaeological monuments in Samarkand Province, on "*obligations to protect archaeological monuments*". Under this, contracts would be concluded to protect 86 of the most important archaeological monuments in the territory of Samarkand province. [10] These documents are still kept in the collection of documents of the museum-reserve and serve as a reference point for scientists (especially archaeologists - M.Y.). Thus, a database of archaeological, architectural and monumental monuments of Samarkand region has been formed, and they have been placed under the protection of the state. However, questions such as their protection, research and the establishment of protection zones were still to be solved. The Museum of the History of Culture and Art of Uzbekistan had no such authority. Therefore, the issue of establishing a museum-reserve in Samarkand was put on the agenda.

This problem was first raised in the 1960s. [10] Because since the 1960s, the number of local departments of the Samarkand Museum has increased. This was done by museumizing existing monuments. During this period, the remains of the famous Mirzo Ulugbek Observatory became the first museum-museum. The Mirzo Ulugbek Memorial Museum was established next to the Mirzo Ulugbek Observatory by Uzbek Government Resolution No. 100 of February 18, 1963 in 1964. [12]

On June 16, 1964, Decree No. 361 of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan on the creation of the Sadriddin Aini House Museum was announced. [13] Construction of this museum began in late 1964, and the museum was established in 1967.

In 1968, by order of the Ministry of Culture, the statute of the Samarkand State Museum Reserve was drawn up, which was to be created by researchers of the Museum of the History of Culture and Art of Uzbekistan. According to it, the museum-reserve was to be built on the basis of the Museum of the History of Culture and Art of Uzbekistan, consisting of the Mirzo Ulugbek Museum, the Sadriddin Aini House Museum, the Samarkand region Museum of Nature. In addition, the Mirzo Ulugbek Observatory, the Shakhizinda complex, the Amir Temur Mosque (Bibi Khanim), the Madrasah on Registan Square, the Amir Temur Mausoleum, the Khazrat Khizr Mosque, the Ashratkhana, the Mausoleum of Rukhabad and Afrosiab town were to be included in the future museum-preserve. [14] In the 1970s, the establishment of a museum-reserve was included in the prospective plan several times. [15]

Also included in this guide are the museums planned for the future, and these are identified as:

1. House-museum of the national defender Khoja Abdulaziz Abdurasulov on Kokcha Street;
2. Museum of secret printing house of Bolsheviks, 1905-1906;
3. African Museum;
4. Museum of economic complex of land-owning period;
5. Museum of Colonial-era household complex;
6. Museum of the History of Repair and Study of the Monuments of Samarkand;
7. Castle Museum;

8. Hamza Cells Museum;
9. M.V. Museum of Frunze Wagons;
10. Yuldosh Okhunboboyev House Museum;
11. Museum of Modern Household Complex;
12. Museum of travelling exhibitions in the USSR and abroad;
13. Akmal Ikramov House Museum;
14. House Museum of Fayzulla Hodjaev

In accordance with Decree No. 728 of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Uzbekistan and the Council of Ministers of 11 December 1978 "On measures to improve the condition and further operation of museums in the Republic", the following museums of the Academy of Sciences will be transferred to the new museum-reserve. [18]

1. Sadriddin Aini House Museum;
2. History of the foundation of the city of Samarkand - Afrosiab Museum;
3. Hamid Olimjon House Museum in Jizzakh;
4. The Kattakorgan Local History Museum;
5. Ishtikhan District History Museum (with the status of a department).

By the decision of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Uzbekistan No. 397 of May 26, 1982, the Regional Museum of Regional History and Local Lore was included in the museum-reserve as a branch.

In establishing the museum-reserve, its protected areas are delimited by streets and neighbourhoods in historical, historical-topographical and architectural terms. According to it, the city of Samarkand is divided into the following groups [16]:

#### **I. Territory**

1. M. Gorky Avenue (now University Avenue);
2. Communism Street (now Bostonsaroy Street);
3. Kahramon street (now R.G. de Clavijo street) Aksaray, Amir Temur's mausoleum, along with the monuments of Ruhabad;
4. Termiz street along the border of the medieval city;
5. Ibragimova Street (Safed Mosque), Sozangaron Street (houses from the 18th-19th centuries);
6. Registan ensemble together with the monument complex. State Museum of the History of Culture and Art (now the State Museum of the History of Culture of Uzbekistan)
7. Panjikent street;
8. Vobkent Street is a complex of buildings formed in the 18th century. Faqih Abu Lays mausoleum, Dari Zanjir complex dating back to the 15th century. Ancient Chokardiza neighborhood;
9. Gijduvan street. The fortress wall of medieval Samarkand (X-XII and XV centuries);
10. East Street;
11. Bukhara Street;

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12. Mubarak street together with the neighborhood mosque;
13. Attack street;
14. Kitab and Kokan street;
15. Ascent to Afrosiyab together with Shahizinda architectural complex, border along Siyob stream;
16. Amir Temur mosque, Bibikhanim mausoleum;
17. Intersection street;
18. Komsomol and Dahbed Street;
19. Exit to M. Gorkiy Avenue.

## II. Territory

1. 15th century architectural monument Ashratkhana together with Abdu Darun complex;

## III. Territory.

1. Nadir Devonbegi madrasa Khoja Ahror complex with the adjacent mosque;

## IV. Territory.

1. Abdu Berun Complex;

## V. Territory

1. Monuments of the Soviet era - the Officers' House, the building of the Rusdrama Theater (now a puppet theater);

## VI. Territory. The territory of the ancient and medieval city of Samarkand;

1. Arch;
2. Jame' mosque - prayer hall;
3. City neighborhood of the 11th century;
4. City quarter of the 10th century;
5. Early medieval city neighborhood;
6. The city wall of the V-III centuries BC located on the western edge of the town;
7. The city wall of the V-III centuries BC near the Shahizinda complex.

The total area of the protected areas is 798 ha, including the city of Afrosiab - 218 ha, the medieval city of Samarkand (Old City - M.Yu.) - 320 ha, the "New City" - 260 ha. [Samarqand davlat muzey-qo'riqxonasi ilmiy arxivi, 1-jamg'arma, 1-ro'yxat, 1954-jild, 18-varaq]. One year after the creation of Samarkand state museum-reserve, i.e. in 1983, 1642 monuments of material culture were placed under state protection. Of them 214 monuments of architecture, 335 monuments of monumental art, and 1093 monuments of archaeology. [Samarqand davlat muzey-qo'riqxonasi ilmiy arxivi, 1-jamg'arma, 1-ro'yxat, 1954-jild, 21-22 varaq] The works carried out and planned for the future have played a decisive role in the protection of cultural heritage. A number of historical buildings and structures on the verge of extinction have been registered and placed under state protection.

In 1982 the "**Perspective plan of museumization of monuments till 1990**" was drawn up. The plan was to create a large number of museums. However, due to the lack of funds and indifferent attitude of the

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government to museum work, some museums were not created. Following the decision of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Uzbekistan and in accordance with the above-mentioned plan, in 1985, the "Museum of the History of Repair and Research of Architecture" was created in the Tillakori Madrasah on Registan Square. There are going to be an exhibition 'The History of Popular Education in Turkestan and History of Restoration in Nadir Devonbegi Madrasah' in Sherdor Madrasah. There are plans to create Muhammad Amir Nakibbek Madrasah in Kattakorgon district, and regional history and local history museums in Chilustun architectural monument in Nurata district. Research has been prepared on the creation of a "Museum of Stone Art" at the Khazrat Khizr Mosque and a "Museum of Ethnography and Daily-life" at the Koshkhovuz complex. There are also plans to create a museum of musical instruments of the peoples of Uzbekistan in Sherdor madrasah, a museum of unique manuscripts in Ulugbek madrasah, a museum of wood-carving of the late 19th and early 20th centuries in Shakhizinda ensemble, and, finally, the Akmal Ikramov house-museum. Unfortunately, due to the lack of material and technical support of the Museum-Reserve, some of the above-mentioned museums and exhibitions will not be organized.

After Uzbekistan gained independence, the cultural heritage monuments of the Samarkand State Museum-Reserve were removed from its structure and placed at the disposal of various organizations. This has prevented the Samarkand State Museum-Reserve from fully discharging its functions. By decision of the Akim of Samarkand Province in 1991 the Registan ensemble was reorganized into an independent directorate, and by decision of 2003 the Shahizinda ensemble was transferred to the jurisdiction of the Moslem Spiritual Board of the Republic of Uzbekistan. The Mausoleum of Imam Motrudi, the cave (tomb) of Hazrat Davud and the shrine of Chorchinor were approved by the decision of the Cabinet of Ministers dated November 4, 2011 "The program of measures to develop tourism industry in Samarkand region and increase the export potential of tourism services in 2011-2012" and the Akim of Samarkand region in 2011. By a decision of December 27, it was transferred to the Samarkand State Museum-Reserve.

However, in 2018, by a government decision, the Khoja Daneer Shrine, Hazrat Khizr Mosque, Hazrat Davud Shrine, Imam Moturudi Complex and Chorchinor Shrine under the jurisdiction of Samarkand State Museum-Reserve were transferred to the Wakf Public Foundation on a free-of-charge basis until 1 January 2024.

Based on the Presidential Decree dated May 26, 2020 "On measures to improve the activities of the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Uzbekistan", the decision of the Akimat of Samarkand dated July 6, 2020, 13 objects of cultural heritage (Afrosiab Castle, Afrosiab Museum, the Imam Motrudi Mausoleum, the Bibi Khanim Mosque complex, the entrance gate to the Palace Mulhonim mausoleum and the remains of the madrasah, the Rukhabad complex (mausoleum, madrasah, mosque and minaret), the Osmatboy madrasah (in fact, it should be the Dostmatboy Osmat M madrasah), White Palace Mausoleum, Amir Timur Mausoleum, Ulugbek Observatory, Khazrat Khizr Mosque, and Khoja Daneer Mausoleum) were transferred to the Samarkand State Museum-Reserve.

On 3 March 2021, the Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers "On Measures to Strengthen the Protection of Tangible Cultural Heritage Sites and Territories included in the UNESCO World Heritage List" entered into force. According to this decision, a total of 29 cultural heritage monuments have been transferred to the Samarkand State Museum-Reserve (most of them have so far been under the jurisdiction of the Museum-Reserve). According to the decision of the Cabinet of Ministers № 206 of April 13, 2021 "On creation of the State Museum of Karakalpak literature history named after Berdak and house-museum of Mahmudhoja Beybudi" Samarkand state museum - it was shown that it will be transferred without compensation to the reserve.

Thus, the number of cultural heritage objects in the possession of the Samarkand State Museum-Reserve should reach 30. According to paragraph 8 of the Presidential Decree of 6 April 2021 "On measures for further improvement of the system of state administration in the field of tourism and sports" "State museums,

museum-reserves and house-museums in the Ministry of Culture, the transfer of tangible cultural heritage properties and the magazine "Mozaidan sado" to the Agency of Cultural Heritage in full with the existing state units and material and technical base, while maintaining the current order of funding, payment and material

At the moment, the Resolution No. 119 of the Cabinet of Ministers "On Measures to Strengthen the Protection of Tangible Cultural Heritage Sites and Territories Included in the UNESCO World Heritage List" is still in force. It follows that museum-reserves subordinate to the Cultural Heritage Agency are subordinate to the Cultural Heritage Agency, with full retention of the ownership rights specified in Decision No. 119. However, despite the passage of so much time, the implementation of this decision has been delayed. As a result, the Samarkand State Museum-Reserve maintains 13 objects of cultural heritage, such as the Afrosiab Museum, the Bibihanum Mosque complex, the entrance gate of the Mulkhanim Mausoleum and the remains of the Madrasah, the Amir Temur Mausoleum complex, the Ulugbek Observatory. and the Nadir Devonbegi complex. The remaining 17 sites remain under the control of various agencies and institutions not involved in the protection of cultural heritage. For one example, while in 1983 the Samarkand State Museum-Reserve had 1,642 objects of cultural heritage on its inventory, now there are only 1,607 of them [National Database of Legislative Data of the Republic of Uzbekistan, No. 09/19/846/3881, art. 1].

Presidential Decree No. PD-5150 of 19 July 2021 on the organisation of the activity of the Agency for Cultural Heritage under the Ministry of Tourism and Sports of the Republic of Uzbekistan and measures for the innovative development of the sector. [Legislative act National Database of the Republic of Uzbekistan. No. 07/21/5150/0581, Art. 1] under the Ministry of Tourism and Sports the Agency of Cultural Heritage and its departments of the Republic of Karakalpakstan, regions and Tashkent city were created. The Department for Museum Development, Museumization of Monuments and State Catalogue of the National Museum Fund has been set up as part of the Agency. The Cultural Heritage Agency's departments for the development of museums and the museumization of monuments and the State catalogue of the National Museum Fund have now been set up in the Republic of Karakalpakstan, the provinces and the city of Tashkent. However, not a single object of cultural heritage has yet been museumed. The Ergash Jumanbulbul Memorial Museum, the House Museum of Khoja Abdulaziz Abdurasulov, the Mahmudkhoja Behbudi House Museum, the Museum of Interethnic Harmony and Religious Tolerance, the Great Silk Road, Uzbekistan. The Samarkand State Museum also has a Museum of the History of Chinese Relations. Booking. At present only 7 thousand out of 236 000 items in the funds of Samarkand State Museum-Reserve are on display and exhibited. The rest 229,000 items are kept in the funds due to lack of space. The practice of the world museum science is widely used to preserve objects of cultural heritage by means of building museum expositions (Louvre of France, Hermitage of the Russian Federation). It would be good for us to follow this way, to display objects of museum-preserved collections, turning monuments into museums. This experience was implemented in the Bukhara State Museum Reserve and now the number of museums has reached 25. The Ichan-Kala State Museum-Reserve in Khiva has established museums at most of its cultural heritage sites. Cultural heritage monuments in the city and district of Samarkand remain within organizations not involved in the protection and preservation of cultural heritage, such as the Wakf Charitable Public Foundation, the Golden Heritage Public Foundation and the Regional Department of Culture. In addition, some monuments have been handed over for use to various governmental organizations. This raises concerns about their preservation.

## Conclusion

The creation of a museum-reserve in Samarkand is certainly a positive development. The process is the result of many years of research and development at the State Museum of the History of Culture of Uzbekistan. As a result of the establishment of the museum-reserve, Samarkand's cultural heritage sites have been placed under State protection and preserved. Scientific research has been conducted and tourist services provided at each site. However, since independence, a number of cultural heritage objects have been removed from the

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Museum-Reserve and made available to various organizations, which has created problems associated with the preservation and museification of cultural heritage monuments.

In view of the above, the following proposals are made:

- Transfer the protected historic part of Samarkand city together with the cultural heritage objects located in it to the Samarkand State Museum-Reserve;
- Organisation of museums, expositions and exhibitions on various topics in the cultural heritage sites located in the protected historic part of Samarkand.
- Creation of a carpet museum in Chorsu Ensemble (18th century); ;
- Creation of an ethnographic museum in the Osmatboy Madrasah (nineteenth century);
- Creation of an arts and crafts museum in the Madrasa Makhdumi Khwarezmi for the Blind (16th century);
- Creation of the necessary infrastructure at other sites such as the Ashratkhan Mausoleum (15th century) and the Childukhtaran complexes and their museumization;
- The demolition of unconnected structures around the Khoja Abdi Darun complex (10th-15th centuries), and the creation of a "History of Jurisprudence in Central Asia" museum in the premises around the Khoja Abdi Darun mausoleum;
- The White Palace Mausoleum (15th century) is located behind the Amir Temur Mausoleum and is closed to tourists. Opening the wall around the Amir Temur Mausoleum, opening the path to the Oqsaroy Mausoleum and creating the necessary tourism infrastructure;
- Museumization of the Shepherd's Tomb (XV-xviii centuries) by the creation of a tourist infrastructure around the road leading to it and the tomb;
- Museumisation through the construction of a road leading to the bridge on the Zarafshan River built by Muhammad Shaibani-khan and the creation of tourism infrastructure around it;
- Gradual museumization of the remaining architectural and monumental monuments and the creation of tourism infrastructure around them.

The above-mentioned activities play an important role in preserving these sites, on the one hand, and enhancing Samarkand's tourist attractiveness, on the other hand.

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