

Ethnography

Study of the Arms Collection at the Georgian National Museum

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(Presented by Academy Member Roin Metreveli)

ABSTRACT. In 1926 the Simon Janashia State Museum of Georgia acquired a precious collection of arms and eastern small statuary belonging to the family of Zurab and Tamar Kobiashvili . This collection has not yet been studied and, therefore, is unknown to the scientific community and the public. Collector General Zurab Kobiashvili (1864-1931) was a fan of arms, oriental culture and good connoisseur. Because of military service, he often had to stay in European and Eastern countries. This gave him the possibility to buy and collect military arms and the so-called Buddhist artifacts from different countries during the years that are very valuable from the artistic and historical-memorial point. Their number exceeds 400 units. In Kobiashvili's collection there are some memorial objects that are very interesting for the Caucasian and Georgian arms studies. Flint guns of Giorgi Saakadze and Haji Murat, Saam Kobiashvili's sword, Emin Geray's helmet, parts of the horse bridle of Prince Alexandre (Batonishvili) etc. © 2018 Bull. Georg. Natl. Acad. Sci.

Key words: Zurab Kobiashvili, museum, private collection, weapon

The Georgian National Museum is the largest union of museums in the Caucasus. The Simon Janashia Museum of Georgia is the oldest among its member museums and its history begins in 1852 [1]. During its existence, the museum's collections were enhanced with donated, purchased items and archaeological and ethnographic artifacts. It should be emphasized that the important source of filling the museum's treasure is the most valuable and sometimes unique material from the historical-artistic perspective preserved in private collections [2]. This time the subject of my research is a private collection of the military person, Zurab

Kobiashvili, protected in ethnological collections of weaponry, precious metal and oriental objects at the Simon Janashia Museum of Georgia.

On June 22, 1926, the Georgian State Museum bought combat weapons and the so-called Buddhist collection from Zurab Kobiashvili and his wife. In the concluded agreement between the parties, it is said: "The Museum of Georgia is obliged to pay citizens Kobiashvili fifteen thousand rubles / 15 000 rub. / in gold for a purchased collection in accordance with the following order: from May 1926, for seven years, namely until May 1, 1933 by the end of each month citizens Kobiashvili will be

granted one hundred and twenty five rubles/ 125 rub. / which is equal to ten thousand five hundred rubles /10 500 rub./ and the rest four thousand five hundred rubles / 4 500 rub. /the Museum of Georgia should pay citizens Kobiashvili during the eighth year i.e. from May 1933 to May 1934 [3]".

In the collections of weaponry, precious metals and oriental objects full identification and certification of the items stored in Zurab Kobiashvili's collection was made. A wide geographic area of the origin of this material was clearly identified. The collection was sorted by origin and types. This will promote the scientific study of materials that have not yet been implemented. An important part of Zurab Kobiashvili's collection is the so-called Buddhist collection (207 units). Here are presented ethnocultural samples of the peoples from India and the Far East (China, Japan, and Mongolia), in particular, bronze, ceramic and wooden images of Hindu and Buddhist deities. Apparently, Zurab Kobiashvili was familiar with Eastern religious and philosophical teachings and was especially interested in the related objects. This is evidenced by the images of the Eastern deities, diversified and almost perfectly presented in his collection. Unfortunately, these exhibits, unlike weapon collection are not registered in the museum's inventory books and therefore are not documented. Only a list of these items compiled by Z. Kobiashvili is preserved. Thus, it is completely unknown and not studied. Yet, this collection, which is kept in the collection of oriental objects, is very valuable historically and artistically. Besides, it is an important source for Georgian researchers in the study of culture, art and religion of the indicated countries. The significance of the study of this Buddhist collection also increases the fact that even in the early Middle Ages Georgia had relations with these countries in the Far East through the "Silk Road". The most important part of the collection is combat weapons (inv. # 10-1927 / 1-183). The collection of weapons comprises 199 Georgian,

Caucasian, Russian, European, Middle and Far East samples, both attack and self-defense. The collection has never been comprehensively studied. Exhibits of the Z. Kobiashvili's weapon collection are important acquisition for the collection of weapons of the Georgian National Museum both horizontally – by countries and regions (Chinese, Japanese, Tibetan, Indian, Persian, Turkish, Mongolian, European, Russian, Caucasian) and vertically, according to the stages of their development. The chronological structure of the material presented here is determined by the 16th - 19th centuries. It should be noted that some of its samples are unique for the Georgian museum collections.

As it was mentioned, because of military service Zurab Kobiashvili often visited European and Eastern countries. As a military man, he was very interested in weapons and was a good connoisseur. Besides, he had enough material resources for their purchase. This is confirmed by his rich collection of weapons, which was handed over to the National Museum at a very low price and significantly enriched its treasury. Unfortunately, the contribution of this high-ranking military officer as a collector was not given special attention. His life and work have not been studied and presented in Georgian scientific publications. Therefore, my goal has been to fill this gap and study Zurab Kobiashvili's life and activities, which in turn will promote my research on his collection of weapons. I was able to obtain biographical data from museum, family and conservatory archives and also National Archives of Georgia, as well as material from Russian official websites, where there was poor information about the participants of the World War I and their awards. It is noteworthy that military personal records from the National Archives of Georgia were sent to the Russian Federation as secret materials. Therefore, we have not been able to add more details to Z. Kobiashvili's biographical data at this stage of research.

Zurab Kobiashvili was born on April 2, 1864, in the village of Akhatani, Dusheti region, in the

family of Simon Kobiashvili and Ekaterine Tusishvili. Akhatani was an estate of the Tusishvilis. Zurab's grandfather from his mother's side had four daughters, one of whom was married to Simon Kobiashvili. This branch of Kobiashvili was from the village of Kobiayantkari, Dushetidistrict. They had four children, three sons - Alexander (Sasha), Zurab, Vladimer (Lado) and daughter Anna. Vladimer was the youngest son in the family; Ekaterine died giving birth to him and was buried in Akhatani cemetery, near the church. Simon is buried next to her. The younger brother of Zurab Kobiashvili - Vladimir had a wife – Pelagia Zandukeli, whom Zurab particularly loved. The family archive contains a photo with Kobiashvili's inscription: "To dear Pelo 1917." Vladimer and Pelagia had two sons: Irakli and Siko (Simon). Siko was the last commander of the Georgian Legion who fought for the Germans. He is buried in France, in Leuville. His brother Irakli is also buried there. In the family archive, there is a photo of Zurab Kobiashvili, taken in Dimitri Ermakov's photo studio, dedicated to his nephew Irakli and confirmed by the Russian inscription: "To dear Irakli from Zurab, 97". Through this inscription, accurate identification of the person was done in Dmitri Ermakov's photo archives at the Georgian National Museum and we found some more photos of Zurab Kobiashvili. Irakli's grandson is Davit Buadze; Zurab Kobiashvili's photo archive and a few of the collector's weapons are kept in his family. He also owns Zurab Kobiashvili's house in Akhatani.

Zurab Kobiashvili received primary education in the village of Akhatani. Then he continued his studies in Tbilisi Real School. His military activities began in 1884 when he graduated from the cadet school of the Elisvetgrad Cavalry. Then he was sent to the 43rd Dragoon Regiment in Tver. In 1891 he got the rank of Cornet; since 1895 he was a Lieutenant; since 1898 - Staff-Captain; in 1902 he was awarded the title of Captain of the senior subaltern officer rank; Zurab participated in

the 1904-05 Russian-Japanese war, where he was wounded. He was awarded the rank of the lieutenant-colonel in 1906. Since 1909 Zurab was in the 17th Dragoon Regiment in Nizegorod. In 1914 for his work in the Lancers of Volhynia in 1913 he was promoted to the rank of colonel and moved to the third Lancers of Smolensk. Zurab Participated in the campaign of East Prussia and since 1914 he was General Major. In 1914-1915 he commanded the Pereslav Regiment and in 1916-1917 the sixth Lancers of Volhynia. Awarded: in 1904 with the 3rd class Order of Saint Anna (sword and Ribbon); in 1905 – with the 2nd class Order of Saint Anna (sword); in 1905 – the 2nd class Order of Saint Stanislaus (sword); in 1905 – with the 4th class Order of Saint Vladimir (sword and ribbon); in 1906 – with 4th class Order of Saint George; in 1914 – Saint George Sword (The Gold Sword for Bravery).

Zurab Kobiashvili married Tamar Tumanishvili on November 20, 1919, in Pyatigorsk, which is confirmed by the museum's archival data. Here is a document about the church wedding at the Pyatigorsk Cathedral. Tamar Kobiashvili presented this document after the death of her spouse in order to receive his money from the museum.

Zurab and Tamar Kobiashvili did not have a heir. So after returning to Tbilisi, they decided to sell their collection to the Georgian State Museum (information provided by Davit Buadze). This fact is confirmed by the museum's archival data; namely, the October 27, 1924 minutes of the Museum's evaluation commission states: "It is desirable to conclude an agreement for the purchase of the collection in the nearest time, because there are proposals from other allied republics". Nevertheless, Zurab and Tamar Kobiashvili had not sold the collection for almost two years and asked the museum to find money. Archival materials evidence that after studying, evaluating and buying the collection, Zurab Kobiashvili became an employee of the museum. According to one museum-archival document, Kobiashvili studied

and identified pistols, guns and swords from his and Mejid II Saltaneh's collections and compiled an album with sketches and relevant texts (in the whole 100 sheets). Unfortunately, the album was not found in the museum's archive. Therefore, I continued the search in the subsidiary ethnographic collection storage room. The album was not found there. However, in the course of my work, I found Kobiashvili's collection of paintings, which he donated to the Society for the Spreading of Literacy among Georgians in 1910. Later this collection was transferred to the Metekhi Museum, from there to the Museum of Arts and from the latter to the State Museum of Simon Janashia. This collection includes 28 oil paintings. These works belong to the first period of the new Georgian Art from the beginning of the 19th century to the 1870s. The paintings of unknown authors are done in oils on canvas. Each of the canvases portrays mainly men or women of the same type wearing traditional costumes. The main attention is paid to clothing and accessories, including combat weapons,

jewelry and household items. The sizes of the pictures are roughly the same. The paintings were probably performed in one of the art studios of Tbilisi [4]. The term of the cooperation agreement signed in 1927 between Zurab Kobiashvili and the museum ended in 1930 and they intended to develop further relations. Kobiashvili was obliged to study the entire collection and supervise their restoration, which he had to accomplish during 17 months - from May 1930 to November 1931 (Two months of summer were not considered). Unfortunately, Zurab Kobiashvili did not fulfill the requirements of the agreement, since he died at the age of 67 on February 21, 1931.

Zurab Kobiashvili was buried in the cemetery of Vera, where now there is the Chess Palace and a park and his grave is lost.

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ეთნოგრაფია

იარაღის კოლექციის შესწავლა საქართველოს ეროვნულ მუზეუმში

მ. ქაფიანიძე

საქართველოს ეროვნული მუზეუმი, თბილისი, საქართველო

(წარმოდგენილია აკადემიის წევრის რ. მეტრეველის მიერ)

1926 წელს სიმონ ჯანაშიას სახელობის საქართველოს სახელმწიფო მუზეუმმა შეიძინა იარაღისა და აღმოსავლური მცირე პლასტიკის ნიმუშთა უძვირფასესი კოლექცია, რომელიც ეკუთვნოდა ზურაბ და თამარ კობიაშვილების ოჯახს. ეს კოლექცია დღემდე შეუსწავლელია, რის გამოც სამეცნიერო წრისა და საზოგადოებისათვის უცნობია. კოლექციონერი, გენერალი ზურაბ კობიაშვილი (1864-1931) იარაღისა და აღმოსავლური კულტურის მოყვარული და კარგი მცოდნე იყო. სამხედრო სამსახურის გამო ხშირად უწევდა ყოფნა ევროპისა და აღმოსავლეთის ქვეყნებში. ეს კი მას აძლევდა საშუალებას, რომ წლების განმავლობაში შეეძინა და შეეგროვებინა სხვადასხვა ქვეყნის მხატვრული და ისტორიულ-მემორიალური თვალსაზრისით მეტად ფასეული საბრძოლო იარაღი თუ ე.წ. ბუდისტური ნივთები. მათი რაოდენობა 400 ერთეულს აჭარბებს. კობიაშვილისეულ კოლექციაში კავკასიისა და საქართველოს იარაღმცოდნეობისთვის მეტად საინტერესო რამდენიმე მემორიალური ნივთიცაა - გიორგი სააკაძისა და ჰაჯი მურატის კაჟიანი თოფები, საამ კობიაშვილის ხმალი, ემინ გირეის მუზარადი, ალექსანდრე ბატონიშვილის ცხენის რახტის ნაწილები და სხვ.

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