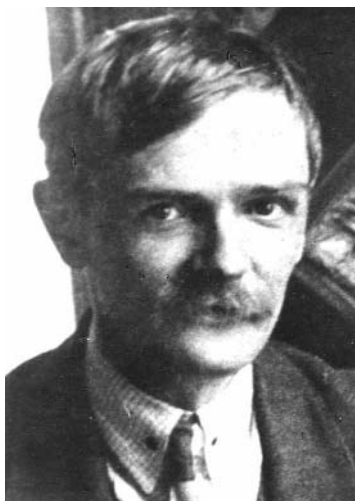


Alexander Nikolaevich Zograf (1889-1942)



Alexander Zograf was the first Keeper of the Numismatic Collection in the Museum of Fine Arts in Moscow. He was born in Moscow on February 26, 1889. His father was a zoology professor at the Imperial Moscow University. Zograf graduated in Classics and Ancient History and then went on to study art history under such well-known scholars as I. Tsvetaev, V. Malmberg and N. Romanov. Zograf's association with them was to determine his future.

One of his mentors – Professor Ivan Tsvetaev – devoted twenty-five years of his life to setting up the Museum of Fine Arts and discussed with Zograf the possibilities of organizing a numismatics department using the university collection as its initial core. Professor Tsvetaev's untimely death in 1913 meant that many of his plans for the museum remained on paper. It was not until 1918 that V. Malmberg, Tsvetaev's successor, invited Zograf to take up the post of Keeper of the Numismatic Collection. Prior to that, Zograf had been teaching. Zograf had also been pursuing his interest in numismatics. In 1913 he was elected corresponding member of the Moscow Numismatic Society, and later in 1917, was made a full member. His teacher in this field was the well-known Russian scholar A. V. Oreshnikov.

Alexander Zograf's work in the Museum of Fine Arts coincided with one of the most difficult periods in the museum's history. In 1918 the Soviet government moved from Petrograd to Moscow. A plan was approved for the setting up of four leading museums in the city: a National Museum of Art, a Museum of West-European Art, a Museum of Russian Folk Art and a Museum of Oriental Art. The Civil War, foreign intervention and economic chaos meant that these plans were postponed for five years. The Museum of Fine Arts remained part of Moscow University. At that period Muscovites experienced some very cold and snowy winters. The museum building was not heated and had no electricity: the damp attacking the walls of the exhibition halls meant that the marble was damaged and in the spring, water got into the building. Nevertheless the efforts of the museum's 16-member staff kept things under control and they were able to open the museum to the public in the summer months. The main task of the staff at that time was to make the museum's exhibits better known to the population at large. Zograf taught Greek and Latin in several institutions and also worked as a lecturer and guide in the city's museums. Despite the difficult conditions and his heavy work load Zograf did a

great deal to systematize the numismatic collections and carried out research in numismatics and philology. During the Civil War he translated Cicero, Cato the Elder, and several chapters of Pliny the Elder's Natural History. He also worked on translations of various Polish documents into Latin relating to the history of the Time of Troubles.

Zograf took part in the excavations of Tyras, a city-site on the northern coast of the Black Sea, and wrote a book on the coins of Tyras. It was during the Moscow chapter of Zograf's career that he first came into his own as a scholar and teacher. In 1922 he was invited to come and work in the Numismatics Department of the Hermitage Museum and moved to Petrograd. By 1925, together with E.M. Pridik, Zograf had prepared the permanent numismatic exhibition, and thereafter he worked without interruption on various problems associated with the enormous Coin collection of the Hermitage. He was first as a scientific collaborator, and from 1930 a full member; in 1935 he was appointed to the post of Keeper of the Numismatics Department, which he held until his death on January 17, 1942 during the siege of the city. In 1939 A. Zograf was awarded the degree of Doctor in Historical Sciences, *honoris causa*.

Methodical approach, accuracy and caution in drawing conclusions were the fundamental characteristics of the late A.N. Zograf. The coin as a work of art had always been of interest to him. But he became a pragmatic numismatist as well. The coin as an archaeological document, the coin as a historical source, the coin as a factor of economic history, the problems of monetary circulation – these were the primary objects of his inquiries.

Alexander Zograf's writings in the field of numismatics are widely known, in particular his book *Coins of The Ancient World*. Zograf's articles were published in many Russian and foreign journals, including *Numismatic Chronicle* and *Zeitschrift für Numismatik*.

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