
Turkish Museums Celebrate Türkiye-China Silk Road Heritage



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ISTANBUL, May 18 – Turkish museums are marking International Museum Day by showcasing centuries-old historical and cultural ties with China through exhibits of porcelain, stone, and silk artifacts. Museums across Türkiye from Erzurum in the east to Istanbul and Bursa in the west are highlighting the deep connections forged along the historic Silk Road.

In eastern Türkiye, the Erzurum Museum is displaying its rich collection of 24,000 artifacts, spanning from the Paleolithic era to the early Republic period. Among its prized exhibits is the 2,500-year-old Tas Ata stele, an anthropomorphic tombstone symbolizing deep cultural links between Anatolia and the Eurasian steppe, including China, Mongolia, and Kazakhstan. “This collection reflects centuries of trade and cultural exchange along the Silk Road,” stated Husnu Genc, Director of the Erzurum Museum.

Erzurum’s historical importance as a key Silk Road hub is further emphasized by Murat Kucukugurlu, a history professor at Erzurum Technical University, who noted its role as a crossroads of trade and culture.

In Istanbul, Topkapi Palace, home to one of the world’s largest collections of Chinese porcelain, is preparing to open its new Porcelain Museum later this year. “We have around 22,000 porcelain pieces, with 12,000 of them being Chinese,” shared Ilhan Kocaman, head of the Topkapi Palace Department. The collection, featuring rare celadon and blue-and-white porcelain from the Yuan and Ming dynasties, symbolizes the historical connections between China and the Ottoman Empire.

Meanwhile, Bursa’s Umurbey Silk Production and Design Center is displaying traditional handlooms, weaving equipment, and silk artifacts, illustrating centuries of textile exchange with

China. “The museum highlights the cross-cultural influences that shaped Bursa’s silk heritage,” said Ayca Tayar, head of the Lifelong Learning Department at Bursa Metropolitan Municipality. Turkish museums continue to preserve and celebrate the legacy of Silk Road trade, reflecting Türkiye and China’s shared history of cultural exchange and economic cooperation.