



Yuriy Fyodorovich Buryakov (1934–2015): A Historiographical Analysis of Archaeological Excavations and Material Culture Studies in the Tashkent Oasis

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Abstract. *Yuriy Fyodorovich Buryakov (1934–2015) was one of the most prolific and methodologically influential archaeologists working in Soviet and post-independence Uzbekistan. Despite the breadth and impact of his contribution, no systematic historiographical evaluation of his scholarly legacy has been undertaken in English-language academic literature. This article provides a comprehensive historiographical assessment of Buryakov's contributions to archaeological excavations and material culture studies in the Tashkent oasis (Chach-Ilak region), situating his work within the broader trajectory of Central Asian archaeology from the Soviet period through Uzbekistan's post-independence scholarly development. The study employs historical-historiographical analysis, comparative-historical methodology, and critical source analysis. Primary sources include Buryakov's monographs and expedition reports; secondary sources encompass biographical scholarship, encyclopaedic data, and international peer-reviewed literature on Central Asian and Silk Road archaeology. Analysis demonstrates that Buryakov developed a distinctive complex interdisciplinary method integrating field archaeology, numismatics, historical topography, and written sources from Iranian, Chinese, and Arabic traditions. His multi-decade direction of the Chach-Ilak (later Chach-Ustrushona) expedition yielded foundational data on urbanisation, mining history, and Silk Road connectivity across more than 550 scholarly works. Buryakov's legacy occupies a pivotal transitional position between Soviet-era archaeological methodology and the internationally collaborative paradigm that characterises post-independence Uzbek scholarship. His work remains a methodological reference point and an underexplored resource for contemporary Silk Road and Central Asian urban archaeology.*

Keywords: *Buryakov, Uzbek archaeology, historiography, Chach-Ilak, Tashkent oasis, material culture, Silk Road, urban culture, Soviet archaeology, post-Soviet scholarship, Central Asian heritage*

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Yuriy Fyodoroviç Buryakov (1934–2015): Daşkənd oazisində arxeoloji qazıntılar və maddi mədəniyyət tədqiqatlarının historiqlrafik təhlili

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Xülasə. Yuriy Fyodoroviç Buryakov (1934–2015) Sovet dövrü və müstəqillikdən sonrakı Özbəkistanda fəaliyyət göstərmiş ən məhsuldar və metodoloji baxımdan təsirli arxeoloqlardan biri olmuşdur. Onun elmi fəaliyyətinin genişliyinə və təsirinə baxmayaraq, ingilisdilli akademik ədəbiyyatda bu irsin sistemli historiqlrafik qiymətləndirilməsi aparılmamışdır. Bu məqalə Buryakovun Daşkənd oazisində (Çaç-İlak bölgəsi) apardığı arxeoloji qazıntılar və maddi mədəniyyət tədqiqatlarına verdiyi töhfələrin hərtərəfli historiqlrafik təhlilini təqdim edir və onun fəaliyyətini Sovet dövründən başlayaraq müstəqillikdən sonrakı Özbəkistan elmi inkişafı kontekstində Mərkəzi Asiya arxeologiyasının ümumi inkişaf xətti daxilində yerləşdirir. Tədqiqatda tarixi-historiqlrafik analiz, müqayisəli-tarixi metodologiya və tənqidi mənbə təhlili tətbiq edilmişdir. İlkin mənbələrə Buryakovun monoqlrafiyaları və ekspedisiya hesabatları daxil edilmişdir; ikinci dərəcəli mənbələr isə bioqlrafik tədqiqatları, ensiklopedik məlumatları və Mərkəzi Asiya və İpək Yolu arxeologiyasına dair beynəlxalq resenziyalı ədəbiyyatı əhatə edir. Təhlil göstərir ki, Buryakov sahə arxeologiyası, numizmatika, tarixi topoqlrafiya və İran, Çin və ərəb mənbələrini birləşdirən kompleks və özünəməxsus interdisiplinar metod inkişaf etdirmişdir. Onun uzunmüddətli rəhbərliyi ilə həyata keçirilən Çaç-İlak (sonradan Çaç-Ustruşona) ekspedisiyası şəhərləşmə, mədəncilik tarixi və İpək Yolu üzrə əlaqələrə dair fundamental məlumatlar təqdim etmiş və 550-dən çox elmi əsərlə nəticələnmişdir. Buryakovun elmi irsi Sovet dövrü arxeoloji metodologiyası ilə müstəqillikdən sonrakı beynəlxalq əməkdaşlığa əsaslanan yeni elmi paradigma arasında keçid xarakterli mühüm mövqe tutur. Onun tədqiqatları müasir İpək Yolu və Mərkəzi Asiya şəhər arxeologiyası üçün həm metodoloji istinad nöqtəsi, həm də hələ tam araşdırılmamış mühüm elmi resurs olaraq qalır.

Açar sözlər: Buryakov, Özbək arxeologiyası, historiqlrafiya, Çaç-İlak, Daşkənd oazisi, maddi mədəniyyət, İpək Yolu, şəhər mədəniyyəti, Sovet arxeologiyası, postsovet elmi, Mərkəzi Asiya irsi

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Introduction

The history of any academic field is shaped not only by its theoretical frameworks but also by the scholars who define its development. Within Uzbek and Central Asian archaeology, Academician Yuriy Fyodorovich Buryakov (1934–2015) stands out as a figure of central importance. Over a career spanning more than fifty years, he authored over 550 publications, including more than ten major monographs, addressing topics such as ancient urbanism, Silk Road exchange networks, mining history, and the historical geography of the Tashkent oasis (Levtseyeva, 2011). In addition to his research, Buryakov played a key institutional role: he trained several generations of specialists, led international UNESCO initiatives, and remained an Academician of the Academy of Sciences of Uzbekistan until his death in Tashkent on 27 June 2015.

Despite the breadth and influence of his work, Buryakov has received comparatively little sustained attention in English-language scholarship. This is notable given the rapid expansion of international

research on Central Asian archaeology and the Silk Road in recent decades, including major studies of regional material culture (Frachetti et al., 2017; Franklin, 2024) and critical reassessments of Soviet archaeological traditions (Arzhantseva, 2015; Díaz-Andreu & Coltofean, 2024). Yet, these discussions seldom engage directly with the methodological approaches and empirical findings developed within Uzbekistan's own scholarly tradition. This omission is significant, as Buryakov's research informed the excavation and interpretation of key sites that continue to underpin broader debates on Silk Road urbanism and early state formation in Central Asia.

Research

This article addresses this gap through a historiographical analysis of Buryakov's contributions in two closely connected areas: archaeological fieldwork—particularly the Chach-Ilak/Chach-Ustrushona expeditions and the sites of Khanqa and Shakhrukhiya—and the study of material culture, including the classification, dating, and contextual interpretation of archaeological finds within wider historical and geographical frameworks. The discussion is organized both chronologically and thematically, situating each stage of Buryakov's work within the broader institutional and methodological development of Central Asian archaeology. It concludes by evaluating the continuing relevance of his scholarship and outlining directions for future research.

Rather than offering a purely biographical account, this study provides a critical historiographical assessment of Buryakov's legacy. It examines what was methodologically distinctive in his work, how his interpretations have been received and developed in subsequent scholarship, and why his contributions remain important for contemporary academic inquiry.

Theoretical and Methodological Framework

Historiographical research in archaeology rests on the understanding that knowledge is not simply accumulated over time but actively produced within specific contexts. It is shaped by institutional settings, theoretical orientations, political and national frameworks, and the individual trajectories of scholars themselves (Díaz-Andreu & Coltofean, 2024; Spengler et al., 2021). This perspective is especially relevant in the Soviet and post-Soviet context. As Arzhantseva (2015) has shown in her study of the Khorezmian Archaeological-Ethnographic Expedition, large-scale Soviet projects were driven by both scientific objectives and ideological imperatives. Their outcomes, therefore, require evaluation not only in terms of empirical contribution but also with regard to the conditions under which they were generated. Buryakov's career, spanning both the late Soviet and post-independence periods, provides a particularly valuable case for examining continuity and change in Central Asian archaeological scholarship.

This study draws on three main methodological approaches. First, a historical-historiographical analysis traces the evolution of Buryakov's scholarly work over time, highlighting shifts in research priorities, methods, and interpretive frameworks. Second, a comparative-historical approach situates his contributions within the broader field of Central Asian and Silk Road archaeology, identifying areas of convergence, divergence, and intellectual exchange. Third, critical source analysis is applied to both Buryakov's own writings and the secondary literature, with attention to the underlying assumptions that shape their arguments.

The source base includes Buryakov's ten major monographs, published reports from the Chach-Ilak and Chach-Ustrushona expeditions, the principal biographical study by L. G. Levteyeva (2011), entries from the *Bolshaya Rossiyskaya Entsiklopediya*, and a range of international peer-reviewed works on Central Asian archaeology, Soviet-era methodologies, and Silk Road studies. Chronologically, the study covers the entirety of Buryakov's academic career from 1956 to 2015.

Geographically, it focuses on the Tashkent oasis, the Akhangaran and Syr Darya valleys, and the broader urban network of the Central Asian segment of the Great Silk Road.

Intellectual Formation and Early Career (1951–1965)

Buryakov was born on 15 March 1934 in the village of Uchqo'rgon in the Osh Region of present-day Kyrgyzstan and moved to Tashkent, where he graduated from secondary school in 1951. That year he enrolled in the History Faculty of the Central Asian State University (now the National University of Uzbekistan named after Mirzo Ulugbek). The intellectual environment of this institution in the early 1950s was one of extraordinary scholarly density. Buryakov received instruction from M. Ye. Masson, one of the founding figures of Soviet Central Asian archaeology and a scholar whose commitment to interdisciplinary synthesis between archaeology, numismatics, and historical geography deeply influenced Buryakov's own later methodology. He also attended lectures by B. B. Piotrovskiy, O. D. Chekhovich, G. A. Pugachenkova, and Ye. K. Betger — scholars who collectively represented the leading edge of Soviet-era orientalist and art-historical research on Central Asia (Levteyeva, 2011).

This formative exposure to a tradition of broad, cross-disciplinary scholarship left a lasting imprint. Where many Soviet archaeologists of the period worked within the strict positivist and materialist framework of Marxist-Leninist historiography — cataloguing finds as evidence of socioeconomic stages — Buryakov developed a more integrative approach that combined material evidence with close reading of written sources. This orientation, arguably derived from the humanistic philological traditions represented by Chekhovich and Pugachenkova as well as from Masson's archaeological syntheses, was to prove distinctive throughout his career.

Following his graduation in 1956, Buryakov joined the Museum of the History of the Peoples of Uzbekistan (now the State Museum of History of Uzbekistan) as a junior research associate. Between 1956 and 1965 he rose through a series of positions to Deputy Director for Research. This museum environment provided direct engagement with the material culture of the region and reinforced his commitment to the integration of archaeological and historical evidence. From 1965 to 1967 he served as Chief Inspector of Monuments at the Ministry of Culture of the Uzbek SSR, a post that gave practical expression to his broader concern with heritage preservation — a concern that would manifest again in his 1969 archaeological supervision at Samarkand's Registan construction site, where his intervention led to the recovery of numerous artefacts that would otherwise have been destroyed (Levteyeva, 2011).

The Chach-Ilak and Chach-Ustrushona Expeditions: Methodology and Principal Findings

4.1 Establishment and Development of the Expedition

The most substantial institutional vehicle for Buryakov's fieldwork was the expedition he began directing in 1973, initially known as the Chach-Ilak expedition. According to Buryakov and Gritsina (2006, p. 94), the project attained formal expedition status in 1983 and was subsequently renamed the Chach-Ustrushona expedition in 1986, reflecting an expanded geographical scope. Over the following decades, this expedition served as the primary framework for systematic archaeological investigation of the ancient Tashkent oasis — a region that, despite its historical centrality to Central Asian civilisation, had received comparatively less intensive study than the more internationally prominent sites of Samarkand, Bukhara, and Termez.

The expedition's methodological approach was characteristic of the 'kompleksnost' (complex interdisciplinary approach) that distinguished the best Soviet-era archaeology, as described by Arzhantseva (2015) in her analysis of the Khorezmian Expedition. Stationary excavations were

combined with historical-topographic surveys, numismatic analysis, and the systematic correlation of material finds with Iranian, Chinese, and Arabic written sources. This integration of field data and documentary evidence was not merely supplementary but constitutive of Buryakov's interpretive method: he treated written sources and archaeological finds as mutually illuminating, using each to test and refine interpretations derived from the other.

4.2 Excavations at Khanqa: Historical Geography and the Kanguy Question

Among the most significant and debated outcomes of the Chach-Ilak expedition was Buryakov's investigation of the site of Khanqa, located approximately 70 km from Tashkent in the Akhangaran valley. The ruins of this site cover approximately 160 hectares and are believed to represent the first capital of the ancient Chach state. On the basis of his excavations and a systematic comparison of material finds with Chinese chronicle sources, Buryakov identified Khanqa with the city of Yu-ni mentioned in 2nd-century BC Chinese records as the capital of the Kanguy (Kangha) state — an ancient polity whose precise geographical extent has been a subject of considerable scholarly debate (Buryakov & Gritsina, 2006).

Buryakov's identification, if accepted, carries significant implications for the historical geography of early Central Asian state formation. The Kanguy state has been recognised in recent archaeological research as a significant actor in the networks of trade, culture, and political interaction that would eventually crystallise into the Silk Road system (cf. Frachetti et al., 2017, on the role of highland nomadic polities in shaping Silk Road geography). Buryakov's argument was that material culture evidence from the site — ceramics, coinage, settlement morphology — was consistent with the identification proposed through the written sources, offering a material dimension to what had previously been a primarily philological debate.

This identification has not been uniformly accepted. The question of where the capital of the Kanguy state was located remains under active scholarly discussion, and Buryakov's hypothesis represents one influential position within a debate that touches on fundamental questions of the relationship between Chinese historiographical traditions and Central Asian archaeological evidence. The critical reception of this aspect of his work exemplifies the broader challenge identified by Franklin (2024, p. 2) in Silk Road archaeology: the difficulty of reconciling "varied and intermittent connections" in the material record with the more linear narratives suggested by textual sources.

4.3 Shakhrukhiya and the Reconstruction of Urban Sequences

The site of Shakhrukhiya, investigated by Buryakov as a second major focus of the Chach-Ilak expedition, presented a different but complementary set of research problems. Located on the Syr Darya, Shakhrukhiya was one of the most strategically significant points along the northern section of the Silk Road, connecting the Tashkent oasis with the steppe zone and the trade networks of the inner Eurasian corridor. UNESCO heritage documentation confirms that the site, encompassing a citadel, two urban territories, and an extensive rabad (craft suburb), covered a total area of approximately 400 hectares, comparable in scale to major contemporaneous urban centres in the region (UNESCO, n.d.).

Buryakov's excavations at Shakhrukhiya focused on the recovery and interpretation of historical strata enabling the reconstruction of a multi-century developmental sequence. This diachronic approach — tracing the continuity and transformation of material culture from the site's early history through its destruction by Mongol forces, its reconstruction by Amir Temur, and its subsequent role in the Timurid and Shaybanid periods — exemplifies his broader commitment to understanding Central Asian urban culture as a process rather than a static condition. The methodological insistence on

stratigraphic continuity, and on the integration of architectural, ceramic, and numismatic evidence into a coherent chronological sequence, was formalised in his final monograph devoted to these two sites: *Khanqa and Shakhrukhiya: Ancient Cities of Chach and Ilak on the Great Silk Road* (Buryakov, 2011).

Material Culture Studies: Methodological Contributions

5.1 Urban Culture and the Systematisation of the Tashkent Oasis

Buryakov's contributions to material culture studies are most fully expressed in his monographic sequence on the Tashkent oasis. The 1973 collective volume *Archaeological Monuments of the Tashkent Region* (Buryakov, Qosimov, & Rostovtsev, 1973) provided the first systematic catalogue of archaeological sites in the region, establishing a baseline inventory that subsequent researchers could build upon. His 1975 monograph, *Historical Topography of the Ancient Cities of the Tashkent Oasis* (Buryakov, 1975), extended this work by reconstructing the historical-archaeological landscape of Chach and Ilak — demonstrating how the distribution and morphology of settlements reflected underlying patterns of resource availability, trade connectivity, and political organisation.

The most theoretically ambitious of these studies is the 1982 monograph *Genesis and Stages of Development of Urban Culture of the Tashkent Oasis* (Buryakov, 1982), which represents Buryakov's most sustained attempt at a synthetic interpretation of the region's archaeological record. Rather than treating urbanisation as a simple process of demographic growth or economic development, Buryakov conceptualised it as a multifactorial phenomenon shaped by the interaction of sedentary and nomadic lifeways, the exploitation of natural resources (particularly metals), the articulation of local production networks with long-distance trade, and the role of political authority in organising and protecting commercial activity. This framework anticipates several themes that have subsequently become central to international Silk Road archaeology, including the work of Frachetti et al. (2017) on the role of nomadic polities in shaping highland Silk Road geography.

5.2 Mining History and Metallurgy as Archaeological Evidence

A particularly original dimension of Buryakov's material culture research was his systematic archaeological investigation of ancient mining and metallurgy in the Chach-Ilak region. Working from the spatial distribution of settlement patterns, the compositional analysis of metal artefacts, and the identification of ore deposits and slag deposits through archaeological survey, he developed an integrated account of how the exploitation of copper, iron, and precious metal resources shaped the development of urban and craft centres in the Tashkent oasis (Buryakov, 1982; Buryakov & Gritsina, 2006). This approach — treating mining and metallurgy not merely as technological history but as a structural factor in urbanisation and trade network formation — was methodologically innovative within the Central Asian archaeological tradition of the period.

The implications of this work extend beyond the Tashkent oasis. By demonstrating the close spatial and economic relationship between mining centres and the network of cities and trade routes, Buryakov contributed to a broader reinterpretation of the economic foundations of Silk Road connectivity — one that emphasised the role of resource extraction alongside the conventional emphasis on luxury goods exchange. This has parallels with more recent archaeobotanical and archaeometallurgical research that has highlighted the diversity of commodities and production networks that sustained Silk Road urbanism (cf. Spengler et al., 2018, on arboreal crops at Tashbulak).

International Collaboration, Scholarly Influence, and the Post-Soviet Transition

From the late Soviet period onward, Buryakov actively sought to position Uzbek archaeology within a broader international scholarly framework. His leadership of the UNESCO “Great Silk Road — Road of Dialogue” programme at the Institute of Archaeology of the Academy of Sciences of Uzbekistan reflected a sustained institutional commitment to international collaboration. Initiated in the early 1990s as part of UNESCO’s wider Silk Road initiative, the programme created opportunities for Soviet-trained Uzbek archaeologists to engage with colleagues from China, Korea, Europe, and other regions at a time when the collapse of the Soviet Union was placing considerable strain on research infrastructure and funding across Central Asia.

The co-authored monograph *Transoxiana on the Great Silk Road* (Buryakov & Gritsina, 2006) exemplifies the internationally oriented synthesis that characterized Buryakov’s work during this period. By situating the material culture of the Tashkent oasis and the wider Maverannakhr region within the context of Eurasian exchange networks, the study aligned with research priorities that had gained prominence in global scholarship after the end of the Cold War. Through his participation in international conferences and the development of collaborative networks across Central Asia, China, and Europe, Buryakov emerged as an important intermediary linking the Uzbek archaeological tradition with the expanding field of Silk Road studies.

His research on the history of chess further broadened this international engagement. Drawing on chess pieces uncovered at Afrasiab, Buryakov argued that cities such as Samarkand, Bukhara, Termez, and Tashkent functioned as key nodes in the westward transmission of chess from its South Asian origins. This line of inquiry extended his influence beyond archaeology, contributing to wider cultural-historical discussions within Silk Road studies.

An equally significant aspect of Buryakov’s legacy is the formation of his scholarly school. As noted by Levteyeva (2011), he supervised and trained numerous researchers, transmitting his methodological approaches through both formal teaching and collaborative fieldwork. Fully assessing the scope of this influence would require a systematic study of citation networks and intellectual lineages within Uzbek archaeology—an undertaking beyond the scope of this article, but one that represents a valuable direction for future historiographical research.

Critical Assessment: Methodological Significance and Scholarly Debates

7.1 Methodological Contributions in Historiographical Perspective

Evaluated against the broader context of Soviet and post-Soviet Central Asian archaeological practice, Buryakov’s most significant methodological contribution was the consistent and systematic application of an interdisciplinary approach that treated material evidence and written sources as equally valid and mutually enriching. This approach, which he applied across more than five decades of fieldwork and publication, amounted to a coherent research programme rather than a series of isolated projects. The integration of numismatics, toponymy, historical topography, and comparative textual analysis with field archaeology enabled him to address historical and geographical questions — including questions of state formation, urbanisation, and trade connectivity — that could not have been resolved through any single disciplinary tradition alone.

This interdisciplinary orientation connects Buryakov’s practice to what Díaz-Andreu and Coltofean (2024) have identified as the most durable traditions in the history of archaeological thought: those that refuse the disciplinary boundaries that artificially separate material culture from documentary history, or local evidence from regional and inter-regional context. It also anticipates what Franklin (2024, pp. 1–2) has described as the central challenge of contemporary Silk Road archaeology: the

need to develop analytical frameworks adequate to 'the shared challenges confronted by Silk Road archaeologists' in working across landscape, material culture, and textual scales simultaneously.

7.2 The Khanqa-Kanguy Identification: A Case Study in Interpretive Debate

The most contested element of Buryakov's work — his identification of Khanqa with the capital of the Kanguy state mentioned in Chinese chronicles — illustrates both the ambition and the methodological risks of his approach. The interpretation rests on a convergence of archaeological evidence (settlement scale, material culture, spatial location) and Chinese textual data, mediated by Buryakov's reading of the relevant historical sources. While this synthesis is methodologically coherent, the identification cannot be verified without additional corroborating evidence, and the interpretation of the relevant Chinese sources has itself been subject to scholarly disagreement.

The debate around the Khanqa identification is representative of a broader challenge in Central Asian historical archaeology: the difficulty of establishing firm correspondences between archaeological sites and the polities and cities named in historical sources, given the fragmentary and often contradictory character of both the archaeological and the textual record. This challenge is not unique to Buryakov's work — it is, as Lewis (2020) notes, a constitutive feature of the historiography of the Silk Road — but it does mean that some of his most ambitious historical-geographical conclusions must be held with appropriate scholarly caution. The continuing scholarly debate around the Kanguy question is itself a measure of the significance of Buryakov's contribution: a claim that did not engage with real evidence would not merit sustained scholarly discussion.

7.3 Soviet Context and Post-Soviet Reassessment

Buryakov's career began and was largely shaped within the institutional and ideological framework of Soviet archaeology — a framework that, as Arzhantseva (2015) and Spengler et al. (2021) have shown, combined genuine scientific ambition with ideological constraint and the imperatives of Soviet nationalities policy. Buryakov's work on the Tashkent oasis was shaped by the broader Soviet project of documenting and celebrating the achievements of Central Asian civilisation as part of a historical legitimisation of Soviet Central Asia. This context does not invalidate his empirical findings, but it does require that historians of archaeology attend to the ways in which the questions he asked, and the frameworks within which he interpreted his answers, were shaped by conditions that are not simply reducible to the logic of scientific inquiry.

The transition from Soviet to post-Soviet archaeology in Uzbekistan is a significant area of scholarly inquiry in its own right, and Buryakov's career — which spanned both periods — offers a valuable case study. His participation in UNESCO programmes and international collaborative research from the early 1990s onward suggests an active engagement with the opportunities and challenges of the post-independence moment, including the search for new international partnerships to compensate for the collapse of Soviet-era funding and infrastructure. A fuller account of this transition, drawing on archival sources and oral history alongside published scholarship, would substantially enrich the historiographical picture that the present analysis has sought to outline.

Principal Monographic Contributions: An Annotated Overview

The following overview identifies Buryakov's most significant monographs, situating each within the trajectory of his research career and noting its principal scholarly contribution:

1. Archaeological Monuments of the Tashkent Region (Buryakov, Qosimov, & Rostovtsev, 1973). The first systematic catalogue of the region's archaeological sites. Provided the empirical baseline for all subsequent work on the Tashkent oasis.

2. Historical Topography of the Ancient Cities of the Tashkent Oasis (Buryakov, 1975). Reconstructed the historical-archaeological landscape of Chach and Ilak through the integration of topographic survey, settlement analysis, and historical sources.

3. Along the Ancient Caravan Routes of the Tashkent Oasis (Buryakov, 1978). Synthesised archaeological and documentary evidence for the trade network of the Tashkent oasis, establishing a methodology for integrating material and textual sources in Silk Road research.

4. Genesis and Stages of Development of Urban Culture of the Tashkent Oasis (Buryakov, 1982). The most theoretically ambitious monograph. Proposed a multifactorial model of urbanisation integrating settlement patterns, resource extraction, trade networks, and political organisation.

5. Transoxiana on the Great Silk Road (Buryakov & Gritsina, 2006). A jointly authored international synthesis situating the Tashkent oasis within the Silk Road's Maverannakhr section. Represented Buryakov's most explicitly internationally oriented publication.

6. Khanqa and Shakhrukhiya: Ancient Cities of Chach and Ilak on the Great Silk Road (Buryakov, 2011). The culminating monograph on the two principal excavation sites. Summarised the results of four decades of fieldwork and offered Buryakov's definitive historical-geographical interpretation of the sites.

Conclusion

The scholarly legacy of Academician Yuriy Fyodorovich Buryakov in the fields of archaeological excavation and material culture studies represents a foundational contribution to the development of Uzbek and Central Asian archaeology. His long-term leadership of the Chach-Ilak and Chach-Ustrushona expeditions generated a substantial and systematic body of empirical data on the Tashkent oasis—one that remains unsurpassed and continues to underpin ongoing research in the region. His methodological emphasis on integrating field archaeology with numismatics, historical topography, and comparative documentary evidence endowed his interpretations with a scope and resilience that extend beyond the limits of any single disciplinary framework.

Placing Buryakov's work within the wider context of Central Asian and Silk Road archaeology highlights both its significance and the conditions under which it was produced. His research was shaped—while at times also constrained—by the institutional and ideological structures of Soviet scholarship. At the same time, his post-independence involvement in international programmes and collaborative projects constitutes an important, though still insufficiently examined, dimension of his career. The debate surrounding his identification of Khanqa as the capital of the Kanguy state exemplifies both the interpretive ambition of his scholarship and the critical scrutiny it continues to invite.

For contemporary researchers, Buryakov's legacy functions simultaneously as a resource and a provocation. His monographs provide exceptionally rich empirical material from a region that remains only partially explored archaeologically. At the same time, they call for sustained critical engagement: situating his conclusions within broader methodological debates, reassessing his historical-geographical interpretations, and tracing his influence on subsequent generations of Uzbek scholarship. A more systematic incorporation of his work into English-language academic discourse would significantly enhance both the historiography of Central Asian archaeology and the wider field of Silk Road studies.

Future research would benefit from three main directions: first, a comprehensive bibliometric and citation-based assessment of Buryakov's scholarly impact; second, a critical re-evaluation of his key historical-geographical hypotheses—particularly the identification of Khanqa with Kanguy—in light of recent archaeological and philological evidence; and third, a broader investigation of the transition

from Soviet to post-Soviet archaeological practice in Uzbekistan, for which Buryakov's career provides a particularly well-documented and analytically valuable case.

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