

**THE ROLE OF YAHYO GULOMOV IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF  
ARCHAEOLOGY IN UZBEKISTAN**

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**Annotation**

This article highlights the role of academician Yahyo G‘ulomov in the development of archaeology in Uzbekistan. Following independence, the preservation of cultural heritage and its scientific study became one of the key tasks in the process of understanding national identity. In this context, Yahyo G‘ulomov’s long-standing scientific activity and his research in fields such as archaeology, ethnography, historiography, and the history of irrigation are of particular importance. Under his leadership, archaeological expeditions were conducted in various regions of Uzbekistan, resulting in the discovery of ancient monuments, cultural layers, dolmens, burial structures (saganas), and sites inhabited by prehistoric people. Especially noteworthy are the findings of the Afrasiab Palace and his initiatives to preserve them, as well as the establishment of a conservation laboratory in the republic, which was a significant advancement for science. This article demonstrates how G‘ulomov’s scientific legacy contributes to the younger generation’s deeper understanding and appreciation of our history.

**Keywords:** Yahyo Ghulomov, Archaeology of Uzbekistan, Cultural heritage, Ancient monuments, Archaeological research, Dolmen, Burial structure (or sagana if keeping original term with explanation), Afrasiab Palace, Conservation, Historical findings, Ustrushana, Scientific expeditions, National identity, Historiography, Ethnography

**INTRODUCTION**

From the very first days of gaining independence, scholars and researchers living and working in Uzbekistan have taken it upon themselves to preserve the spiritual and cultural heritage of the Uzbek people and to pass it on to future generations, thereby contributing to national unity and self-awareness. Today, significant work is being carried out in various branches of our science. In particular, when we consider the efforts made in the field of archaeology, it is clear that this science plays a unique role in rediscovering and studying the invaluable treasures of our

ancient history, revealing that our country possesses a rich legacy of historical artifacts.

Indeed, as our President I.A. Karimov once emphasized: “For many centuries, the land of ancient Uzbekistan has served as a center of science and enlightenment, one of the cradles of world civilization. The pursuit of knowledge and enlightenment has become an integral part of our national mentality.” In support of these words, we can cite the example of the beloved son of the Uzbek people, academician Yahyo G‘ulomovich G‘ulomov.

## **MATERIAL AND METHODS**

Yahyo G‘ulomovich G‘ulomov was a talented researcher and an organizer of science, known for his initiative and dedication. Over the course of more than 40 years of scientific and scholarly activity, he accumulated encyclopedic knowledge in various fields of historical studies—archaeology, ethnography, Oriental studies, historiography, ancient architecture, historical geography, the history of irrigation, and more. He actively disseminated this knowledge among colleagues, students, and the wider public.

The renowned specialist in the ancient culture of human society, academician B. Piotrovsky, spoke about Yahyo G‘ulomov with high regard: “The name Yahyo G‘ulomovich G‘ulomov is well-known both in our country and abroad as a prominent expert in the history and archaeology of Uzbekistan. His many years of encyclopedic research in the field of studying the history of irrigation—an essential foundation of economic life in Central Asia—are considered an unprecedented achievement in science,” he said, offering high praise for the scholar’s scientific work.

Throughout his life and academic career, academician Yahyo G‘ulomov studied sources related to the material and spiritual culture of the Uzbek people, transforming them into national heritage. He led efforts to preserve such rare ancient artifacts for future generations.

During his speech at the celebration of the 2750th anniversary of Samarkand, the President of our country, I. A. Karimov, spoke about the scholar with these words: **“Historians know well that historical monuments, even the remnants of entire ancient cities, are often buried beneath mounds. During the Soviet era, at a time when cotton was planted on every piece of land except rooftops, this senseless policy even went as far as leveling such ancient mounds to turn**

**them into cotton fields. I clearly remember that the courageous scholar Yahyo G‘ulomov opposed such irrational actions.”**

Among Yahyo G‘ulomov’s earliest scholarly research, several archaeological investigations conducted in the region of Ustrushana hold special significance. For example, one of the main goals of the archaeological expedition in the autumn of 1956 was to study several ancient monuments in the Jizzakh oasis. As a cultural region, the Jizzakh oasis served as a vital economic and strategic node between ancient Ustrushana and Sogdiana, with the Nurata mountain range acting as an impenetrable northern border of the Zarafshan valley's cultural territory. [3, p. 92] The eastern branch of the Nurata mountain range separates the Jizzakh oasis from southern Kazakhstan in the north. On the western side of this range lies the Qulpi-Sar cemetery, which is located along the bank of a stream locally known as Qilli Soy. During the exploration of the Qulpi-Sar cemetery, the scholar identified the site as part of a system of *rabats* (roadside inns or outposts), which were constructed every 30 kilometers along the Otrar–Nurata route in the 9th–10th centuries. He concluded that this site was one of those *rabats*. South of the Qulpi-Sar *rabat*, a tomb-shaped grave, 18 meters in length, was discovered. He noted that similar tomb-like mausoleums exist at the site of Afrasiyab in Khwaja Daniyal, at Mozor-Qishloq in Nurata, and in Dekhi-Baland of Shahimardan.

About 100–120 meters east of the mausoleum, in the area between the grave and the cemetery, a *dolmen* was discovered—marking the first time such a structure was found in Central Asia. The scholar remarked that similar dolmens were known in Western Europe. He determined that the dolmen was a burial structure from the Bronze Age, dating back approximately 2000 years before the advent of Islam.

During his return from the 1956 Mohondarya expedition, the scholar also studied the petroglyphs (rock carvings) located 18 kilometers south of Jizzakh city, at Takalisoy, concluding that humans had inhabited the area since the Stone Age. Another significant study in the Ustrushana region in 1957 was the exploration of an ancient fortification in the village of Khayrobod, Jizzakh province—specifically the remains of the *Kanpirdewar*. In 1957, archaeologist A. R. Muhammadjonov conducted a more in-depth investigation of the site. The study revealed that the remnants of this wall stretched from the Sipanchiqtepa area to the fortress mound of Qo‘rg‘ontepa in Rabot village, covering a distance of 20 kilometers, and were well preserved. [4, p. 52]

Yahyo G‘ulomov led numerous archaeological expeditions. These included the discovery of the Neolithic site of Darvozaqir and the Zamonbobo cemetery; the study of Stone Age monuments in the Zarafshan and Kashkadarya basins; the finding of a pre-Islamic dolmen sacrificial site on the northwestern edge of the Jizzakh oasis; the identification of Paleolithic, Mesolithic, and Neolithic monuments in the Tashkent oasis such as Obi-Rahmat; and the discovery of the famous Buddhist temple of Quva. All these major discoveries are associated with Yahyo G‘ulomov’s name.

During this period, academician Yahyo G‘ulomov gained significant recognition in the academic community for his extensive research and earned much praise. He also played a key role in introducing natural science methods into archaeological research in Uzbekistan. Thanks to these efforts, valuable finds could be restored and preserved.

Notably, in 1965, the magnificent palace of Varxuman, a ruler of early medieval Samarkand, was uncovered at the Afrasiyab site. The palace walls were adorned with unique, colorful paintings. However, there was a shortage of skilled restorers and art historians in the republic capable of preserving these precious discoveries at a high professional level.

The uncovering of the archaeological finds was delayed for a certain period. On the initiative of Yahyo G‘ulomov, in 1966, a Laboratory for Chemical-Technological Research and Conservation was established under the Institute of History and Archaeology of the Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Uzbekistan. Today, this laboratory has become a department of the Archaeology Institute of the Academy of Sciences of Uzbekistan, now named after Yahyo G‘ulomov.

Thanks to the chemical restoration methods developed by the scholars of this department, many art monuments were preserved, including masterpieces of world culture such as the wall paintings of Afrasiyab, Varakhsha, Zartepa, Tavka, and Jartepa, as well as the sculptures of Sopollitepa and Kuyovqo‘rg‘on, and various examples of written culture. These have all become part of our nation's cultural heritage. [5, p. 11]

In addition to stone tools, a rich collection of fauna material was gathered at this site, and paleo-botanical and lithological-facies research was also carried out (including the study of animal and bird remains). In the cultural layers, human shoulder bones and teeth (anthropological remains) were discovered. As a result of the studies initiated under the leadership of Yahyo G‘ulomov in the 1950s–60s

on the earliest historical periods, scholars concluded that the territory of Uzbekistan had been a habitat for primitive humans since the ancient Stone Age. Today, the scientific works of Yahyo G‘ulomov open up golden pages in the history, archaeology, and ethnography of Uzbekistan. They instill in the younger generation a deep respect and pride in their own history and national heritage, encouraging them to study it and to pass it on to future generations.

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