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**REPORT ON ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING AND FIELD
RESEARCH CONDUCTED AT THE SITE OF THE PLANNED
"NEW TASHKENT INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT"
CONSTRUCTION PROJECT IN THE ORTA CHIRCHIQ
DISTRICT OF TASHKENT REGION**

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION	7
2. HISTORY OF RESEARCH ON SITES LOCATED IN THE ORTA CHIRCHIQ AREA	9
3. RESEARCH CONDUCTED IN THE ORTA CHIRCHIQ AREA (TERRITORY DESIGNATED FOR THE AIRPORT)	13
4. CONCLUSION	47
5. LIST OF SOURCES USED	48

ABSTRACT

This report consists of 48 pages and includes 105 illustrative materials, including 96 photographs.

Keywords: Tashkent oasis, Orta Chirchiq area, archaeological research, no separate structural archaeological objects identified, identified materials are scattered and secondary in nature, material culture, archaeological map, Elliboytepa, stratigraphic excavation, cultural layer, ceramic fragments.

This scientific report is dedicated to the results of field observations and limited-scale excavations carried out in April 2026 by the scientific staff of the Institute of Anthropology (National Centre of Archaeology) of the Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Uzbekistan in the area allocated for the construction of the New Tashkent International Airport, located in the Orta Chirchiq and Quyi Chirchiq districts of Tashkent Region.

During the research, operations consisted of inspecting identified sectors within the area allocated for the New Tashkent International Airport, conducting limited excavations, studying their topographic characteristics, and examining new objects through survey-reconnaissance methods.

Fieldwork was conducted in April 2026 across four provisionally designated sectors within the territory. Initially, archaeologists conducted visual survey-reconnaissance and track (walking) studies using the "Locus map" mobile application. These surveys covered all parts of the project area. As a result, no additional or new sectors beyond the pre-designated ones were identified.

The provisionally designated sectors within the specified territory were labeled based on the Latin alphabet as Sector A, Sector B, Sector D, and Sector E. Archaeological excavations were conducted at specific coordinates within these sectors. During the research, the project territory was fully covered, and the surface and sub-surface layers were assessed both visually and stratigraphically. Consequently, no systematic, unified, or scientifically significant archaeological objects were identified in the territory.

The documented materials mainly consist of scattered and fragmented ceramic shards located in mixed and disturbed layers, bearing a secondary character. With the sole exception of the Elliboytepa mound, located at a distance of 680–700 m north of the project area, the conducted investigations demonstrated that the archaeological potential of the project territory is low.

DEFINITIONS

Tashkent Oasis – A historical-geographic region located in northeastern Uzbekistan, characterized since ancient times by irrigated agriculture, urban culture, and an abundance of archaeological sites.

Orta Chirchiq Area – A region situated along the middle course of the Chirchiq River, which has been inhabited since ancient times and where numerous archaeological sites have been identified.

Archaeological Sites – Material remnants reflecting past human activity (settlements, cemeteries, mounds, structures) that serve as crucial sources for historical study.

Archaeological Excavation – The process of scientifically uncovering and studying historical-cultural layers preserved underground.

Chirchiq River Basin – The primary water system of the Tashkent Oasis, which played a critical role in the development of agriculture and urban culture in ancient times.

Stratigraphic Excavation – An archaeological research method aimed at identifying historical periods by studying soil layers in sequential order.

Cultural Layer – A soil layer formed as a result of human activity containing various archaeological finds.

Bedrock Layer (Materik) – The lowest, natural soil layer untouched by human activity or archaeological deposits.

Ceramic Fragments (Shards) – Broken pieces of ancient vessels, through which chronological periods, culture, and economic activities are determined.

Glazed Ceramics – Ceramic items whose surface is covered with a special glaze, typically characteristic of the Medieval period.

Pakhsa Wall – A type of ancient wall built of densely compacted clay, widely utilized in Central Asian architecture.

Elliboytepa – An archaeological mound site located in the Orta Chirchiq region, surrounded by a thick circular defensive wall and recorded as an ancient settlement.

ABBREVIATIONS OF SCIENTIFIC PUBLICATIONS

IMKU – Istoriya Material'noy Kul'tury Uzbekistana (History of Material Culture of Uzbekistan)

1. INTRODUCTION

The Tashkent Oasis holds a distinctive position in the development of world civilization as one of the most ancient and rich historical-cultural regions of Central Asia. The geopolitical positioning, natural-geographic conditions, and favorable opportunities for human settlement since antiquity converted this region into one of the earliest cultural centers. The international celebration of the 2200th anniversary of the city of Tashkent in 2009 further reconfirmed that the oasis possesses profound historical roots.

As a result of archaeological research conducted in the Tashkent Oasis from the end of the 19th century to the present day, essential scientific data concerning the historical stages of the region from the Stone Age down to the Antiquity have been accumulated. While initial archaeological investigations relied heavily on accidental discoveries and casual observations, subsequent systematic excavations, stratigraphic analyses, and the implementation of advanced scientific methods enabled a deep study of the material culture of the oasis.

Consequently, significant conclusions have been drawn regarding the ancient population's lifestyle, economic activities, religious beliefs, and cultural relations. Particularly during the years of independence, the study of historical heritage within the territory of Uzbekistan was elevated to the status of state policy, and specialized attention was dedicated to archaeological research. The integration of modern technologies and new methodological approaches in scientific investigations expanded the possibilities for clarifying issues that were previously poorly understood or insufficiently illuminated.

Specifically, through the comprehensive study of sites belonging to the Paleolithic, Mesolithic, Neolithic, and Bronze Ages of the Tashkent Oasis, the civilizational development stages of the region are being systematically reconstructed. Simultaneously, the scientific analysis of the archaeological sites discovered in the oasis is of high importance not only for local history but also for global historical studies. This is due to the fact that the Tashkent Oasis has historically been located at the crossroads of cultural and trade routes connecting East and West, reflecting the processes of interaction between diverse civilizations. In this regard, the archaeological investigation

of this region remains one of the current directives of historical science and is expected to yield new scientific outcomes in the future.

Nevertheless, the specific investigations carried out within the parameters of the project territory indicated that scientifically significant and integrated archaeological objects do not exist across this area.

MAIN BODY

CHAPTER I. HISTORY OF RESEARCH ON SITES LOCATED IN THE ORTA CHIRCHIQ AREA

Written sources from the 10th century provide data indicating the existence of nearly 50 cities in Shosh and Ilaq. Among these, 17 are mentioned as cities of Ilaq, and the remainder as cities of Shosh. The territory of the Ilaq estate currently encompasses such districts and cities of Tashkent Region as Ohangaron, Orta Chirchiq, Bo'ka, Angren, Nurafshon, Piskent, and Olmaliq.

The archaeological investigation of the Tashkent Oasis commenced in the second half of the 19th century. Beginning from the late 1860s, representatives of various professions, including artists, educators, and local historians who arrived in the region, conducted historical and cultural research along the Ohangaron Valley. Their efforts were principally focused on identifying historical monuments and archaeological sites and collecting information about them. In executing this process, individuals such as D. Gramenitskiy, local historian D. Zatsepin, N. Pandusov, archaeologist N. Veselovskiy, geologist I. Mushketov, artist V. Vereshagin, as well as members of the "Turkestan Circle of Archaeology Amateurs" including N. Likoshin, Y. Smirnov, N. Ostroumov, N. Mallitskiy, A. Divayev, M. Andreyev, and others showed great dedication. In these initial phases of research, archaeological materials were gathered and descriptions of some were provided.

In the late 1920s, M.E. Masson conducted specialized research within the territory of the To'ytepa village. During this period, archaeological investigations in the region were pursued by M.E. Masson, T. Mirg'iyosov, and others. The earliest archaeological excavations in close proximity to the current area were performed in 1928 by M.E. Masson around the city of Nurafshon (To'ytepa). As a result of these investigations, a large monument stone (balbal) featuring an engraved depiction of a man was discovered in one of the uncovered burial vaults (dahma). It was hypothesized by M.E. Masson that another site, Ulkanto'ytepa, might represent the ruins of the medieval city of Nukat mentioned in historical sources.

Archaeological research in territories close to the project area was also conducted in 1934–1935 by G.V. Grigorev. The excavations were executed at the site of Qovunchitepa, situated on the left bank of the Qoraquldoq stream within the current city of Yangiyo'l. At this site, two cultural phases of the Qovunchi culture, typical for the Tashkent Oasis and dating to the end of the Late Bronze Age (the end of the 2nd millennium BC to the middle of the 1st millennium BC), were identified.

Subsequent research was carried out in the 1940s during the construction of the Tashkent Canal, adjacent to the project area, under the leadership of A.I. Trenojskin. He conducted archaeological excavations in Burg'ulliqsoy,

within the territory of the Tuyabo'g'iz Reservoir, and identified the Burg'ulik culture, which is distinct from the Qovunchi culture. In 1971–1972, V.I. Sprishevskiy also conducted research in this area, discovering numerous settlements belonging to this culture.

In the 1950s and 1960s, a portion of the archaeological research conducted by a team consisting of staff from the Institute of History and Archaeology of the Academy of Sciences of the Uzbek SSR and the Museum of History of the Peoples of Uzbekistan, led by Yu.F. Buryakov, was also carried out around the project area. The research by this archaeologist continued into the 1970s and 1980s. As a result of these investigations, the "Archaeological Map of Tashkent Region" was compiled by Yu.F. Buryakov in 1973.

In the 1970s, the localized descriptions of archaeological sites situated in the Tashkent Oasis were provided. At present, the names of the places where these sites are located have changed, and due to a sharp population increase in the oasis, some have been almost entirely absorbed or destroyed. New modern settlements have emerged in their place. In 1977, investigations concerning the study of archaeological sites of the Tashkent Oasis were carried out along the middle and lower courses of the Chirchiq River (in the Yangiyo'l and Chinoz districts). As a result of inspections and research in these areas, 12 new sites were identified¹.

Based on the natural-geographic conditions, soil, and climate characteristics of the oasis, Yu.F. Buryakov proposed dividing the regional system into four districts². These are as follows: a) the basin of the Chirchiq and Keles rivers; b) the extensive foothill regions between the rivers; v) the basin of the Ohangaron River; g) the plains on the right bank of the Syr Darya. In turn, each of these regions was divided into local areas and small oases concentrated within separate water systems. The history of the study of archaeological and cultural heritage sites in the Tashkent Oasis spans at least a century. However, the first archaeologist to approach the sites of the entire oasis within a unified framework as a scientific problem was Yu.F. Buryakov. Subsequently, through research conducted by O.M. Rostovtsev, M.R. Qosimov, and other specialists, a series of new sites was discovered and introduced into scientific discourse.

In the Medieval period, the basin of the Chirchiq (Parak, Farak, Turk) River was considered the core of Choch. Agricultural oases and urban culture in Choch developed principally along this daryo and its tributaries. Numerous items of material and cultural heritage confirming this fact have been identified. Based on natural-geographic and ecological factors, the sites in the Chirchiq River basin are provisionally divided into the following 8 parts: 1. Sites in the Piskom Valley; 2. Sites in the Chatkal Valley; 3. Sites along the upper course of the Chirchiq River; 4. Sites on the right bank of the middle course of the Chirchiq River; 5. Sites on the left bank of the middle course of the Chirchiq River; 6. Sites in Tashkent city and its environs; 7. Sites on the left bank of the lower course of the Chirchiq River; 8. Sites on the right bank of the lower course of the Chirchiq River³.

In recent years, archaeological field exploration and site registration works have been conducted by D. Normurodov. As a result of these research efforts, numerous additional sites were identified, and the archaeological site map was expanded.

The Project Area and Its Immediate Environs

Within the coordinates of the planned project territory, there are currently four points containing the sites of unidentified sectors (mounds). Located outside the project area, 680–700 m to the north at the coordinate point 41°6'45.26"N, 69°13'13.01"E, there is a mound surrounded by a thick circular wall, which was recorded as an archaeological site under the name "Elliboytepa"⁴ by A.A. Potapov in 1929. This mound was subsequently designated with number 381 on the Map of Archaeological Sites of Tashkent Region developed by D. Normurodov⁵. Elliboytepa is situated between the Chirchiq and Qorasuv rivers, 2 km southwest of Chingiltepa, and is a material cultural heritage object currently included in the cultural heritage registry.

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CHAPTER II. RESEARCH CONDUCTED IN THE TERRITORY DESIGNATED FOR THE AIRPORT

In the territory allocated for the construction of the New Tashkent International Airport, visual inspection works were initially carried out by specialist archaeologists in accordance with international standards for conducting archaeological research. In this process, the researchers conducted survey-reconnaissance investigations via tracks (paths, trajectories) using the "Locus map" software tool. Initially, 8 researchers, having downloaded the mobile application, performed visual inspection of the area starting from the southwestern corner of the project territory, moving in a zigzag (parallel) pattern every 100 meters. This study covered the entirety of the specified territory. As a result of the visual archaeological surveys, no material cultural heritage objects or archaeological artifacts were identified on the surface of the project area.

To determine the presence or absence of cultural layers and material cultural artifacts in the four unidentified sectors marked within the area allocated for the airport construction, archaeological excavation operations were conducted. These sectors were provisionally designated using letters of the Latin alphabet as Sector A, Sector B, Sector D, and Sector E.

Excavation Works

Initial investigations commenced with the study of Sector A, located near the central part of the project territory. The total preserved area of the object is 0.85 ha. Judging by the inscriptions on the tombstones placed over the graves, burials were made there until the 1930s and 1940s of the last century. The total height of the mound from the ground level is 2 m, and almost 85% of it is occupied by graves dating approximately from the late

19th century to the first quarter of the 20th century, with an estimated depth of 1.30–1.50 m. However, determining the initial period when burials began to be placed here is difficult. In the center of the mound, a trench was excavated in a triangular form with a length of 9 m, a width of 4 m at the top, and narrowing to 0.5 m at the bottom. To verify the presence or absence of a cultural layer and archaeological artifacts on the mound, 2 exploratory trial pits (shurfs) were sunk. Shurf 1 was excavated in the northern part of the central trench, and Shurf 2 was dug in its northeastern section.

Shurf 1: An area of 3x2 m was allocated, and a stratigraphic excavation in the form of a cross-section was performed. It was excavated from the upper horizon down to the bedrock layer (materik) to a depth of 140 cm. The topmost 15–20 cm consisting of the "turf layer" was removed. Small quantities of ceramic fragments were observed within its composition. The subsequent second layer was lowered down by 30 cm. Based on the loose consistency of the soil, this was designated as a "mixed layer". Within the soil removed from this layer, alongside modern plant roots, small stones and small, fragmented glazed and unglazed ceramic shards were recorded; their presence bears a secondary character. Below this layer, a compacted soil layer was observed, the origin of which may be natural or associated with later activity. Due to the high moisture content of the soil, separating distinct layers associated with structural phases proved difficult in this excavation. Leaving the "compacted soil layer" cleared, digging continued on the eastern side of the excavation down to the bedrock layer to a depth of 95 cm. The initial 30 cm of "loose soil" formed a continuation of the second mixed layer. Plant roots and small ceramic fragments were identified within the soil composition. In the subsequent 50 cm "light brown layer", small quantities of ceramic fragments, small stones, and plant roots were also found. Further down, a fourth layer consisting of a 15 cm light brown "bedrock layer" was identified. No content was detected within its soil composition. The ceramic remnants from Shurf 1 consist of shards of blue, green, and cream-colored glazed vessels, including the remains of a handle-shaped lamp and fragments of bowl walls with wavy-line ornaments on the rim, along with various remnants of thick and thin unglazed vessels. Geometrical decorations are present on the surface of the unglazed shards.

Shurf 2: This was executed on the northeastern side of the sector with dimensions of 2x1 m and a depth of 115 cm. The initial 10 cm "upper turf layer" was removed. Modern plant roots and organic remnants are present in the soil. No ceramic shards were detected at this stage. From the second, darkish-colored layer measuring 30–35 cm, small and fragmented glazed and unglazed ceramic pieces were recorded, their origin being secondary. The soil composition consists of organic remnants, roots, and a minor volume of stones. The third "yellowish layer" measured 40 cm; the soil exhibits medium density and high moisture, with no structural indications encountered. Minor quantities of glazed and unglazed ceramic fragments were identified within the soil of this layer. The fourth layer consists of a 30 cm yellowish bedrock layer. No material or cultural artifacts were detected within its composition. The ceramic finds from Shurf 2 comprise fragments with black ornamentation over a blue or green glaze, as well as shards of thick and thin unglazed ceramic vessels. No structural indications associated with construction phases were observed in this trial pit.

Sector B: The total area of this object is 0.26 ha. Outwardly, it appears to have been formed by natural processes or as a result of subsequent agricultural activities. On its southern side, a trial pit measuring 2x1 m with a depth of 125 cm was sunk. The upper 10 cm constitutes the turf layer. The second layer was identified as a 20 cm grey soil layer. Organic remnants, plant roots, and small stones emerged within the soil composition. The third

layer was a 50–55 cm darkish soil layer containing sand, stones, and plant roots. The fourth layer emerged as a yellow-colored bedrock layer measuring 35–40 cm. No archaeological materials of historical, cultural, material, or scientific significance were identified in any of the layers of this trial pit.

Sector D: The total area of this object is 1.45 ha. Ancient graves are present on its upper section. Excavation works were carried out at three separate locations in the northeastern, southern, and central parts of the object.

Shurf 1 was sunk on the northeastern slope across a cross-sectional area of 3x2 m. Based on the cross-section of this trial pit's walls, six layers were distinguished. The upper brown turf layer of 20–25 cm contains small stones, ceramic fragments, and plant roots, with no structural traces present. The second layer is dark to deep brown and may represent the debris of a collapsed structure. The soil composition includes small stones, small quantities of glazed and unglazed ceramic fragments, soil compaction, and constructive-looking features (their exact origin is unclear), along with plant roots. Based on the finds, these represent the remnants of thin and thick ceramic vessels. The surfaces of the glazed fragments are covered with green, blue, and light blue glaze, with no ornaments observed. Various unglazed vessel fragments were identified in the first and second layers. Among the discovered finds, ceramic shards with a blackened exterior surface can be classified as cooking pots.

The third, light brown layer contains ceramic fragments, stone shards, and organic and mineral mixtures, which are difficult to link to a specific historical context. Compacted construction remnants also occur here. Ceramic fragments without ornamentation or with ambiguous markings do not allow for precise typological dating. The fourth layer is yellowish and contains a small quantity of ceramic fragments, bone remnants, and plant roots, with the soil being of medium density. The fifth layer is dark to deep brown and contains small quantities of ceramic shards and animal bone remnants. The sixth layer is a light yellowish bedrock layer, where no structural remains or ceramic fragments were encountered.

Shurf 2 was excavated near the center of the sector with dimensions of 2x2 m to a depth of 190 cm. The first, light brown layer of 20 cm consists of turf and plant roots. Within the second, darkish layer of 85 cm, a compacted structure of unknown length (possibly a wall) with a height and width of 50 cm was discovered. Fragments of an unglazed jug, a cooking pot, and remnants of green-glazed ceramic vessels were identified in this layer. At a depth of 1 m, a base fragment of a ceramic vessel with black triangular linear decorations over a light blue glaze was recovered. Other discovered glazed fragments feature grid-like geometric patterns. Fragments of various unglazed vessels were also found, including one shard with stamped rhombic geometric decorations on its surface. From the third layer, shards of light blue glazed vessels and small pieces of various unglazed vessels were recovered, among which no samples with body decorations were encountered. At a depth of 160 cm on the eastern side of the trial pit, the mouth of an old grave oriented in a north-south direction (presumably dating to the last century) was partially exposed. Traces of compacted structures are present in the excavated layers of the trial pit.

Shurf 3 was opened on the southern side of the object across a 2x2 m area to a depth of 160 cm as a cross-sectional stratigraphic excavation. The first turf layer consists of 30 cm of soil containing plant roots, with no ceramic remnants observed. The second, brown layer measured 70–80 cm, yielding glazed ceramic fragments, various unglazed vessel shards including the rim of a thick storage jar (khum), plant roots, and a small quantity of large and small stones. On the southern side of the excavation, the presence of one of the old graves became

apparent. Ceramic shards also emerged in the third, light yellowish layer. The fourth layer was a 15 cm yellowish bedrock layer, where no structural traces or ceramic fragments were identified.

Sector E: The area of this object is 0.30 ha. Based on the relief structure of the mound, it appears to have been an ancient burial ground. No tombstones were erected in this cemetery. On the northeastern side of the object, a stratigraphic excavation in the form of a cross-section measuring 3x2 m was conducted. Based on the wall profiles of the excavated area, a total of six layers were distinguished. The first turf layer is present across all sides of the excavation, consisting of brown soil with a thickness of 20–25 cm containing small stones, organic matter, and plant roots. The second layer is light brown with soil of medium density and a thickness ranging from 10 to 60 cm across all sides, consisting of several micro-layers containing ceramic fragments, stones, animal bones, and plant roots; outwardly, it resembles redeposited soil. The third layer is brown, 15–25 cm thick, containing ceramic shards, small stone fragments, and plant roots. The fourth, dark brown layer is present on all sides and measures 25–100 cm, with soil of medium density containing ceramic pieces, stone, bone, and plant roots. The fifth layer is a mixed stone-ceramic layer present on all sides, laid directly over the bedrock. It has a thickness of 15 cm and initially consisted of thick ceramic vessel fragments carefully arranged, topped with medium-sized stones, while the spaces between the stones were filled with thin-walled ceramic vessel shards. This indicates a layer formed as a result of subsequent historical activity. The sixth layer is a yellow bedrock layer, within the soil composition of which nothing was identified. The scattered and fragmented ceramic shards of this object yielded a very small quantity of glazed fragments and numerous pieces of various types of unglazed vessels of large and small sizes. No decorations were visible on the surface of these shards, which mainly represent the remains of thick unglazed vessels.

4. CONCLUSION

The comprehensive archaeological monitoring and field investigations conducted in April 2026 across the territory allocated for the construction of the "New Tashkent International Airport" in the Orta Chirchiq district of Tashkent Region covered the entirety of the project parameters. Visual surveys using modern mobile mapping tools ("Locus map") established that no surface expressions of material cultural heritage or integrated archaeological structures exist within the zone of planned construction impacts.

Stratigraphic control via trial pits (shurfs) excavated across the four provisionally designated internal sectors (A, B, D, and E) revealed that these elevations possess complex, often disturbed profiles. Sectors A, D, and E clearly functioned as late historical or modern local burial grounds, as evidenced by modern tombstones (Sector A), exposed grave structures at deep horizons (Sectors D and E), and highly mixed, redeposited upper soil matrixes. The recovered material culture assemblages consist almost exclusively of redeposited, highly fragmented, and typologically mixed ceramic shards (both glazed and unglazed) spanning historical periods but lacking primary contexts or structural domestic components. Sector B proved to be completely devoid of cultural layers, representing an entirely natural landform or an accumulation resulting from agricultural activities.

Consequently, the scientific investigations demonstrate that the direct project impact zone possesses a very low archaeological potential. No integrated, scientifically significant, or unified archaeological objects or architectural structures subject to state preservation mandates under current heritage legislation were identified

within the project block. The historical cultural values of the immediate region are anchored outside the project zone, specifically at the major defensive mound site of Elliboytepa situated 680–700 meters to the north, which will not be subject to physical impacts from the planned airport engineering works. From an archaeological heritage standpoint, construction operations within the investigated territory may proceed subject to standard legal protocols regarding chance finds during earthmoving activities.

5. LIST OF SOURCES USED

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