

NEOLITHIC SETTLEMENTS AND MATERIAL CULTURE IN THE  
KHOREZM OASIS: ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVIDENCE FROM JONBAS AND  
QAVAT SITES

Ibragimov Ibragim Akhmedovich

Researcher

Urgench State University named after Abu Rayhan Beruni

**Abstract.** *This thesis investigates the Neolithic period in the Khorezm oasis based on archaeological research conducted by A.V. Vinogradov and M.A. Itina. Excavations in the lower Amudarya basin revealed settlement patterns, material culture, and economic activities of prehistoric communities, including hunting, fishing, and early agriculture. Key sites such as Jonbas and Qavat produced ceramic artifacts, stone and bone tools, and ornaments, providing insights into daily life, craftsmanship, and social organization. These findings highlight the importance of the Khorezm oasis in the development of Neolithic societies in Central Asia.*

**Keywords:** *Khorezm oasis, Neolithic, Jonbas settlements, Qavat settlements, lower Amudarya basin, prehistoric communities, pottery, stone tools, bone tools, early agriculture.*

**Introduction.** The Khorezm oasis, located in the lower Amudarya basin, represents one of the most significant regions for understanding the Neolithic period in Central Asia. Archaeological research conducted by A.V. Vinogradov, M.A. Itina, and other scholars has revealed the settlement patterns, economic activities, and material culture of early communities in this region. Excavations in the 1940s–1970s documented numerous Neolithic settlements, including Jonbas-4, Jonbas-5, Jonbas-12, Jonbas-II, Qavat-5, and Qavat-7, which provide critical insights into the lifestyle, craft, and subsistence strategies of prehistoric populations.

The research highlights how early communities adapted to the local geography and natural resources. The Khorezm oasis was suitable for settlement due to its access to clay, flint, and quartzite, as well as fertile plains and river systems that supported primitive agriculture, hunting, and fishing. Archaeological data from these sites illuminate the social and economic connections between clan communities and neighboring hunter-gatherer groups, reflecting the broader Neolithic cultural network in the Amudarya basin.

**Analysis.** Vinogradov's excavations at Jonbas-4 revealed complex settlement structures. Trenches measuring 2×4 m and 3×5 m uncovered:

- 200 ceramic vessels, mostly handmade from clay mixed with small stones, 80 of which belonged to the lower layers;
- Large vessels with mouth diameters of 20–30 cm and heights of 40 cm;
- Spherical bowls and boat-shaped containers;
- Decorative patterns on vessels, including straight and wavy lines, circular motifs, and double-sided linear designs.



## MODERN EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM AND INNOVATIVE TEACHING SOLUTIONS

Other notable sites include Jonbas-5, where 50 ceramic fragments and stone tools were uncovered, and Jonbas-12, which yielded 60 ceramic fragments, with lower parts flat and vessel diameters reaching 2.5 m. Excavations at Jonbas-II documented over 350 ceramic artifacts, predominantly knife-like stone tools, reflecting daily subsistence and labor activities.

Stone and bone tools were critical for survival and craft activities. Raw materials were sourced locally from the Sulton Uvais mountain:

- **Stone tools:** cores, knife-like blades, arrowheads, chisels, awls;
- **Bone tools:** arrowheads, needle-like instruments;
- **Ornaments:** small cylindrical and circular beads crafted from quartzite, flint, and turquoise-colored minerals.

These tools and ornaments demonstrate the advanced craftsmanship and adaptive strategies of Neolithic communities in the Khorezm oasis.

Excavations at Qavat-5 and Qavat-7, located in the western region of the oasis, revealed dense settlement layouts covering approximately 1000 m<sup>2</sup>. Qavat-7 consisted of over 100 houses constructed using wooden posts, reeds, and flexible branches, arranged in circular or slightly elongated forms. Ceramic artifacts and stone tools were widely distributed, including over 300 stone tools at Qavat-5 and nearly 690 m<sup>2</sup> of ceramic and tool findings at Qavat-7. These settlements reflect well-organized community structures with advanced craft production and food preparation capabilities.

Neolithic communities in the Khorezm oasis engaged in diverse economic activities:

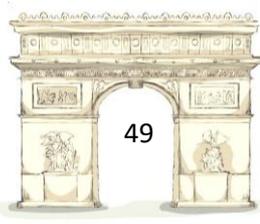
- **Primitive agriculture:** Clan communities practiced early farming known as “Qayr”;
- **Hunting and gathering:** Fish such as carp and tench were commonly caught;
- **Craft production:** Ceramic vessels and stone tools were used for daily activities;
- **Social organization:** Settlements indicate cooperative labor, house construction, and resource management.

The findings highlight the strategic adaptation of Neolithic populations to local resources and geography, enabling sustainable settlement in the lower Amudarya basin.

**Conclusion.** Archaeological evidence from the Khorezm oasis, particularly from Jonbas and Qavat sites, provides a comprehensive understanding of Neolithic communities in Central Asia. Findings include:

- Handmade ceramics with diverse decorative motifs;
- Stone and bone tools reflecting hunting, fishing, and craft activities;
- Ornaments indicating social and cultural practices;
- Settlement structures demonstrating organized communal life.

These discoveries underscore the Khorezm oasis as a key center of prehistoric human development, offering valuable insights into early human adaptation, social organization, and material culture. The Neolithic communities of Khorezm played a crucial role in shaping the economic, cultural, and technological landscapes of Central Asia.



REFERENCES

1. Tolstov S.P. Ancient Khorezm. Moscow: AN SSSR, 1948.
2. Vinogradov A.V. Neolithic Khorezm. Moscow: Nauka, 1981.
3. Vinogradova E.A. Stone Age Sites of the Amudarya Lowlands. Moscow: Nauka, 1987.
4. Itina M.A. Neolithic and Bronze Age Khorezm. Tashkent: Fan, 1965.
5. Andrianov B.V. Ancient Irrigation Systems of Khorezm. Moscow: Nauka, 1969.
6. G'ulomov Ya.G. History of Irrigation in Khorezm. Tashkent: Fan, 1957.
7. Bijanov B.I. Stone Age Sites of Ustyurt. Tashkent: Fan, 1976.

