

Sheikh Muftah Culture: A transition between prehistoric and historical times in the Dakhla Oasis (Egypt)

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حضارة الشيخ مفتاح: مرحلة انتقالية بين عصور ما قبل التاريخ والعصور التاريخية في واحة الداخلة
(مصر)

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Abstract

Ancient Egyptian history comprises three intermediate periods which combine the characteristics of the preceding and succeeding periods and have left many influences and traces which have affected the succeeding periods. Likewise, the prehistoric period also has some transitions without giving a complete picture, but it has strongly influenced the subsequent periods and left many puzzling features and thousands of questions to be answered. One of the most enigmatic and influential units of Egyptian prehistory is the 'Sheikh Muftah Unit', which is scattered throughout the Dakhla Oasis and beyond, with many gaps in information regarding the stratigraphic sequence of the unit, environmental conditions and population adaptation. On the eastern side of Dakhla Oasis, north of the pharaonic Egyptian complexes of Ain Asil near Balat, an exceptionally large and well-preserved site of the Late Sheikh Muftah Group was discovered. This is the last archaeologically recognised indigenous community in the oasis, characterised by its distinctive pottery. This site exemplifies how this unit functions as a transitional unit in Dakhla Oasis between Prehistoric and Historic periods. As a result, the main focus of this paper's research is on studying and interpreting the most prominent features of this cultural unit, as well as how climatic conditions affected how the original Sheikh Muftah culture lived in the oasis and its surroundings, and how it became a transitional unit between prehistoric and historic times at Dakhla Oasis?

Keywords: Sheikh Muftah – Balat – Ain Asil – Dakhla Oasis – The Egyptian Western Desert

المخلص

يتألف التاريخ المصري القديم من ثلاث فترات انتقالية، والتي تجمع بين خصائص الفترات السابقة والتالية لها، كما تركت العديد من الخصائص والآثار التي أثرت على الفترات التالية لها. وبالمثل، فقد شهدت فترة ما قبل التاريخ

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أيضًا بعض التحولات التي أثرت بشدة على الفترات اللاحقة لها، كما تركت العديد من الخصائص المحيرة وآلاف الأسئلة التي يتعين الإجابة عليها. واحدة من أكثر الوحدات غموضًا وتأثيرًا في عصور ما قبل التاريخ المصرية هي "وحدة الشيخ مفتاح"، المنتشرة في جميع أنحاء واحة الداخلة وما وراءها، مع وجود العديد من الفجوات في المعلومات المتعلقة بالتسلسل الطبقي للوحدة، والظروف البيئية والتكيف السكاني. على الجانب الشرقي من واحة الداخلة، شمال المجمعات المصرية الفرعونية في عين أصيل بالقرب من بلاط، تم اكتشاف موقع كبير بشكل استثنائي ومحفوظ بشكل جيد لمجموعة الشيخ مفتاح. هذا هو آخر مجتمع أصلي معترف به أثرًا في الواحة، ويتميز بفخاره المميز. يوضح هذا الموقع كون هذه الوحدة وحدة انتقالية بين عصور ما قبل التاريخ والفترات التاريخية في واحة الداخلة. وعليه، فإن الفكرة الرئيسية لهذه الورقة البحثية هي دراسة وتفسير أبرز سمات هذه الوحدة الثقافية، وكذلك كيف أثرت الظروف المناخية على كيفية عيش ثقافة الشيخ مفتاح الأصلية في الواحة ومحيطها، وكيف أصبحت وحدة انتقالية بين عصور ما قبل التاريخ والعصور التاريخية في واحة الداخلة.

الكلمات الدالة: الشيخ مفتاح- بلاط- عين أصيل- الواحة الداخلة- الصحراء الغربية المصرية

1. Introduction

In the Mid-Holocene, there were more developed cultures, than before, that inhabited both Dakhla Oasis (like Bashendi B specialized pastoralists, c.6400–5500 BP) and Nile Valley region (like the first agricultural society in Egypt 'Faiyumian' (c. 7600–6200 BP) in the Middle Egypt, the Merimidian then El-Omari at Lower Egypt, and Tarifian then Badarian at Upper Egypt).³ The main prehistoric cultural units that formed the Mid-Holocene sequence in Dakhla Oasis were; Masara, dated to c. 7200– 6500 BC in three sub-units (A, B and C), Bashendi, dated to c. 5700–3250 BC in two sub-units (A and B) and Sheikh Muftah (fig. 1), which began during the Bashendi B sub-unit and survived to overlap with the Old Kingdom. These three cultures are deflated, but more archaeological evidence are now available including grinding equipment, small finds of stone and shell, stone shelters, pottery and rock art. Besides, the *in situ* deposits those yield organic material as bone, plant remains and charcoal.^{4 & 5}

During the earliest field work of DOP (Dakhla Oasis Project) at Dakhla Oasis and its surroundings, between 1977 and 1996, they have found many Neolithic and historic

³ Brookfield, Michael, The Desertification of the Egyptian Sahara during the Holocene (the last 10,000 years) and Its Influence on the Rise of Egyptian Civilization, Dordrecht: Springer, 2010, 91-108.

⁴ Kleindienst, M.R. et al., *Geography, Geology, Geochronology and Geoarcheology of the Dakhleh Oasis region: An interim report*, Oxford: Oxbow Books, 1999, 1- 54.

⁵ McDonald, M.M.A., *Dakhla Oasis, prehistoric sites*, Taylor & Francis e-Library, 2005, 265-269.

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localities.⁶ Some of these Neolithic localities that were rich of scattered lithics, pottery and other material culture, existed south of Ezbet Sheikh Muftah, south of Ismant El-Kharab (fig. 2). DOP members defined this unit as 'Sheikh Muftah Cultural Unit' on the basis of the first place where these clustered material culture were concentrated.⁷ However, it isn't a limited-time culture, but a dispersal unit and a cultural phenomenon or a state of knowledge.⁸

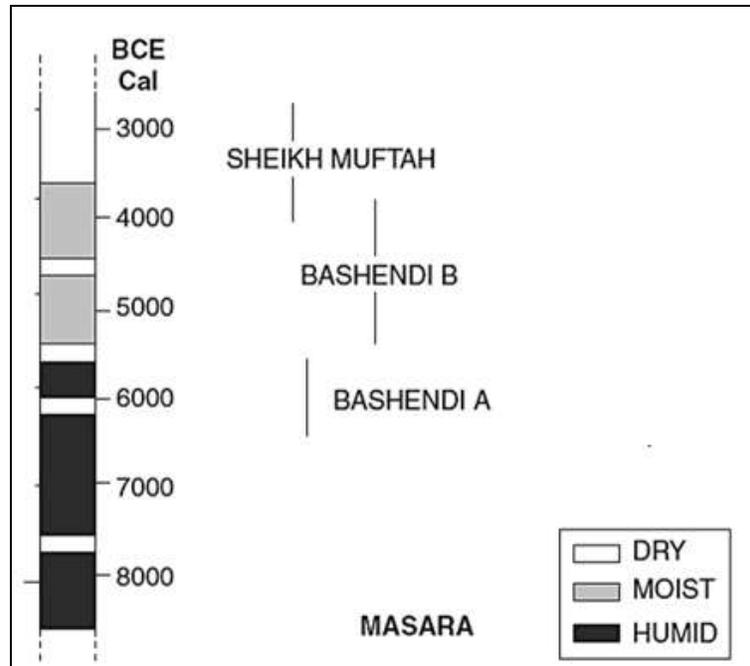


Figure 1: Dakhla Oasis cultural units sequence during the Mid-Holocene.⁹

2. Sheikh Muftah Culture (Overview)

Sheikh Muftah Culture Unit (c. 4000–2800 BP) is the youngest among the prehistoric cultural units in the Dakhla Oasis¹⁰ and coexisted with the Pharaonic Egyptian tradition

⁶ Churcher, C.S., et al., *The Quaternary Faunas of Dakhleh Oasis, Western Desert of Egypt*, Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2008, 3-24.

⁷ McDonald, M.M.A., et al., *The Mid-Holocene Sheikh Muftah Cultural Unit of Dakhleh Oasis, South Central Egypt: A Preliminary Report on Recent Fieldwork*, Nyame Akuma 56, 2001, 4–10.

⁸ Midant-Reynes, Béatrix et al., *The Prehistory of Egypt from the First Egyptians to the First Pharaohs*, Oxford, UK, Blackwell Publishers, 2000, 1- 11.

⁹ Brookfield, Michael, *The Desertification of the Egyptian Sahara during the Holocene (the last 10,000 years) and Its Influence on the Rise of Egyptian Civilization*, 91-108.

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1. Sheikh Muftah Localities in Dakhla Oasis and Its Surroundings

Although there are more than 100 sites of Sheikh Muftah that were recorded and surveyed during the survey activities conducted by the DOP and ACACIA missions (fig. 4) in the desert areas north and south of Dakhla,¹⁶ they are still the most poorly understood and few of them remain *in situ*.¹⁷ &¹⁸ This Culture was distributed near or under the modern cultivation in the Dakhla Oasis floor,¹⁹ confined mainly to the central lowlands of the oasis and often associated with marshy areas.²⁰ Some localities exist at the northern end of Ein El-Gezareen (an Old Kingdom site) southeast of Teneida in eastern Dakhla and others southwest of the Balat cultivation, but Sheikh Muftah campsites are scarce outside of the oases in the dry and inhospitable desert. Perhaps the most prominent example of this unit is El-Kharafish site located on the Libyan Plateau (fig. 4). However, due to the availability of water resources, the concentration of occupations in Dakhla Oasis is generally toward the south, most notably the Sheikh Muftah occupation.²¹ The presence of this culture near the site of the Old Kingdom reflects a kind of interaction between these two different cultures,²² especially when the oasis was under military occupation and colonization from the Nile Valley and it appears that Ain Asil was the capital of the Old Kingdom in Dakhla.²³

2. Recent Excavated Localities

After a brief survey in 2011, the IFAO (*Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale*) focused on exploring the remains of Sheikh Muftah culture at Ain Asil/Balat in order to understand the interaction between this local culture and the Pharaonic settlement south of it. The excavations revealed the presence of Sheikh Muftah campsites (fig. 5), about

¹⁶ Riemer, H. et al, *El Kharafish. The archaeology of Sheikh Muftah pastoral nomads in the desert around Dakhla Oasis (Egypt)*, 17-21.

¹⁷ Jeuthe, C., *Initial results: The Sheikh Muftah occupation at Balat/North-1 (Dakhla Oasis)*, Cairo, IFAO, 2014, 103-114.

¹⁸ Jeuthe, C., *Balat/Dakhla oasis: the Sheikh Muftah campsites during the Old Kingdom*, Leuven, Peeters Publishers, 2017, 165-174.

¹⁹ McDonald, M.M.A. & Teubner, I., *Holocene Prehistory*, Egypt, SCA, 2000, 13-14.

²⁰ Brookfield, Michael, *The Desertification of the Egyptian Sahara during the Holocene (the last 10,000 years) and Its Influence on the Rise of Egyptian Civilization*, 91-108.

²¹ Riemer, H. et al, *El Kharafish. The archaeology of Sheikh Muftah pastoral nomads in the desert around Dakhla Oasis (Egypt)*, 17-21.

²² Smekalova Tatyana, *Geophysical Surveying*, Egypt, SCA, 2000, 16.

²³ Boozer, Anna Lucille, *The Social Impact of Trade and Migration: The Western Desert in Pharaonic and Post-Pharaonic Egypt*, Oxford Handbooks in Archaeology Online, 2015, 2.

90 m north of the walls of the Sixth Dynasty, and in other scattered areas at Ain Asil/Balat. The mission identified the main areas of occupation of the Sheikh Muftah Unit at Balat, known as 'Balat/North-1'²⁴, during the 2013-2014 seasons by identifying all visible features, such as fireplaces, small shallow mounds, and concentrating objects, and then grouping them into specific occupation areas, each of which is known as a zone because it describes the primary accumulation of finds and/or features as seen on the surface. There are eight contiguous zones of occupation, ranging in size from about 175 m² to 471 m², with a remarkable mixture of multi-size fireplaces ranging in size from approximately 0.6 m to 1.3 m (fig. 3); only three zones have been excavated since not all have clearly apparent surface borders and some are hazy and/or overlapping. The remaining zones, on the other hand, were totally selected through surveys. The majority of the zones are connected, shifted, and/or overlapped, while others are isolated.²⁵

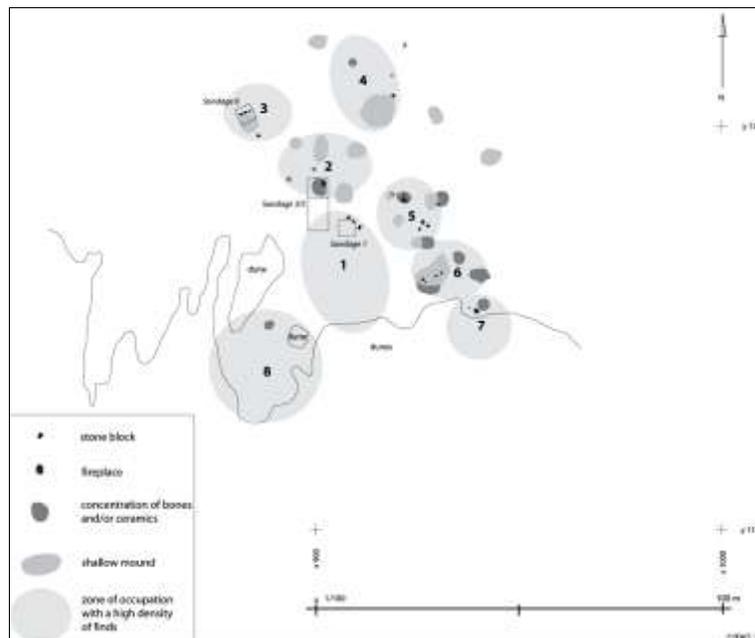


Figure 3: Zones of occupations and distribution of features at Balat/North-1 site.²⁶

²⁴ This site has been well documented and subsequently published by Jeuthe, C. with contributions from Emery-Barbier, A., Laisney, D., Lesur, J., Linseele, V., Ownby, M.F., Quiles, A., & Torchy, L. in the *Fouilles de l'Institut français d'archéologie orientale* (86), Le Caire, under the title (Balat XII : The Sheikh Muftah Site).

²⁵ Jeuthe, C., et al, *The Sheikh Muftah Site, Balat XII*, Le Caire, IFAO, 2021, 9-39.

²⁶ Jeuthe, C., *Initial results: The Sheikh Muftah occupation at Balat/North-1 (Dakhla Oasis)*, 103-114.

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The Balat investigation gave important information about the Sheikh Muftah culture as well as the geographical distribution of several campsites. However, there are no clearly defined activity zones, and the actual dwelling places are challenging to identify. The issue of a purely seasonal or temporary occupation cycle must be left open while archaeozoological and archaeobotanical research is carried out. Despite this, preliminary results show minimal evidence of seasonal settlement. While precise finds are limited since only a section of the inhabited area was examined, and no similar Sheikh Muftah site in the oasis has yet to be discovered.²⁷ So far, the subsistence of the Balat Sheikh Muftah group remains unknown. However, hunting takes priority over small livestock consumption, notably goat consumption. Except for agriculture, it was most likely an issue of exploiting the different resources available rather than focusing on a particular one. It is likely that transitory and temporary campsites within and beyond the oasis made do with whatever was available.

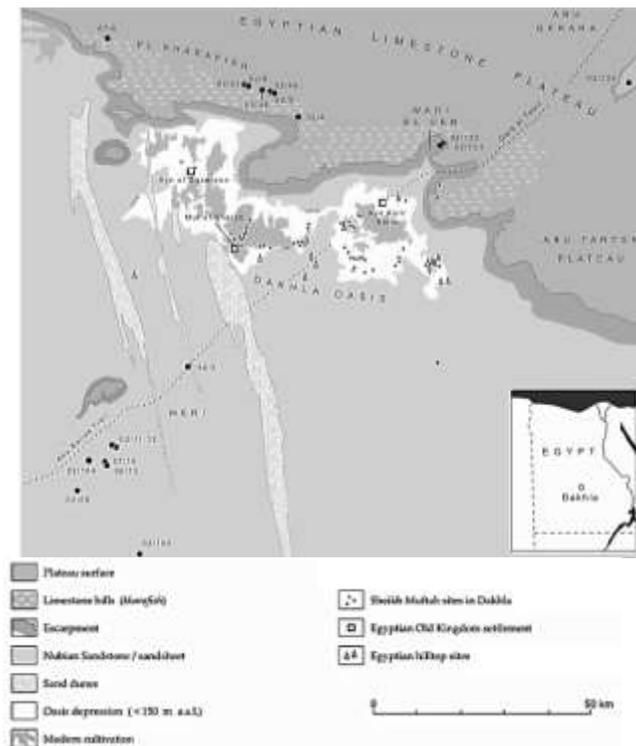


Figure 4: Map of Dakhla Oasis and its surrounding desert regions showing the distribution of Sheikh Muftah sites and other archaeological sites of the 3rd millennium BC.²⁸

²⁷ McDonald, M.M.A., *Neolithic cultural units and adaptations in the Dakhla Oasis*, 117–132.

²⁸ Riemer, H. et al, *El Kharafish. The archaeology of Sheikh Muftah pastoral nomads in the desert around Dakhla Oasis (Egypt)*, 17-21.

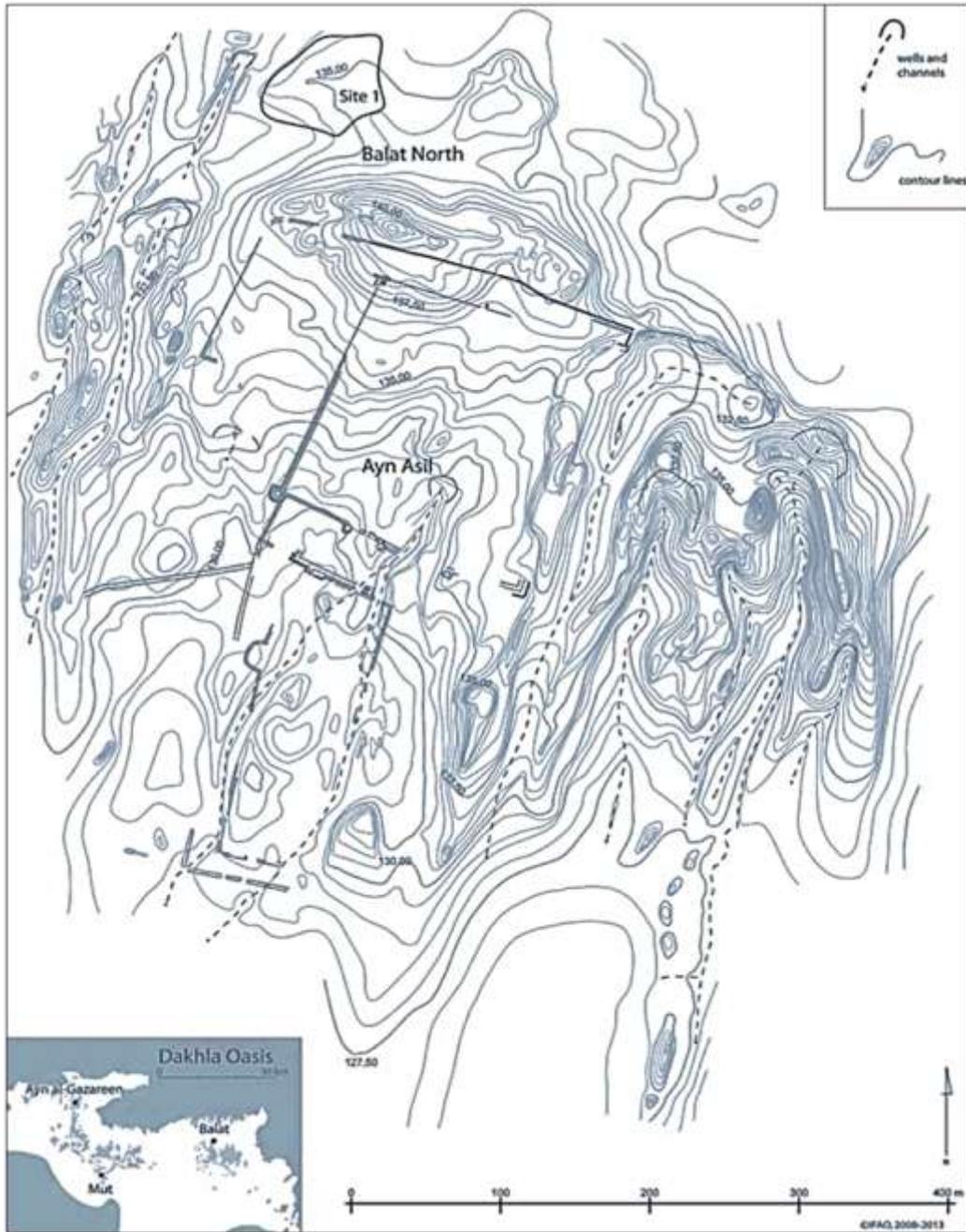


Figure 5: Contour Map of Balat/ North-1 site and Ain Asil, Dakhla Oasis, Egypt²⁹ &³⁰

²⁹ Jeuthe, C., *Initial results: The Sheikh Muftah occupation at Balat/North-1 (Dakhla Oasis)*, 103-114.

³⁰ Jeuthe, C., *Balat/Dakhla oasis: the Sheikh Muftah campsites during the Old Kingdom*, 165-174.

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The site was most likely used as a starting point for seasonal or temporary migrations that occurred within a certain time frame. Long distance travel, such as those to the Nile Valley, other oasis, and the desert to Gilf Kebir, might have been for trade and business. Other reasons for travelling might have been more personal or social, such as visiting friends and family, sharing and receiving news and information, or simply enjoying the experience of travelling and seeing the globe. Due to a lack of comparisons, this cannot be proved or denied. It is also unclear if Balat/North-1 was an exception or whether such enormous residential campsites occurred irregularly however on a regular basis. It doesn't provide indications of cultural adaptation, but rather a continuation of the traditions of previous Holocene populations in the oasis. Even though most of our information about the Sheikh Muftah group must be regarded hypothetical in the wider perspective, Balat/North-1 may be understood as a temporary residential camp.³¹

3. The Features of Sheikh Muftah Culture

Despite the similarities in the features of the Neolithic civilizations, the Sheikh Muftah unit has some special features that distinguish it from any other Neolithic cultural unit in Dakhla and its surroundings, such as its occupation of the Dakhla Oasis and coexistence with some other civilizations both inside and outside the oasis, for a longer period of time than any other group.³²

3.1. Common Features

Most of sheikh Muftah localities have no shelters but some cluster fireplaces, scatter animal bones mainly gazelle and hartebeest, ground stones, chipped stone, lots of flakes, points, notches, denticulates, scrapers and pottery.³³ Moreover, we can notice some features that are common in the Neolithic cultures in the Oasis and even in the Nile Valley, such as:

- Chipped Stone Assemblages marked on the today's surface by clusters of fireplaces, bone concentrations, and a high density of pottery and flint tools.^{34 &35}
- Most of the tools were scrapers, denticulates and composite tools³⁶, located near the fireplaces and were probably related to food preparation and/or storage, as in case of Balat/ North-1 site (fig. 9).

³¹ Jeuthe, C., et al, *The Sheikh Muftah Site, Balat XII*, 167-212.

³² Boozer, Anna Lucille, *The Social Impact of Trade and Migration: The Western Desert in Pharaonic and Post-Pharaonic Egypt*, 13-15.

³³ McDonald, M.M.A. & Teubner, I., *Holocene Prehistory*, 13-14.

³⁴ Jeuthe, C., *Initial results: The Sheikh Muftah occupation at Balat/North-1 (Dakhla Oasis)*, 103-114.

³⁵ Jeuthe, C., *Balat/Dakhla oasis: the Sheikh Muftah campsites during the Old Kingdom*, 165-174.

³⁶ These tools are typical hunter-gatherer people tool-kit.

- There are also grinding stones, pottery, the worked bones (especially piercing implements) and copper.
- There are numerous handmade pottery types, sizes, and surface treatments available, including sherds from the Nile Valley and local tradition pottery.³⁷
- The common shape of Neolithic dwelling places is a circular or oval structure with circular shaped fireplaces made of mud bricks or clay balls, such as those of the Faiyum, el Omari, Merimda Beni Salama, and Maadi, and even at the earliest Upper Egyptian settlement Amaratian (Naqada 1).³⁸ Furthermore, several sites in Dakhla Oasis from Masara, Bashendi, and Sheikh Muftah units include hut circle sites with small fireplaces and scattered collapsed wall fragments, assumed to have been occupied for a short period of time.³⁹

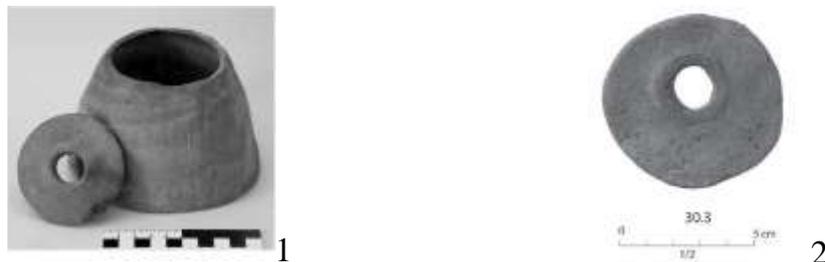


Figure 6: 1) Clayton ring from El Kharafish 02/49 site,⁴⁰ 2) Clayton ring from Balat/ North-1 site⁴¹



Figure 7: Sheikh Muftah vessel, from Balat/ North- 1 site, surface Zone 2.⁴²

³⁷ McDonald, M.M.A., *Neolithic cultural units and adaptations in the Dakhla Oasis*, 117–132.

³⁸ Midant-Reynes, Béatrix et al., *The Prehistory of Egypt from the First Egyptians to the First Pharaohs*, 1- 11.

³⁹ McDonald, M.M.A. & Teubner, I., *Holocene Prehistory*, 13-14.

⁴⁰ Riemer, H. et al, *El Kharafish. The archaeology of Sheikh Muftah pastoral nomads in the desert around Dakhla Oasis (Egypt)*, 17-21.

⁴¹ Jeuthe, C., *Initial results: The Sheikh Muftah occupation at Balat/North-1 (Dakhla Oasis)*, 103-114.

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3.2. *Special Features*

Some features in the Sheikh Muftah Culture were a bit different from other Neolithic Cultures, such as;

- The crude quartz and shale objects, often consisting of large, deep undecorated bowls.⁴³
- The existence of the Clayton rings and disks (fig. 6). However, in el Omari and Khartoum Neolithic cultures, there a number of small pierced discs in a diameter of 5.6- 7.6 cm and a thickness of 5 cm were found, probably used as spindle-whorls, fishing net weights, or maceheads.⁴⁴
- The combination of multi-size fireplaces and fragmented bones.
- The interaction between Sheikh Muftah occupation and the pharaonic culture, which appeared clearly though the imported Nile Valley pottery, especially in Ain Asil/Balat, the seat of governors of the oasis from the sixth dynasty until the early Middle Kingdom.^{45 &46}
- Roofed structures were only identified at the Balat/North-1 site in the context of the Sheikh Muftah dwelling pit (fig. 8). However, the functions of this pit were the same as those of the other camps.
- Postholes were evident in the sandy subsoil only in rare situations, and they could not be rebuilt as dwellings.
- According to the cooking pots uncovered in situ at Balat/ North-1 site, there is a recognised pattern in these dwelling pits, consisting of a main fireplace, which was presumably primarily used for fire maintenance, in combination with multiple short-term fires, which were used for real food preparation. This was common on Sheikh Muftah sites, but it's unclear if they were all from the same household or if they were formed by separate social groups.

⁴² Jeuthe, C., *Initial results: The Sheikh Muftah occupation at Balat/North-1 (Dakhla Oasis)*, 103-114.

⁴³ Boozer, Anna Lucille, *The Social Impact of Trade and Migration: The Western Desert in Pharaonic and Post-Pharaonic Egypt*, 13-15.

⁴⁴ Midant-Reynes, Béatrix et al., *The Prehistory of Egypt from the First Egyptians to the First Pharaohs*, 1- 11.

⁴⁵ Jeuthe, C., *Initial results: The Sheikh Muftah occupation at Balat/North-1 (Dakhla Oasis)*, 103-114.

⁴⁶ Jeuthe, C., *Balat/Dakhla oasis: the Sheikh Muftah campsites during the Old Kingdom*, 165-174.

- Mud ridges, mud bricks, and mud coating are among the odd and hitherto unknown features, for such sites. Some ridges were built around a small hole, while others were practically 'bricked up' or formed a platform. They were usually round or oval in form, especially near fireplaces. Larger vessels (fig. 7) supported by the ridges were very probably present, at least in the shallow pits.

Although only for a brief period during the Late Sheikh Muftah period, the Balat/North-1 finds give a distinct illustration of the Sheikh Muftah group. However, considering the current state of investigation, interpreting the finds in a larger context is challenging without a better understanding of the neighbouring Oasis villages. Even while the juxtaposition of a base camp in the oasis with a presumably existing seasonal camp on the outside is notable, the features of Balat/North-1 cannot be described as uncommon or typical only on this basis.⁴⁷



Figure 8: Dwelling pit from Balat/ North- 1 site.⁴⁸

⁴⁷ Jeuthe, C., et al, *The Sheikh Muftah Site, Balat XII*, 213-224.

⁴⁸ Jeuthe, C., et al. 2021.

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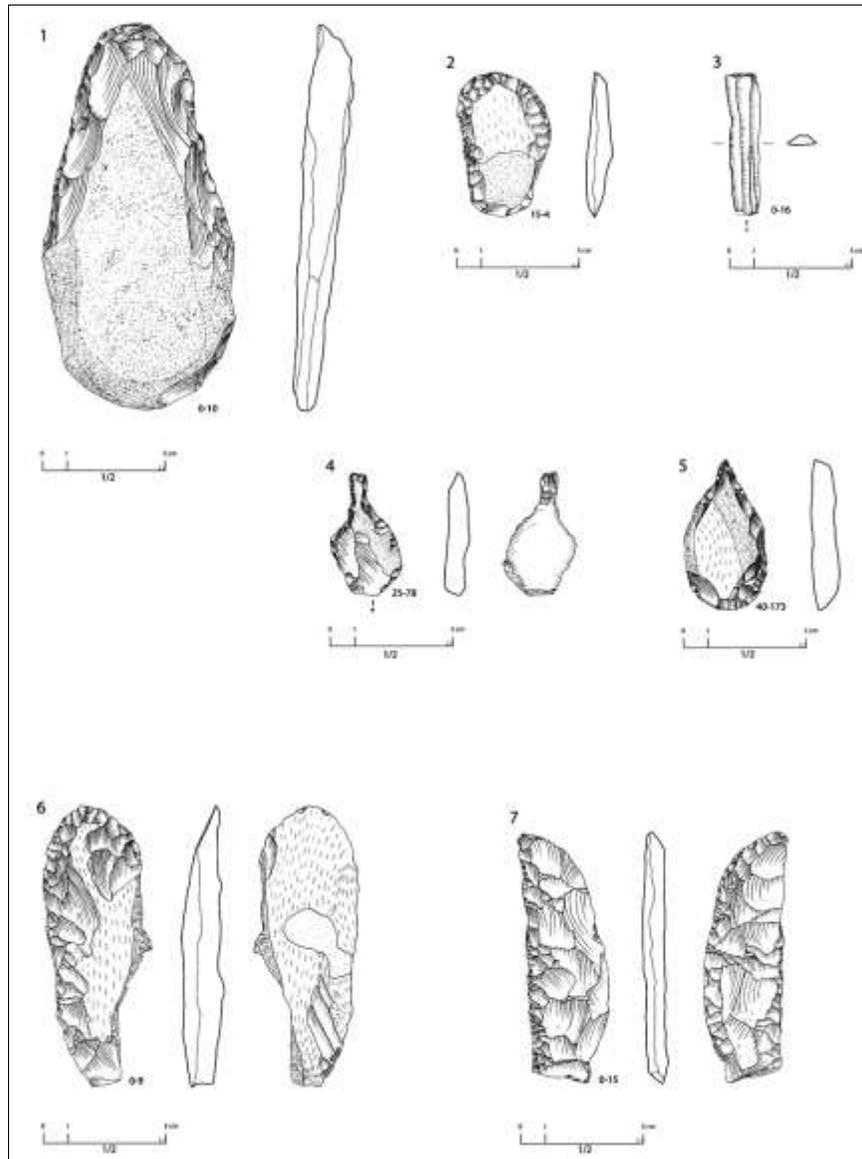


Figure 9: Flint tools at Balat site, made of local materials: 1, 2) scraper, 3) truncated blade, 4, 5) perforator, 6, 7) knives.⁴⁹

4. Palaeoenvironment of Sheikh Muftah Unit

Since the late Quaternary period, and succeeding the Sahara desert's drought, a wet phase began around 10,000 - 7,000 years ago, with heavy precipitation and temperatures that enhanced the level of desert lakes and streams. As a result, vegetation cover became

⁴⁹ Jeuthe, C., *Initial results: The Sheikh Muftah occupation at Balat/North-1 (Dakhla Oasis)*, 103-114.

more concentrated in the Western Desert during prehistoric and early historical times, providing exploitation opportunities for the Neolithic population with different subsistence strategies, particularly the hunter-gatherer groups who occupied this savannah-like desert during this optimum climate.⁵⁰ Eastern Sahara climate in early to Mid-Holocene c. 8500–5000 BC, especially in the Egyptian Western Desert, was influenced by increasing precipitation (approximately 50– 100 mm annual rainfall) after the hyperarid Pleistocene in the region. It was a suitable humid phase for mobile human groups which occupied the desert areas then. Afterwards, the Eastern Sahara faced dryer conditions that resulted in a rapid decrease of archaeological sites. However, Sheikh Muftah Unit still existed in the Western Desert, where prehistoric activity continued until the end of the third millennium BC. The existence of the permanent groundwater made the oases in the Western Desert not influenced so much by these climate changes.⁵¹

Conclusion

The Sheikh Muftah Unit is a culture that dates back about 2000 years. However, it has merely been scattered, with no remaining structure other than pits and evidence of circular huts with varying material culture. Its population were mostly pastoral-nomads (with Sedintizm Adaptation), and they utilised numerous artefacts from the Bashendi B Unit. Some of its tools were created locally, while others were brought from beyond the Oasis (the Nile Valley), indicating a form of contact between the Oasis and other cultures. The most unusual aspect is that all of the units that inhabited the desert during the Holocene period remained there due to the ideal habitats and climate. Masara was discovered to exist in humid climates, as were Bashendi A and B. Sheikh Muftah culture, on the other hand, is the only desert culture that has survived in unsuitable surroundings with hyperarid climates for approximately two millennia (!).

Seasonal migrations have occurred between the Nile Valley and the Western Sahara since the fifth millennium BC, and maybe earlier. It has been proposed that the Oases region was used for desert journeys as early as the third Dynasty. There are other trade routes through the oases that connect the Nile Valley and the nomads of the Western Desert to Nubia and Sudan, such as "Darb Al Arbain," where multiple Old Kingdom

⁵⁰ Jeuthe, C., *Initial results: The Sheikh Muftah occupation at Balat/North-1 (Dakhla Oasis)*, 103-114.

⁵¹ Riemer, H. et al, *El Kharafish. The archaeology of Sheikh Muftah pastoral nomads in the desert around Dakhla Oasis (Egypt)*, 17-21.

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campsites have been excavated atop wells and seasonal playa basins.⁵² To conclude, the Sheikh Muftah Neolithic Culture is assumed to be a culture with three roots: one in the Nile Valley, one in Sudan, and one in Eastern Sahara. A Late Sheikh Muftah group's extraordinary large and well-preserved site was discovered on the eastern side of the Dakhla Oasis, north of the Pharaonic Egyptian enclosures of Ain Asil near Balat. This is the oasis's last archaeologically recognised indigenous population, distinguished by its characteristic pottery. So far, it has been assumed that the tribe is highly mobile, ecologically adaptable, and pastoral nomadic, with cattle herding as a prominent component. It dated from the early second millennium yet persisted until the Old Kingdom. The extension of Pharaonic Egyptian dominance in the oasis, on the other hand, appears to have been a continuous process of absorption, with the Sheikh Muftah group vanishing from archaeological record by the early First Intermediate Period at the very latest.

More research is needed, however, to perform a thorough examination of the relationship between the Sheikh Muftah group and the pharaonic population of the oasis region. Contacts and trade with the pharaonic culture are obvious within the material remnants based only on the data provided by the Balat research. It is more like a transition between pure prehistoric and pure Old Kingdom cultures. All evidence, however, testifies to a nomadic existence, with no trace of pharaonic culture adaptation or even a preliminary stage of integration.

⁵² Boozer, Anna Lucille, *The Social Impact of Trade and Migration: The Western Desert in Pharaonic and Post-Pharaonic Egypt*, 13-15.

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