



Fig. 1. General view of structures 254a/254b/255 (front) and 256 (rear) (looking east).

Harrat Juhayra 2

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Harrat Juhayra 2 is a Middle Chalcolithic site located on a basalt hill at the northwestern corner of the al-Jafr Basin, southern Jordan, containing the following three architectural entities: an elongated settlement stretching along the southern slope of the hill, a small cemetery behind the settlement, and an extensive open sanctuary covering the flat hilltop. The 2018 and 2019 seasons explored the overall picture of the linear settlement, the core of the composite site.

The excavations revealed two dozen broadhouses common to Chalcolithic settlements in the southern Levant. They fall into the freestanding, forecourt, and composite types. The most common are freestanding-type



Fig. 2. Small finds from structure 255.

broadhouses, which measure c. 7-11 m wide and c. 3-5 m deep and are equally equipped with a narrow entrance in the middle of the south- or southeast-facing front wall and a small bin at one corner of the elongated floor, respectively. The other types are their minor variants, but it is interesting to note that the freestanding type includes a connected form unique to the Golan Chalcolithic (Fig. 1).

The settlement also includes two types of water-use facilities. One consists of masonry walls more than 50 m long and up to c. 0.5 m high, which encompass the lower edge of a gentle slope. They were probably used as barriers for promoting the impregnation of surface runoff water into the subsoil and, at the same time, preventing fortified soil from being washed away by a flood. The other are short walls c. 10-20 m long, constructed on a middle slope across a shallow gully. They are slightly curved upstream instead of downstream and, therefore, are thought to have been used for dispersing the gully stream into the surrounding gentle slopes. Seeing that both types of barrages share the same stratigraphy with neighboring broadhouses, it is highly likely that they belonged to the linear settlement and were used for different purposes. The al-Jafr Basin has a long history of water exploitation starting with the

Pre-Pottery Neolithic B (PPNB) outpost culture, and the barrage system newly found at the middle Chalcolithic settlement could be understood as its subsequent form.

Small finds from the settlement are characterized by a flake-oriented flint assemblage marked by horizontally long tabular scrapers (also called fan-scrapers), a ground-stone assemblage centering on flat querns and handstones, and a pottery assemblage including shallow bowls and cooking pots (Fig. 2). Although faunal/floral evidence is not yet available, the predominance of the supposedly wool-shearing tools and the grinding implements, coupled with the existence of sickle blades with a silica sheen, provides insights into the subsistence strategy of the farming community. Noteworthy is the occurrence of a cornet-type pottery and a V-shaped basalt vessel, which is suggestive of some contact with the Ghassulian culture to the northwest. In addition, stone vessels and mace heads commonly occurred.

What characterizes the Harrat Juhayra 2 settlement in terms of social structure is the homogeneity in structures and small finds. Every broadhouse has a similar size, plan, and construction quality, and no clear hierarchy is observable. The same is true with small finds, which are much alike in contents at every broadhouse and, understandably, include no prestige goods such as copper products. This applies to the cemetery as well, and no elite burial has been attested. These observations clearly indicate that the Harrat Juhayra 2 settlement formed a pre-chiefdom egalitarian society.

The findings of Harrat Juhayra 2, coupled with new research data from the southern and eastern Jordanian Badia, could potentially rewrite the post-Neolithic cultural landscape in southern Jordan. With PPNB outpost complexes, late Neolithic pseudo-settlements, and the Ghassulian-related Chalcolithic cultural entity, the al-Jafr Basin offers still more to study.