

**THE NORTHEAST 'ARABA
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
RECONNAISSANCE SURVEY, 1985:**

by
F. L. Koucky and B. McDonald

The Northeast 'Araba Archaeological Reconnaissance Survey was in the field from May 26-June 4, 1985. The survey team consisted of Dr. F. L. Koucky, director, College of Wooster, Wooster, Ohio, two of his students, namely J. M. Ferguson and E. C. Lapp, and Dr. B. MacDonald, St. Francis Xavier University, Antigonish, Nova Scotia. Dr. Zeidoun Al Muheisen served as representative of the Department of Antiquities of Jordan. While in the field, the team stayed for three days at Sheriff Nasser Camp, Wadi Fidan and for the remainder of the time at Khuneizira, one of the camps of the Jordan Valley Authority in the northeastern 'Araba. The project was licenced by the Department of Antiquities of Jordan under the Directorship of Dr. Adnan Hadidi. Funding was provided by the College of Wooster.

The purpose of the survey was to acquire a first-hand knowledge of the area and to assess the feasibility of carrying out an intensive and systematic survey of the same area. The ten days in the field acquainted the team members with the area and led them to the conclusion that a much more intensive and systematic survey of the area is badly needed.

The area investigated is part of the Great Rift Valley which extends from Turkey in the north to Mozambique in the south. The Wadi 'Araba is that portion of the Rift Valley which leads from the Dead Sea to the Gulf of Aqaba. It was the northeastern segment of the 'Araba or the area between eṣ-Ṣāfi and the Wadi Fidān that was investigated (Map: Northeast 'Araba). Geologically, the area surveyed may be divided into two segments: 1) the Ghor from eṣ-Ṣāfi south to the Wadi Khuneizir; and 2) from the northern edge of the escarpment overlooking the Ghor as far south as the Wadi Fidān. The survey team spent its time almost equally between

these two areas.

Before beginning the survey the team members were aware of the work done in the area by previous explorers. Musil visited the area in 1898 and 1902; Frank and Glueck explored almost the same area in 1932 and 1934 respectively; Rast and Schaub visited three sites in the area in 1973; and King searched for Byzantine and Islamic sites in the Ghor in 1983. All of these surveys were of a purposive nature and all the sites visited were highly obtrusive. An intensive and systematic survey of the area has never been carried out and is badly needed.

During the survey 26 sites were visited: 11 of these sites are located in the Ghor; the remainder are on the plateau and associated wadis to the south of the Ghor. Approximately half of the sites visited were known previous to the survey. Materials collected at the sites visited included slags, querns, one gaming stone, sherds and lithics. The sherds collected span the period from the Chalcolithic through to the modern period. The lithic materials were much more abundant in the southern segment of the area surveyed. An examination of high elevations is necessary for the discovery of early lithic materials in the Ghor.

The present intention is to return to the area in 1986 and 1987 to carry out two seasons of work. One season will survey the Ghor from eṣ-Ṣāfi to the Wadi Khuneizir while the second season will treat the area to the south as far as the Wadi Fidān.

Dr. F. L. Koucky
College of Wooster
Wooster, Ohio 44691

Dr. B. MacDonald
St. Francis Xavier University
Antigonish, Nova Scotia B2G 1C0

