

【Grant-in-Aid for Scientific Research(S)】

Humanities and Social Sciences (Humanities)



Title of Project : Beyond the Fertile Crescent: Tracing the Formation Process of the Nomadic Near East

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Research Area : Near Eastern Archaeology

Keyword : Near East, Fertile Crescent, Pastoral Nomadism, Jordan, Saudi Arabia

【Purpose and Background of the Research】

Our research objective is to shed new light on the formation process of the nomadic society in the Near East through comprehensive investigations in the northwestern part of the Arabian Peninsula, the core of the epoch-making episode. It aims to trace: 1) the appearance process of short-range pastoral transhumance in the Pre-Pottery Neolithic B period; 2) the establishment process of initial pastoral nomadism during the Late Neolithic to Chalcolithic periods; and 3) the formation process of nomadic society in the Early Bronze Age. We would like to re-measure the original depth of the Near Eastern Prehistory through the cross-border, comprehensive investigations and, in so doing, reform the traditional Near Eastern archaeology that has long been focused on the Fertile Crescent.



Fig. 1 Fertile Crescent and its outside

【Research Methods】

What is required for tracing the processes referred to above are cross-border, comprehensive, mobile investigations that covers the five millennia from the PPNB to the EBA. We conduct it in the Jafr Basin in southern Jordan and the Tabuk/Jawf plains in northwestern Saudi Arabia (Fig. 2). The targets of our investigations include PPNB outposts, Late Neolithic encampments, Chalcolithic to EBA cairn fields. We place them into the chronological framework established by our previous research

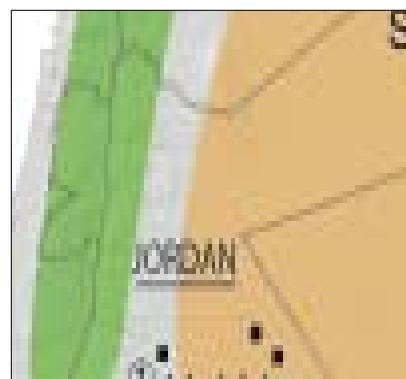


Fig. 2 Target sites

and trace the process of pastoral nomadization on the basis of specific archaeological evidence.

【Expected Research Achievements and Scientific Significance】

The challenging research project shall pave the way to a comprehensive description of the Near Eastern Prehistory involving the outside as well as the inside of the Fertile Crescent. In this sense, it contributes to the recovery of the original totality of the Near Eastern Prehistory.

【Publications Relevant to the Project】

- Fujii, S. (2011) Domestication of Desert: Archaeological study on pastoral nomadization in the Jafr Basin, Southern Jordan. *Bulletin of the National Museum of Ethnology* 85: 519-553.
- Fujii, S. (2001) Archaeology of Wheat and Sheep. 344 pages. Tokyo: Douseisya.

【Term of Project】 2013-2017

【Budget Allocation】 77,300 Thousand Yen

【Homepage Address and Other Contact Information】

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