

ABSTRACT

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The field work was carried out in the Eastern Badia of Jordan in September 1993. During a two week stay, the lichens which have colonised the basalt flows masking the arid landscape, were studied. Attention was paid to the orientation of the faces on which they grow and the total percentage of the face covered. This allowed 4 hypotheses concerned with how and why the distribution changes to be investigated.

The study found that the lichens preferred the environments on the north faces of the rocks to that of the south faces, and preferred the western latitudes to the eastern. The reasons for these preferences were suggested by literature written on the subject which discussed the variations in micro-climate on the faces of rocks, and background knowledge suggested that it may not be the actual latitude of the rock but more the proximity to a less arid climate.

Further study would be needed to investigate the lichen fully, however a greater understanding of the geology of the Eastern Badia and a more comprehensive knowledge of the lichens themselves, would be necessary.

Lichens are one of the oldest living organisms and along with their global distribution they may hold the key to historical events and could be used in the future to predict changes to the environments of the arid realm and the world itself.