The Fauna from Tel Bet Yeraḥ

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A small assemblage of 20 bones was retrieved during the excavation in the southern part of Tel Bet Yeraḥ (Area AG). The bones were hand-collected from four of the five strata identified in the excavation (see Golani, this volume): the majority (n = 13) belonged to Strata III–I (Loci 110, 117, 121, 123, 131, 136 and 141), dated to EB III; one bone belonged to Stratum IV, dated to EB II (L138); and the other bones were not associated with strata (Loci 120, 130, 135, 162 and 164). All phases of occupation were attributed to domestic activities.

Methods

The faunal remains were identified using the comparative collection of the Laboratory of Archaeozoology at the University of Haifa. Bone and tooth fragments were identified to the lowest taxonomic level possible, using the 'rapid protocol' (see Davis 1992; Albarella and Davis 1996; Marom and Bar-Oz 2008). Bones were inspected for taphonomic modifications, consisting of weathering, butchery marks, signs of animal impact and burning. Standard measurements of all the fused specimens and teeth were taken according to the protocols of Driesch 1976 and Davis 1996.

Results and Discussion

Most of the bones in the assemblage belong to adult sheep/goat (*Ovis aries*/*Capra hircus*; n = 13, 65%) and adult cattle (*Bos taurus*; n = 3, 15%; Table 1). It is noteworthy that despite the small assemblage size it includes the typically rare bones of hunted animals (n = 4, 20%), gazelle (*Gazella gazella*) and fallow deer (*Dama dama*; for data on species frequencies from a previous excavation at the site, see Cope 2006), all belonging to adult individuals. No butchery marks were discerned on the bones, and most were found with severe weathering marks (n = 16, 80%). Measurements are presented in Table 2. Due to the small sample available for study, no further analysis of the bones was possible.

Table 1. Species Frequencies Organized by Skeletal Element and Strata

Element	Species				*Total*
	Sheep/Goat	Cattle	Gazelle	Deer	
Strata III–I (L110, 117, 121, 123, 131, 136, 141)					
Astragalus	1				*1*
Calcaneus	1				*1*
Femur	1				*1*
Metapod	1				*1*
Pelvis	1				*1*
Phalanx 1	1	1	1		*3*
Phalanx 2	1	1			*2*
Radius	1				*1*
Tibia	2				*2*
Stratum IV (L138)					
dp4			1		*1*
Loci 120, 130, 155, 162 and 164					
Astragalus		1			*1*
Mandibular teeth	2				*2*
Phalanx 1	1			1	*2*
Tibia				1	*1*
Total	*13*	*3*	*2*	*2*	*20*

Table 2. Measurements of Identified Bones

Element	Measurements (cm)				
	GL[i]	Bp	Bd	SD	Dd
dp4					
Gazelle	21.55		8.05		
M3					
Sheep/Goat	16.16		6.38		
Phalanx 1					
Cattle	68.13	27.25	27.85		
Deer	42.66	12.7	15.32	13.58	
Gazelle	45.64	10.27	9.93	9.07	
Tibia					
Sheep/Goat			28.08		21.49

[i] GL = greatest length; Bp = greatest breadth of the proximal end; SD = smallest breadth of diaphysis; Dd = greatest depth of the distal end; Bd = breadth of distal end.

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