

THE ARCHAEOZOOLOGICAL FINDS FROM KHIRBAT EL-THAHIRIYA

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The faunal assemblage from Khirbat el-Thahiriya originated in 31 loci (41 baskets) and dates to the Byzantine–Abbasid periods (see Kogan-Zehavi and Hadad, this volume).¹ Most of the finds can be attributed to domestic animals (Tables 1–3). The wild species comprise birds (Aves sp.), Trigger fish (Balistidae), fish (Pisces sp.) and mole (*Spalax ehrenbergi*); of these, the *Spalax ehrenbergi* is probably a modern intrusion. Bone measurements are based upon von den Driesch (1976) and animal identification, on Schmid (1972).

One land snail, *Helix engaddensis* (Heller 1993), and three marine snails, *Murex trunculus*, *Cardium edule* (Linne') and *Polynices josephinus* (da Costa; Barash and Danin 1965), were recovered.

From Tables 1–3, it can be concluded that the main branch of economy at this settlement was sheep/goat herding. The hen/cock category comprises an unusually high percentage of the assemblage, suggesting that these birds also played an important role in the economy of the site.

Table 1. Distribution of Domestic Animal Bones

Species Bones	Sheep/Goat (<i>Ovis aries/Capra hircus</i>)	Cattle (<i>Bos taurus</i>)	Dog (<i>Canis familiaris</i>)	Hen/Cock (<i>Gallus gallus domestica</i>)	Total
Horn core	2				2
Cranium	4	1			5
Maxilla	1				1
Mandibula	21		1		22
Molar	48	1			49
Premolar	22		2		24
Incisor	3				3
Canine			1		1
Scapula	19	1			20
Humerus	19			1	20
Radius	4				4
Ulna	5			3	8
Coracoid				6	6
Metacarpus	4	1			5
Pelvis	19			1	20
Femur	1	1		3	5
Tibia/Tibiotarsus	14			3	17
Sternum				2	2
Calcaneus	7	1			8
Astragalus	6	1			7

Table 1. (cont.)

Bones \ Species	Sheep/Goat (<i>Ovis aries/Capra hircus</i>)	Cattle (<i>Bos taurus</i>)	Dog (<i>Canis familiaris</i>)	Hen/Cock (<i>Gallus gallus domestica</i>)	Total
Metatarsus/ Tarsometatarsus	11	1		1	13
Os centrotarsus	1	1			2
Metapod	63	6		15	84
Phalanx I	16		1		17
Phalanx II	7	1			8
Phalanx III	1				1
Vertebra	5	1			6
Vertebra axis	2				2
Vertebra lumbar	35				35
Costa	156	9			165
<i>Total</i>	<i>496</i>	<i>26</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>35</i>	<i>562</i>
% of Assemblage	88.25	4.62	0.90	6.23	100.00

Table 2. Right, Left, Proximal and Distal Bones of Domestic Animals

Bones \ Species	Sheep/Goat		Cattle		Hen/Cock	
	R	L	R	L	R	L
Humerus P	2					
D	9	10				1
Radius P	2	2				
Ulna P	4	1				1
D	1				1	1
Metacarpus P	4		1			
Femur P					2	1
D	1		1			1
Tibia/Tibiotarsus P	2					
D	6	6			2	
Calcaneus	6			1		
Astragalus	6		1			
Metatarsus P	5	6	1			
D	1					
Coracoid					1	4
Tarsometatarsus D						1

Table 3. MNI of Domestic Species

Species	Sheep/Goat	Cattle	Dog	Hen/Cock	Total
No.	10	1	1	4	16
%	62.50	6.25	6.25	25.00	100.00

NOTE

¹ I wish to thank Elena Kogan-Zehavi for giving me the opportunity to study the archaeozoological finds from her excavation.

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