

## CHAPTER 8

### THE ARCHAEOZOOLOGICAL FINDS

#### Moshe Sade

The Yesodot faunal remains, dated to the Middle and Late Bronze Ages, are comprised of 34 bones found in 16 separate loci. These remains represent several domesticated animal species: goat (*Capra hirsus*); sheep (*Ovis aries*); cattle (*Bos Taurus*); pig (*Sus scrofa*) and chicken (*Gallus gallus domestica*).

#### Summary

The small amount of faunal remains in this assemblage makes it difficult to draw specific

conclusions about the nature of the animal husbandry during the MB and LB periods in this part of the Yesodot site. No comparison between the two periods can be made with this sample. The dearth of faunal remains may suggest that animal products were not regularly processed, consumed or discarded here. Another conclusion we can draw is that a good water source was available, which was a necessity for raising cattle and pigs.

*Table 8.1. Frequencies of faunal remains, according to bone type and species.*

<b>Species/Bones</b>	<b>Goat/sheep</b>	<b>Cattle</b>	<b>Pig</b>	<b>Chicken</b>	<b>Total</b>
Horn core	2	1			3
Maxilla			1		1
Mandibula		1			1
Molar	2	3	2		7
Premolar	1				1
Radius	1	1			2
Humerus			1		1
Metacarpus	1	1			2
Femur				1	1
Astragalus		2			2
Metapod	2	2		1	5
Phalanx I		4			4
Phalanx 2		1			1
Vertebra (unidentified)		1			1
Vertebra (lumbar)	1	1			2
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>%</b>	<b>29.41</b>	<b>52.94</b>	<b>11.76</b>	<b>5.89</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Table 8.2. Right, left, proximal and distal bone metapods.

Species/Bones	Goat/sheep		Cattle		Pig		Chicken		Total	
	Right	Left	Right	Left	Right	Left	Right	Left	Right	Left
Proximal radius			1							
Distal radius				1						
Distal humerus					1					
Proximal metacarpus	1		1							
Distal femur								1		
Astragalus			2							

Table 8.3. Minimum number of individuals.

Species	Goat/sheep	Cattle	Pigs	Chicken	Total
Minimum number of individuals	1	2	1	1	5
%	20.00%	40.00%	20.00%	20.00%	100.00%

### Postscript

David Ilan

The discovery of a chicken bone from a Bronze Age context is surprising. The bone's find spot appears to be uncontaminated and of an MB/LB date. In this case it is one of the earliest pieces of evidence for domesticated chicken in the Levant (Blench and McDonald 2000: 497).<sup>1</sup> It is surprising that such a

rare animal should turn up in a rural settlement, when none have been found at larger urban sites. It remains to subject this bone to radiocarbon dating, if possible. All that can be said at this point is that there exists the possibility of a very early specimen of this domesticated fowl at Bronze Age Yesodot/ Khirbet Umm el-Kalkha.

### References

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- West, B and Ben-Xiong, Z. 1988. Did Chickens Go North? New Evidence for Domestication. *Journal of Archaeological Science* 15: 515-533.
- <sup>1</sup> *Gallus* has been reported from Iron Age II contexts in the City of David excavations in Jerusalem (Horwitz and Tchernov 1989; Horwitz and Tchernov 1996) and in a Early Bronze Age context from Tell es-Sweyhat in Syria (Buitenhuis 1985) having originated in southeast Asia (West and Ben-Xiong 1988).