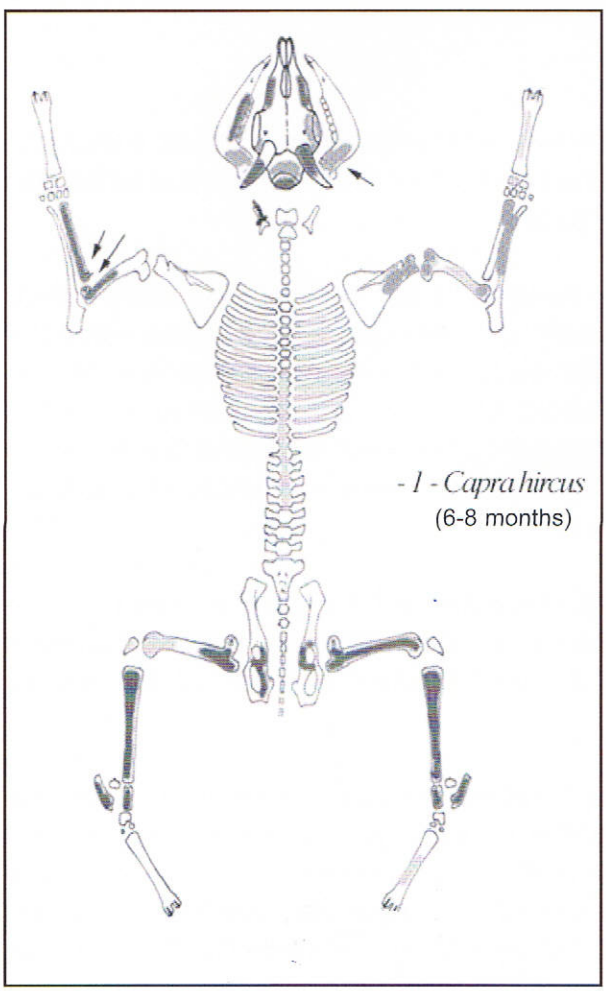
ARCHAEOLOGY & HISTORY IN THE LEBANON ISSUE TWENTY : AUTUMN 2004, PP. 31-33.

NOTE ON THE SKELETAL REMAINS FROM WARRIOR BURIAL 27 AT SIDON (FAUNAL MATERIAL)

EMMANUELLE VILA

Among the remains found in the Middle Bronze Age grave 27 at Sidon during the 2003 season, nearly 350 bones of mammals, five fishbones and one shell were recovered. The mammalian remains are somewhat fragmentary. All are attributable to mammals of medium size. Those bones that could be positively identified are attributable to caprines (*Capra hircus*) and pigs (*Sus scrofa*). Only one bone was positively identifiable as ovine (*Ovis aries*). One large mammal, probably a domestic bovine, is also represented by a single fragmentary bone. The large number of fragments that could not be positively identified were placed in the category *Ovis/Capra*, although they probably represent goats.

Remains Attributable to Goats



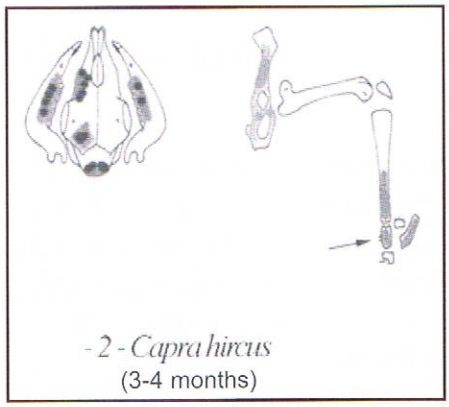
- 1 - Capra hircus
(6-8 months)

One individual (fig. 1-1) was identified by the remains (pelvis, femur, tibia tarsal bones) of two associated hindlimbs, one right and one left, to which elements of forelimbs corresponded. he right represented by remains of scapula and humerus, the left by scapula, humerus, radius, ulna and semilunare. Fragments of skull and horn-core, a group of upper and a group of lower teeth, fragments of metapodial bones as well as a large number of ribs and vertebrae no doubt also belong to this individual.

Judging by the stage of fusion of the epiphyses of the long bones as well as by the stage of eruption and wear of the teeth, they represent a caprine six to eight years old: the milk molar D4 is worn, as are the first cusps of the molar 1. The stage of development of the horn-core may be an indication that this is a male.

Cutmarks are visible on the distal part of the left humerus and on the proximal part of the left radius: the positions of the marks reflect one another, and cutmarks related in this way are generally interpreted as marks either of removal of the flesh or of dismemberment. Dismemberment does not seem to have been the cause of the marks here, as the bones of this forequarter appear to have been found in articulation, which would signify that they were still connected when they were deposited. Cutmarks were also found

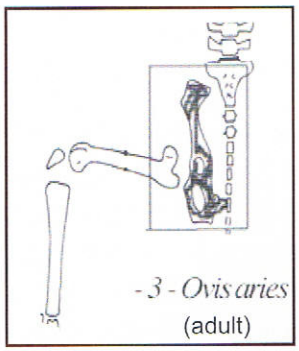
on the coronoid process of a mandible fragment Perhaps they resulted from the separation of the mandible from the cranium or from the removal of the skin.



- 2 - *Capra hircus*
(3-4 months)

A second individual (fig. 2) was identified by the presence of a left hindlimb whose stage of development is less advanced than that of the first caprine, as well as by the presence of left and right rows of lower teeth and a row of upper teeth. Some skull fragments can also be attributed to this individual, and probably also elements of vertebral column and fragments of ribs. On the other hand, not a single element of a forelimb that could have belonged to this caprine was found.

The stages of eruption and wear of the teeth indicate that they come from a kid three to four months old The first cusp of the milk molar D4 is partially worn, and permanent molar M1 is present in the mandible and shows no signs of wear, whereas it has not yet erupted in the maxilla.



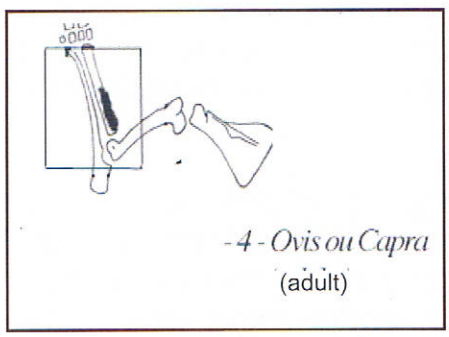
- 3 - *Ovis aries*
(adult)

Cutmarks are visible on the talus. Their positions suggest that they are linked to the separation of the extremity from the limb.

Other Remains of Fauna

The left half of the pelvis of a ewe (*Ovis aries*) exhibits female anatomical characteristics The ewe was adult (fig. 3). A proximal fragment of radius also represents an adult, *Ovis* or *Capra* (fig. 4).

A large number of the other skeletal remains were not positively identifiable, but were classed as small domestic ruminants using the criteria of size, thickness and appearance. These fragments include splinters of long bones, fragments of ribs and vertebrae as well as a proximal fragment of a burnt juvenile phalanx I, the morphology of which is caprine. The epiphysis of another phalanx I is fused, and appears, somewhat uncertainly, to exhibit ovine characteristics.

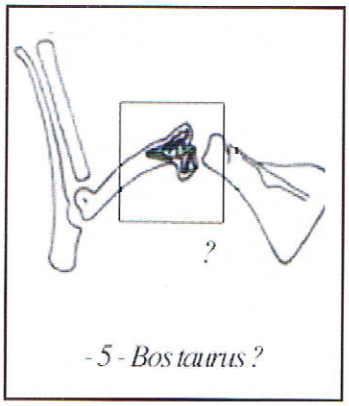


- 4 - *Ovis ou Capra*
(adult)

A fragment of the epiphysis of a long bone (humerus? fig. 5) attests to the presence of a large mammal, perhaps a bovine, a species attested in other funerary contexts of the Middle Bronze Age.

In addition, the pig is represented by two fragments One fragment of the mandible of a juvenile (fig. 6) about one to two months old, as the teeth show no signs of wear; and another of the maxilla of a sub-adult (fig. 7). The definitive teeth (P4, M1 and M2) have erupted, but without signs of wear. This fragment represents an animal about one and a half years old.

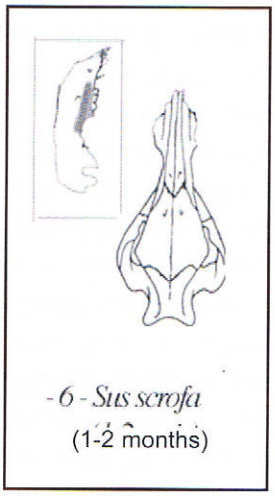
Five remains of fish have also been catalogued, but these have not yet been positively identified (fig. 8).
Only one shell (a limpet) is present.



- 5 - *Bos taurus ?*

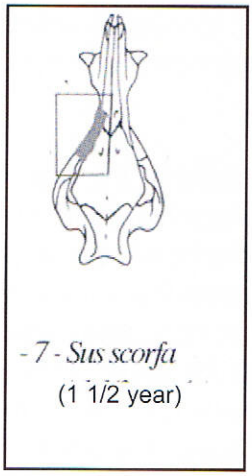
Interpretation of the Assemblage of Fauna in Grave 27

Four species of mammals are represented in the grave goats, sheep, pigs and probably domestic cattle. The remains represent animals of various ages, including some very young individuals. The types of deposit represented also vary. In the first case, it would appear that a male kid was deposited nearly complete, although such operations as the removal of the extremities, the separation of the mandible from the cranium and perhaps some removal of flesh had taken place before deposition. In the second type of deposit, only parts of the animal were deposited. The head and the ham (plus the spinal column?) of a suckling kid, and only parts of a ewe and a cow. All the above deposits belong in the category of food offerings, as no doubt do the remains of fish. The last type of deposit, on the other hand, is of single elements of the skeleton that provide no edible flesh, represented by the mandible of a piglet and the maxilla of a sub-adult pig. The significance of this last type of deposit is probably symbolic.



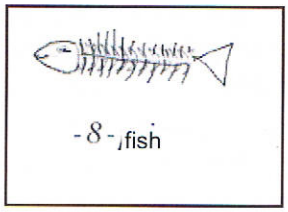
- 6 - *Sus scrofa* (1-2 months)

The animal remains from the group of tombs and burials at Sidon to which Constructed Grave 27 belongs are the subject of a separate publication (Vila, 2004, 167-180). The catalogue of food offerings places this grave among those most richly provided in this respect, since it contained the remains from the slaughter of at least six animals. A deposit of a caprine characterized by the presence of a large part, but not all, of the skeleton was also found in Constructed Grave 5, where the skeletal remains indicate that the head and vertebral column of a caprine as well as three of its four limbs minus their extremities had been deposited. In this grave, too, cutmarks were found on some of the bones. This leads to the hypothesis that the flesh may have been removed before the bones were deposited.



- 7 - *Sus scorfa* (1 1/2 year)

The study of the fauna in the *Levant* publication on Middle Bronze Age burials at Sidon demonstrates that deposits of pig were uncommon They are attested by only a few remains of bones in four burials (Inhumation 3 and Constructed Graves 4, 16 and 19). The presence of skull fragments is noteworthy in two burials (Constructed Grave 4: frontal bone, mandible, maxilla + axis and femur; (Constructed Grave 19: mandible). Although the data available for study are still very few, one may wonder whether, as far as the pig is concerned, parts of the skull (mandible, maxilla) were not deposited preferentially.



- 8 - fish

Bibliography

E. Vila,
2004, "Survey of the Remains of Mammals Recovered in the Middle Bronze Age Burials at Sidon (Lebanon)", *Levant* 36, pp. 167-180.