

11. Animal bones from the basins of Sykourio and Elateia

Maaïke Groot

11.1. Methods

During the systematic surface surveys carried out in the basins of Sykourio and Elateia a total of 125 faunal remains could be collected. All of them were in fragmentary condition, some covered with sinter, others burnt. As it was not possible to have a zooarchaeologist examine the animal bones on site in Greece, 125 bones were photographed by Agathe Reingruber from different perspectives and the photographs sent to Maaïke Groot for identification. Additional information regarding size and weight was available from the project's database. The main aim was to get some idea of species representation and to identify animal bones selected for radiocarbon dating. Identification from photographs is not ideal. In some cases, identification to species and skeletal element was easy; in others, only a possible identification could be offered. For a large part of the fragments, identification was not possible at all; however, this is also normal during zooarchaeological analysis where the bones can be handled.

11.2. Elateia 1

A total of 115 fragments of faunal remains were available from the flat site of Elateia 1. Most of them are bones (95 fragments), followed by shells (11 fragments) and teeth (9). 28 fragments of mammals could be identified to species: 15 sheep or goat, 10 cattle, 2 pig (or wild boar) and 1 deer (Table 11.1 and Fig. 11.1). Two tooth fragments are probably identifiable if seen and handled, but at the moment are identified as sheep/goat or cattle. Of the 26 mammal fragments that could be attributed to a size class, 19 are from medium-sized mammals and 7 from large-sized mammals. The remaining 48 fragments could not be identified at all, but are almost certainly all from mammals. For both sheep or goat and cattle, bones from different parts of the body are represented, including the feet which contain little meat. This suggests that animals were killed and processed on site.

species	n fragments
<i>mammals</i>	
sheep/goat	15
cattle	10
pig	2
deer	1
total identified	28
sheep/goat or cattle	2
medium mammal	19
large mammal	7
mammal	48
total mammal	104
<i>molluscs</i>	
Spondylus sp.	1
Cardidae	3
Unio sp.	1
mollusc	6
total molluscs	11

Table 11.1. Faunal remains from Elateia 1.

Information on slaughter ages is limited: two epiphyses from cattle and one from pig are fused. For sheep or goat, one epiphysis is unfused and four are fused. The teeth all seem to be permanent molars.

The average weight of identified mammal fragments is 18 g and that of unidentified mammal fragments is 2 g. As expected, cattle fragments are heavier (between 17 and 133 g) than fragments of the smaller species (sheep or goat: 1-16 g; pig: 2-5.5 g; deer: 17 g).

The economy was largely based on domesticated animals, but it is possible that some meat was added by hunting. However, the only fragment that is certainly from a wild species is an antler fragment and does not provide proof for hunting, as antler can be gathered (after the animal has shed it) or traded. Due to the fragmentary condition of the bones no tools were identified among them.

Of the eleven molluscs, three could be identified as cockles (family Cardidae; marine molluscs), one

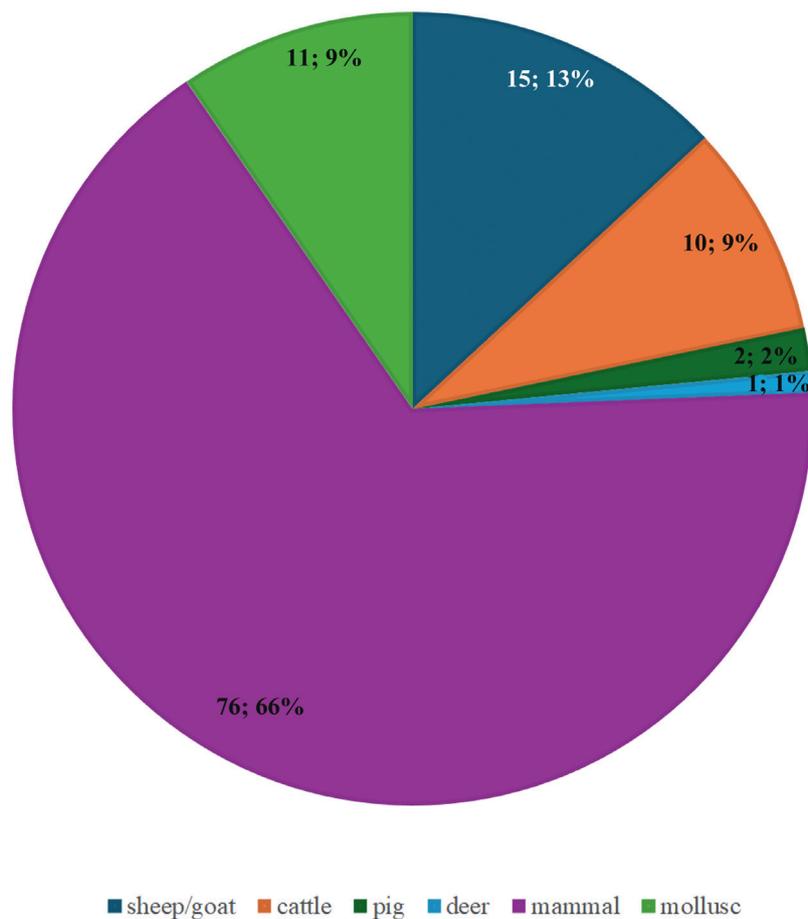


Fig. 11.1. Diagram showing the identified animal species from Elateia 1.

as *Spondylus* sp. (also marine) and one as *Unio* sp. (a freshwater species). Three molluscs were not identified from the photographs but can probably be identified if seen in real life and with access to reference material.

11.3. Nessonis II (Theocharis' excavation)

A total of 14 animal bones, mostly small fragments, were preserved from the investigations led by D. Theocharis in Nessonis I and II (i.e. Nessonis 1-East and Nessonis 2). Four of them show traces of working or use. Two of these are ribs, one probably from cattle and the second from a medium-sized mammal. A tibia from a sheep or goat is distally fused. A fragment is from a medium-sized mammal, burned, but could not be identified further.

The other ten animal bone fragments were unworked fragments, some of them selected for

C14-dating. One fragment is a sheep/goat metapodial that is distally fused. Two other fragments are probably also from sheep or goat: one fragment is almost certainly from a radius and the second probably from a metacarpus. The other seven fragments were not identifiable.

In addition to mammal bones, two shells could be identified as Noa's ark (*Arca noae*) and Mediterranean scallop (*Pecten jacobaeus*). Nessonis 2 is situated 30 km from the Aegean coast where they were probably collected.

11.4. Makrychori 3

Four bones from this site were available. One bone is a distal fragment of a sheep/goat metapodial. Another bone is probably a distal fragment of a cattle phalanx. Two fragments could not be identified.

A bead and a fragment of a bracelet are probably both made from *Spondylus* shells.