



Centre for Human Palaeoecology
Department of Archaeology
The King's Manor, York YO1 7EP

**Reports from the *Fishlab*, Centre for Human
Palaeoecology, University of York**

Report **2005/09**

The fish bone from Cartergate, Grimsby

by

Rachel L. Parks

fishlab, Centre for Human Palaeoecology, Department of Archaeology, University of
York, The King's Manor, York YO1 7EP

15th July 2005

The fish bone from Cartergate, Grimsby

Rachel L. Parks

Summary

A small assemblage (42 identified specimens) was recovered from three contexts. Cod was the predominant species recovered; other taxa included herring, haddock and saithe.

KEYWORDS: GRIMSBY; FISH BONES; ZOOARCHAEOLOGY

The Centre for Human Palaeoecology brings together archaeological scientists within the University of York whose research interests include past human activity, economy and environment.

Disclaimer: this report is one of a series produced by staff and colleagues of the Centre for Human Palaeoecology, based in the Department of Archaeology, University of York. It contains material that may eventually be intended for publication and, as such, may represent only an interim statement. When quoting this report, please refer to it in this way:

Postlethwaite, A.C. and Mudge, B.E. (2003). Technical Report: Plant and animal remains from a muddy hole somewhere in Yorkshire. Reports from the Centre for Human Palaeoecology, University of York 2003/03, 6pp. + 10 pp. Appendix.

Please address all non-academic enquiries concerning these reports to the Centre for Human Palaeoecology, Department of Archaeology, University of York, The King's Manor, York YO1 7EP (e-mail: biol38@york.ac.uk).

The fish bone from Cartergate, Grimsby

Introduction

A small fish bone assemblage was recovered from the site (site code CGG03) which has mediaeval and early modern features (D. Young *pers comm.*). Unfortunately, at the time of writing no phasing information was available for the deposits with fish bone.

Methods

Recording followed the York protocol as outlined by Harland *et al* 2003. All specimens are counted and weighed and are classified as either 'diagnostic' or 'non-diagnostic' elements. The diagnostic elements are identified to species level where possible and are further divided into three groups; quantification codes 1, 2 and 4. For a suite of 18 QC1 elements, criteria including estimation of fish size, element completeness, bone modification (such as butchery) and metric data are recorded. Generally, unless modified in some way vertebrae (QC2 elements) are not recorded in detail beyond taxonomic identification. However, due to the small size of this assemblage estimated fish size was recorded for vertebrae where possible. Special elements such as dermal denticles (quantification code 4) are recorded in a similar level of detail as the QC1 elements. Under the York protocol all other (QC0) elements are usually recorded as unidentified. A list of Latin and common names for all taxa in the assemblage is included in appendix 1.

The complete archive has been submitted to Lindsey Archaeological Services with this report, as a Microsoft Access database file and a series of text files which duplicate its content. A copy of the archive will also be kept on file at the University of York.

Analysis

Fish bone was recovered from three sampled and wet sieved contexts (408, 506 and 542); material from the greater than 2mm fraction was analysed. In total, 963 specimens were recorded (table 1), of which 42 were diagnostic (as defined above). No burnt, or otherwise modified, specimens were recorded. The small number of QC1 elements does not permit comment on element completeness and surface texture (table 2).

The majority of identified specimens were cod (table 3). Haddock, saithe, eel, herring, the ray family and gurnard family were present in small numbers. Context 542 yielded the most specimens (856, 32 of which were diagnostic). Although a wide range of elements are represented in this context, there are insufficient specimens to comment on element distribution (table 3). It can be noted, however, that these same elements are generally from fish greater than 500mm estimated total length.

References

Harland, J. F., J. H. Barrett, J. Carrott, K. Dobney, and D. Jaques. 2003. The York System: An integrated zooarchaeological database for research and teaching. *Internet Archaeology* 13:http://intarch.ac.uk/journal/issue13/harland_index.html

Table 1. Number of identified specimens

context	count			weight		
	unidentified	diagnostic	total	unidentified	diagnostic	total
408	30	6	36	5.86	8.38	14.24
506	67	5	72	20.03	6.11	26.13
542	824	32	856	109.02	32.53	141.55
total	921	42	963	17.36	68.81	86.15

Table 2. Bone preservation by context (only recordable for certain contexts)

	408	506	542	total
Element completeness (QC1 elements only)				
0-20%		1	8	9
21-40%		2	10	12
41-60%	2		1	3
81-100%	2	1		3
Surface texture (QC1 elements only)*				
excellent	1			1
good	2		2	4
fair	1	2	4	7
poor		2	13	15

*Assessment of surface texture based on the following criteria (Harland *et al* 2003) :
 excellent - majority of surface fresh or even slightly glossy; very localized flaky or powdery patches
 good - lacks fresh appearance but solid; very localized flaky or powdery patches
 fair - surface solid in places, but flaky or powdery on upto 49% of specimen
 poor- surface flaky or powdery on over 50% of specimen

Table 3. Element representation

taxa	element	408	506	542
ray family	dermal denticle			1
eel	dentary	1		
Atlantic herring	abdominal vertebra			1
	caudal vertebra			1
cod	articular			1
	abdominal vertebra 1		1	3
	abdominal vertebra 2			1
	abdominal vertebra 3	2		2
	ceratohyal			2
	dentary			3
	hyomandibular		1	1
	palatine		1	
	posttemporal			2
	premaxilla	1	2	2
	quadrate			1
	vomer			2
haddock	caudal vertebra 1			1
	premaxilla			1
saithe	opercular	1		
	premaxilla	1		
cod family	abdominal vertebra			2
	dentary			3
	maxilla			1
gurnard family	caudal vertebra			1

Table 4. Estimated fish total length (based on comparison with reference specimens of known length)

size	taxon	408	506	542
151-300mm	cod family			1
301-500mm	haddock			1
501-800mm	eel	1		
	cod		2	4
	haddock			1
801-1000mm	cod	3	2	16
	saithe	2		

Appendix 1. Common and Latin names of taxa mentioned in the text

Common name	Latin name
ray family	Rajidae
eel	<i>Anguilla anguilla</i>
Atlantic herring	<i>Clupea harengus</i>
cod	<i>Gadus morhua</i>
haddock	<i>Melanogrammus aeglefinus</i>
saithe	<i>Pollachius virens</i>
cod family	Gadidae
gurnard family	Triglidae