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**Assessment of biological remains from excavations at  
62 Tadcaster Road, York (site code: 1995.55)**

by

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**Summary**

*Three samples of sediment and a very small quantity of hand-collected bone were submitted for an assessment of their potential for bioarchaeological analysis. None of the material gave worthwhile assemblages and further work is not recommended.*

**Keywords:** TADCASTER ROAD; YORK; BIOLOGICAL REMAINS; ANIMAL BONES

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## Assessment of biological remains from excavations at 62 Tadcaster Road, York (site code: 1995.55)

### Introduction

Excavation of land at 62 Tadcaster Road, York was undertaken by York Archaeological Trust during the summer of 1995. Three samples of sediment ('GBAs' *sensu* Dobney *et al.* 1992) and a small quantity of hand-collected bone were submitted for assessment.

The aims of this assessment were (a) to confirm, if possible, that one of the samples was taken from a natural deposit, (b) to determine the nature of the two remaining sediments and (c) to identify and interpret the bone assemblages

### Methods

The sediment samples were inspected in the laboratory and described using a standard *pro forma*. It was considered that few, if any, remains would be present in this material therefore two samples were selected for bulk-sieve processing only. A 1 kg voucher was retained from each sample.

All of the bone was examined.

### Results

#### *The sediment samples*

The results of the investigations are presented in context number order, with context information from the excavator in square brackets.

**Context 8002** Sample 5 [fill of cut, possibly construction]

Just moist, mid grey/brown, crumbly to unconsolidated, slightly clay sand with clasts of light green/brown and ?burnt sand (to 8mm).

Seven kilograms of sediment was bulk-sieved to 500µm. The residue (1.55 kg when dry) consisted mostly of sand and stones with some brick/tile (including a large piece of tile) and charcoal. The washover 'flot' contained some plant detritus, rootlets, many earthworm capsules and the remains of 5 individuals of beetles. These were: a large, black carabid (unidentified); *Aphodius* sp.; *Cercyon* sp. (one individual each); and two individuals of the weevil *Barynotus obscurus* (Fabricius). The age and significance of these remains is uncertain.

**Context 8005** Sample 3 [ditch fill, possibly for drainage. Roman]

Just moist, mid grey/brown (working plastic), clay sand with rotted ?mortar/plaster, brick/tile and charcoal present.

Seven kilograms of sediment was bulk-sieved to 500µm. The residue (453g when dry) was composed mainly of stones and sand with a moderate quantity of charcoal (to 1cm), a little brick/tile and a couple of fragments of unidentifiable mammal bone. The washover 'flot' contained a small amount of plant detritus (mostly rootlets) and single earthworm capsule.

**Context 8009** Sample 4 [?natural]

Just moist, mid brown, stiff (working plastic), clay with patches of mid brown sand and pale grey veining, giving a gleyed appearance. Almost certainly natural.

No further analysis was undertaken.

#### *Bone*

Overall, preservation was fair to poor. Most of the bones were brown in colour,

very few were measurable, and fresh breaks were evident throughout.

**Context 8003** (preservation fair, angularity variable, colour brown)

Pig primary phalanx (very eroded)  
Cattle maxillary molar (x 2)  
Cattle primary phalanx  
Sheep/goat proximal metacarpal (measurable)  
4 x unidentifiable cow-sized fragments

**Context 8005** (preservation poor, angularity variable, colour brown)

Cattle metacarpal  
Cattle astragalus  
Sheep/goat mandibular molar fragment  
3 x unidentifiable sheep-sized shaft fragments  
26 x unidentifiable cow-sized fragments

**Context 8007** (preservation fair, angularity variable, colour brown)

Cattle distal metatarsal (measurable)  
Cattle primary phalanx  
Cattle secondary phalanx  
Cattle tertiary phalanx  
(All cattle fragments probably represent a single individual)  
Horse distal tibia (measurable)  
4 x unidentifiable cow-sized fragments

## Discussion

The sediment from Context 8009 (Sample 4) was considered to be from a natural deposit, the laboratory investigation therefore confirming the view of the excavator. The nature of the sediment from the remaining two contexts (8002 and 8005) could not be clearly defined from the evidence of the meagre remains found in the residues.

The bone assemblage was also of little interpretative value because of its very small size.

## Statement of potential

Neither the sediment samples nor the bone offer any significant potential for further bioarchaeological analysis

## Recommendations

No further work is recommended on the material in hand.

## Retention and disposal

The samples recovered during this exercise are not considered worthy of retention for their content of plant remains or macroinvertebrates. The animal bones may be disposed of.

## Archive

All extracted fossils and flots are currently stored in the Environmental Archaeology Unit, University of York, along with paper and electronic records pertaining to the work described here.

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## References

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