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**An assessment of intestinal parasitic nematode egg remains from excavations at Merton Priory, London**

by

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**Summary**

*One hundred and twenty small samples of sediment from deposits excavated at Merton Priory, London, were submitted for an assessment of their potential for analysis of intestinal parasitic nematode eggs.*

*Twenty samples were selected, at random, for examination. Only one of the samples (Sample 2204, Context 4134) contained eggs and these were too few in number and too poorly preserved to be of interpretative value.*

**Keywords:** MERTON PRIORY; LONDON; ASSESSMENT; INTESTINAL PARASITIC NEMATODE EGGS; ?*TRICHURIS*; *ASCARIS*

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## **An assessment of intestinal parasitic nematode egg remains from excavations at Merton Priory, London**

### **Introduction**

Excavations at Merton Priory, London, undertaken by Museum of London Archaeology Service yielded one hundred and twenty samples of sediment from deposits around the pelvic areas of human burials. These have been examined for the eggs of intestinal parasitic nematodes.

### **Methods**

One hundred and twenty samples of sediment ('SPOTs' *sensu* Dobney *et al.* 1992) were submitted. Twenty were randomly selected for examination for the eggs of intestinal parasitic nematodes using the 'squash' technique of Dainton (1992).

### **Results**

The results of the investigations are presented in Context number order in Table 1.

Although primarily for the detection of intestinal parasitic nematode eggs the 'squash' technique routinely reveals other microfossil remains, where present these have also been noted.

### **Discussion and statement of potential**

The examined samples were effectively barren of interpretable microfossil remains— only one of the samples (Sample 2204, Context 4134) contained eggs and these were too few in number and too poorly preserved to be of interpretative value.

### **Recommendations**

No further work is recommended on these samples.

### **Retention and disposal**

Any remaining sediment samples may be discarded.

### **Archive**

Paper and electronic records pertaining to the work described here are currently stored in the Environmental Archaeology Unit, University of York,

### **Acknowledgements**

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### **References**

- Dainton, M. (1992). A quick semi-quantitative method for recording nematode gut parasite eggs from archaeological deposits. *Circaea* **9**, 58-63.
- Dobney, K., Hall, A. R., Kenward, H. K. and Milles, A. (1992 for 1991). A working classification of sample types for environmental archaeology. *Circaea, the Journal of the Association for Environmental Archaeology* **9**, 24-6.

Table 1. Intestinal parasitic nematode eggs from Merton Priory, London (with notes on other observed remains). **Key:** f - few; i - inorganic; m - many; s - some; t - trace

Context	Sample	Main component	Organic content	Trichuris	Ascaris	Fungal spores and/or hyphae	Non-fungal spores/pollen	Notes
2376	2006	i	t	-	-	f	-	
2464	2053	i	t	-	-	f		unidentified land snail in sample
2629	6010	i	t	-	-	f	-	
2860	2072	i	t	-	-	-	-	
3122	2091	i	t	-	-	-	-	
3394	2113	i	t	-	-	f	-	
3544	2133	i	t	-	-	f	f	
3941	2172	i	-	-	-	-	-	
3955	2174	i	t	-	-	-	-	
4050	2183	i	t	-	-	f	-	
4062	2185	i	t	-	-	-	-	
4065	2776	i	t	-	-	f	-	
4134	2204	i	s	?2	1	m	-	unidentified land snail in sample
4184	2210	i	t	-	-	f	-	
5034	2504	i	t	-	-	-	f	
5287	2519	i	t	-	-	f	-	
5862	2558	i	t	-	-	-	-	
5883	2553	i	t	-	-	f	-	
5892	2565	i	t	-	-	f	-	
6027	2630	i	t	-	-	f	-	