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**An evaluation of vertebrate remains from excavations
at Catterick (sitecode: 1995.57)**

by

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Summary

A very small assemblage of animal bones was submitted to the EAU for evaluation. Although the assemblage shows characteristic Roman butchery, it is too small to offer more detailed interpretation. However, further excavations with adequate recovery will yield larger and thus more valuable groups.

Keywords: Catterick; North Yorkshire; Roman; vertebrate remains; commercial butchery

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Introduction

A small assemblage of hand-collected animal bone, amounting to a single box (31 x 31 x 22 cm), was recovered from two of the five trenches excavated at Catterick. Bone from trench 3 was recovered from deposits of 3rd century date, whilst a small quantity of very fragmentary material came from agricultural soil associated with a single sherd of medieval pottery.

Results

Preservation was variable, with some bone appearing battered and friable. Colour was mostly gingery brown, with little variation apparent within the material from each context. Few of the bones showed evidence of dog gnawing, although fresh breakage was noted in quite high frequencies (20-50% of the entire assemblage), as was butchery.

From trench 3, a total of 208 fragments were recovered, of which cattle remains predominated (46 fragments), with only six fragments of sheep/goat and a single pig element represented (Table 1).

Many of the cattle long bones had been split longitudinally and trimming of the epiphyses was also observed. Of particular interest were the cattle scapulae, most of which had been trimmed around the glenoid cavity and, in some cases, the spinus had also been removed. It is possible that this type of butchery represents 'brined' and cold-smoked joints, the trimming allowing access for the salt into the muscle mass. Additionally, two scapulae exhibited knife marks on the medial surface of the blade.

The remaining cattle fragments present were mostly non-meat-bearing elements (i.e. lower limbs, feet and heads) suggesting waste from primary butchery. The nature of the butchery observed, indicates the presence of commercial

butchery waste, with systematic splitting of the shafts for marrow extraction.

Horse remains (from Trench 3) were mostly represented by upper and lower teeth and mandible fragments. Knife marks were noted on the shaft of a single metacarpal. Also present were five fragments, identified as dog, which appeared to be part of the same small and robust individual.

Eleven measurable bones (mostly cattle) and two mandibles with teeth were recorded from this assemblage.

Animal bone from Trench 4 was mostly unidentifiable because of its very fragmentary nature. Only three fragments were identified as cattle, whilst the remainder consisted of cow-sized shaft and vertebra fragments.

Statement of potential

The animal bone from Catterick is limited in its interpretative value by its small size and the small numbers of fragments providing biometrical and age-at-death data. However, the cattle bones from Trench 3 are of interest since they show characteristic butchery noted from other assemblages of Roman date both from Catterick (Hodgson 1977; **) and Carlisle (Stallibrass 1993), the wider region, i.e. York (O'Connor 1988; Carrott *et al.* 1995) and Lincoln (Dobney *et al.* forthcoming) and beyond i.e. Chichester (Levitan 1989) Exeter (Maltby 1979) and Gloucester and Cirencester (Maltby 1984).

Recommendations

It is likely that a moderate bone assemblage would be recovered should further excavation be undertaken. Systematic recovery procedures would also ensure that a more representative range of species and elements was

recovered. Large assemblages from Catterick would enable comparisons to be made between the diet and economy of the military and civilian Roman settlements.

Retention and disposal

The bone should be retained for the present.

Archive

The bones 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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Table 1. Animal bone from Trench 3

Taxon	Total fragments	No. measurable	No. mandibles
<i>Bos</i> f. domestic	46	7	
Caprine	6	2	1
<i>Sus</i> f. domestic	1		
<i>Equus</i> f. domestic	15	2	1
<i>Canis</i> f. domestic	6		
Unidentified	139		
Total	213	11	2