Notes on the vertebrate and shellfish remains from Friary Gardens, Richmond, North Yorkshire (site code RGF00)

by

Deborah Jaques

Introduction

Six trenches located within an area to the west of the Friary Gardens, Richmond, North Yorkshire, were excavated by On-Site Archaeology during February and March 2000. The evaluation was undertaken prior to the development of the gardens, with a view to establishing the presence (or not) and potential of archaeological remains within the area.

Several bags of vertebrate remains (1347 g) representing 10 contexts were submitted for evaluation of their bioarchaeological potential.

Methods

The vertebrate remains were recorded using the protocol outlined in Dobney et al (1999). Where possible, fragments were identified to species or species group, using the reference collection at the Environmental Archaeology Unit, University of York. Fragments not identifiable to species were grouped into categories: large mammal (assumed to be cattle, horse or large cervid) and medium-sized mammal (assumed to be caprovid, pig or small cervid). Notes were made of preservation, angularity (i.e. the nature of the broken surfaces) and colour. The total weight of bone was recorded for each context. Measurements were not taken because of the modern or uncertain date of the deposits.

Results

Artefactual remains, context descriptions and pottery spot dates all indicate that the deposits from which the bones were recovered were of modern date, or contained residual or redeposited material. Although most of the material was well-preserved, human remains from Contexts 1035 and 1039 were rather eroded, and the presence of these fragments, and the human teeth from Context 1001, also suggest that these deposits contained some reworked material.

Fresh breakage was noted throughout the assemblage and evidence for butchery was observed on a few fragments. No burnt or dog gnawed fragments were recorded.

The hand-collected assemblage amounted to only 67 fragments, of which 26 were identified to species (Table 1). Species present included cattle, caprovid (sheep/goat), horse and pig. The human teeth (Context 1001) represented an adult individual, whilst the cranial fragments and ulna (Context 1035) were from the remains of a baby. A detailed list of identifications can be found in the appendix.
Discussion and statement of potential

Although mainly well-preserved, this small assemblage is mostly of modern origin or reworked from earlier deposits, it is therefore of little interpretative value. No further work is warranted on this material.

Retention and disposal

The vertebrate assemblage may be discarded.

Reference

Table 1. Hand-collected vertebrate remains from Friary Gardens, Richmond, North Yorkshire.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Species</th>
<th>Total fragments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Equus f. domestic</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sus f. domestic</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bos f. domestic</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caprovid</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homo sapiens</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large mammal</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium mammal</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unidentified</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>67</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 1

Trench 1

Context 1001

Preservation: variable – mostly good
Angularity: variable – mostly ‘spiky’, but few fragments eroded and rounded
Colour: fawn

*Human*: 3 permanent teeth – 2 upper premolars and 1 upper canine
*Cattle*: 1 upper molar
*Large mammal*: 1 rib fragment
*Medium mammal*: 4 shaft fragments – including tibiae
*Unidentified*: 12 fragments, mostly small and with fresh breaks

Fresh breakage noted throughout assemblage.

Weight: 104.4g

Context 1006

Preservation: fair
Angularity: spiky
Colour: fawn

*Large mammal*: 1 rib fragment

Weight: 6.5g

Context 1008

Preservation: very poor
Angularity: eroded and battered
Colour: brown

*Unidentified*: 1 fragment

Weight: 5.3g

Trench 2

Context 1026

Preservation: good
Angularity: spiky
Colour: fawn

*Cattle*: 1 distal humerus fragment – heavily chopped through distal articulation and down shaft

Weight: 72.7g
Trench 3

Context 1029

Preservation: good
Angularity: spiky
Colour: fawn

*Large mammal*: 3 cranium and 2 shaft fragments

Fresh breakage noted.

Weight: 73.8g

Trench 6

Context 1042

Preservation: good
Angularity: spiky
Colour: fawn or brown

*Horse*: 1 tibia (distal articulation measurable)
*Cattle*: 1 unfused distal tibia, 1 heavily chopped pelvis fragment
*Caprovid*: 2 tibia fragments (both measurable), representing large individuals
*Pig*: humerus shaft fragment
*Large mammal*: 1 pelvis fragment and 1 thoracic vertebra
*Medium mammal*: 1 femur shaft fragment
*Shellfish*: 1 oyster shell

Fresh breakage noted throughout assemblage.

Weight: 748.3g

Trench 4

Context 1035

Preservation: good
Angularity: spiky
Colour: fawn

*Human*: 8 cranium fragments and 1 ulna fragment representing a baby
*Medium mammal*: 6 vertebra fragments, including sacrum, lumbar (chopped longitudinally) and cervical fragments. Also 1 rib and 1 pelvis fragment. Vertebrae and pelvis chopped.
*Shellfish*: 1 cockle shell

Fresh breakage noted.

Weight: 35.7g

Trench 5

Context 1039

Preservation: good
Angularity: variable – spiky and battered
Colour: brown

*Cattle*: 1 distal tibia fragment
*Caprovid*: 1 metacarpal (rather battered)