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**Evaluation of the vertebrate remains from Elmbank Hotel, The Mount,
York, (site code 1998.13)**

by

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Summary

A small assemblage of vertebrate remains was presented for analysis. Three fragments of human bone were recovered together with animal remains. The potential of the current material was extremely limited, but the tight dating (mid-late 2nd Century) and the possibility that there was a high status settlement in the vicinity indicate that, should further excavation recover a larger assemblage, it would be of significance.

Keywords: ELMBANK HOTEL, YORK, ROMAN, 2ND CENTURY, VERTEBRATE REMAINS, BONE.

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Introduction

An evaluation excavation was carried out by 'On-site Archaeology' at the Elmbank Hotel, The Mount, York, during March 1998. Vertebrate remains from two contexts (2014, 2015), both ditch fills, were presented for analysis of their potential. The pottery from both contexts indicated high status settlement in the vicinity during the mid-late 2nd Century (Precious and Vince 1998)

Methods

The vertebrate remains were examined and a basic archive produced. A record was made of preservation, quantities (numbers and weights) and identifications where appropriate. Measurements were taken, where applicable, according to von den Driesch (1976).

Results

Overall preservation was fair, with angularity (appearance of broken surfaces) described as battered. Colour was a uniform fawn. Dog gnawing, butchery and fresh breakage were present on 0-10 % of the fragments.

In total 84 fragments (weighing 983 g) were recovered, of which 14 (weighing 574 g) were identified to species. The appendix gives a list of the fragments recovered. Three fragments were measurable (Table 1).

Three human femur fragments were recovered from Context 2014, with a further bone fragment for which identification as human is tentative. In addition, four horse (*Equus f. domestic*), two cattle (*Bos f. domestic*), and single sheep/goat (Caprovid) and dog (*Canis f. domestic*) fragments were recovered from this context. Thirty-eight unidentified fragments were present (a further 32 unidentified fragments were recovered by sieving).

Context 2015 contained a single sheep/goat incisor.

Discussion and statement of potential

The extremely small size of this assemblage severely limits any discussion of its potential, and as it stands the vertebrate assemblage is of little interpretative value.

The reasonable bone preservation suggests that a substantially larger quantity of material would be recovered should further excavation be undertaken. Given the tight dating (mid-late 2nd Century) and the evidence of high status occupation in the area, further material would shed important light on early to mid Roman occupation outside the Roman city.

The recovery of fragmented human remains suggests that there may be some degree of reworking of earlier material. Further work would, therefore, be dependent on clarification of the integrity of the deposits.

Recommendations

No further work is recommended on the present assemblage. However, if further excavation is undertaken, provision should be made for the instigation of a systematic sieving and sampling programme, the recovery of more material, and its subsequent analysis and publication.

Archive

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

Acknowledgements

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References

Precious, B. And Vince, A. (1998). Pottery and ceramic building material from Elmbank Hotel, York. Unpublished archive report deposited with 'On-Site Archaeology'

von den Driesch, A. (1976). A guide to the measurement of animal bones from archaeological sites. *Peabody Museum Bulletin* 1, Cambridge Mass., Harvard University.

Table 1. Measurements of vertebrate remains from Context 2014 from Elmbank Hotel, The Mount, York.

Species	Element	Side	Measurements		
Horse	Metacarpal	R	GL=196.72	Bd=45.01	Dd= 32.05
Horse	Tibia	R	SD=26.25	Bd=68.43	Dd=39.77
?Goat	Metatarsal	R	SD=14.2	Bp=20.17	Dp=19.61

Appendix

The vertebrate remains from Elmbank Hotel, The Mount, York.

Context 2014

3 fragments (2 join) human femur (right)
Weight = 131 g

1 horse tibia (right)
1 horse metacarpal (right)
1 horse upper incisor 3 (7 year hook present)
1 horse lower molar (left)
Weight = 370 g

1 cow 1st phalanx (right)
1 cow incisor
Weight = 20 g

1 dog humerus (right)
Weight = 9 g

1 sheep/goat mandible (left) - P2 & P3 only
1 sheep/goat metacarpal (left)
1 ?goat metatarsal (right)
Weight = 43 g

4 large mammal vertebra fragments
4 large mammal shaft fragments
16 large mammal rib fragments
2 medium sized mammal shaft fragments
10 medium sized mammal rib fragments
1 shaft fragment, may be human but no clear
identification possible.
1 unidentified fragment
Weight = 392 g

Context 2014 (?sieved)

32 unidentified fragments
Weight = 17 g

Context 2015

1 sheep/goat incisor
Weight = <1 g