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**Evaluation of vertebrate remains from Toft Green, York  
(site code 1998.29)**

by

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**Summary**

*A very small, broadly dated, vertebrate assemblage was examined and a basic archive produced. The assemblage had little interpretative or zooarchaeological potential.*

KEYWORDS: TOFT GREEN; YORK; HUMAN REMAINS; NON-HUMAN VERTEBRATE REMAINS; ROMAN TO POST-MEDIEVAL; EVALUATION.

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## Evaluation of vertebrate remains from Toft Green, York (site code 1998.29)

### Introduction

An evaluation excavation was undertaken by On-Site Archaeology at Toft Green, York, during April/May 1998. Four trenches were excavated and vertebrate remains recovered from nine contexts. All the deposits were very broadly dated as 'Roman to post-medieval' period. A large bag of bone (approximately 9 litres) was submitted for evaluation.

### 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.

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).

### Results

Overall, preservation was described as fair and angularity (appearance of broken surfaces) as variable (mostly spiky or slightly battered). Colour was recorded as brown (mostly light brown). The preservation generally appeared consistent both within and between contexts. The degree of fragmentation of the bones was not great, most fragments being between 5 and 20 cm in any dimension. Dog gnawing and butchery were evident on less than 10 % of fragments.

Fresh breakage was noted on 10-20 % of fragments.

A total of 68 fragments (weighing 1438 g) were recovered, of which 40 (weighing 1079 g) were identifiable to species or species group. A single human femur fragment was identified from Context 1008, suggesting a degree of reworking in the deposit as no other human material was recovered.

Other mammal species represented in the assemblage included cattle (*Bos* f. domestic), sheep/goat (caprovid), pig (*Sus* f. domestic), horse (*Equus* f. domestic), dog (*Canis* f. domestic), cat (*Felis* f. domestic) and fallow deer (*Dama dama* (L.)). A single bird fragment (unidentifiable to species) was noted in Context 1011. Three unfused bones, three mandibles, a single loose tooth and nine measurable bones were noted.

### Discussion and statement of potential

The small size of the assemblage and the broad dating of the deposits precludes any further analysis of the vertebrate remains. As such the assemblage is of little interpretative or zooarchaeological value.

The reasonable state of vertebrate preservation suggests that if further excavation were to take place, a moderate-sized bone assemblage may be recovered. If a tighter dating framework could be achieved, the material would have some potential, as knowledge of this area of the city is very limited.

## **Recommendations**

No further work is recommended on this assemblage but, should further excavation recover a larger bone assemblage, and a tighter dating framework be achieved, then further work should be undertaken.

## **Retention and disposal**

The vertebrate remains need not be kept.

## **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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Table 1. Vertebrate remains from Toft Green, York.

<b>Taxa</b>		<b>No. unfused</b>	<b>*No. teeth</b>	<b>No. mandibles</b>	<b>No. measurable</b>	<b>Total no. fragments</b>
Dog	<i>Canis f. domestic</i>	-	-	-	1	2
Canid	Canid	-	-	-	-	1
Cat	<i>Felis f. domestic</i>	-	-	-	-	1
Horse	<i>Equus f. domestic</i>	-	-	-	-	1
Pig	<i>Sus f. domestic</i>	1	-	-	-	3
Fallow Deer	<i>Dama dama</i> (L.)	-	-	-	1	1
Cow	<i>Bos f. domestic</i>	1	1	1	2	17
Sheep/goat	Caprovid	1	-	2	5	12
Human	<i>Homo sapiens</i>	-	-	-	-	1
Bird		-	-	-	-	1
<b>Subtotal</b>		-	-	-	-	<b>40</b>
Large Mammal		-	-	-	-	11
Medium Mammal		-	-	-	-	17
<b>Subtotal</b>		-	-	-	-	<b>28</b>
<b>Total</b>		<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>68</b>

\*The number of teeth includes only those teeth of use in providing ageing or sexing information.

## Appendix - The vertebrate remains from Toft Green, York.

### Context 1008

1 human femur - 110 g  
 1 pig femur (unfused)  
 1 sheep/goat femur (unfused)  
 1 large mammal fragment  
 1 medium-sized mammal fragment  
 Weight identified = 42 g  
 Weight unidentified = 124 g

### Context 1009

1 cow femur (unfused)  
 1 cow M3 (reduced 3rd cusp)  
 1 sheep/goat pelvis  
 1 sheep/goat metacarpal (m)  
 2 large mammal fragments  
 7 medium-sized mammal fragments  
 Weight identified = 188 g  
 Weight unidentified = 73 g

### Context 1010

1 dog tibia (m)  
 1 dog tibia and fibula fused together  
 3 sheep/goat humeri (2m)  
 1 sheep/goat femur  
 1 cow calcaneum  
 1 cow 2nd phalanx  
 1 cow metatarsal  
 1 cow radius  
 1 cow mandible  
 1 pig metatarsal  
 3 large mammal fragments  
 5 medium-sized mammal fragments  
 Weight identified = 232 g  
 Weight unidentified = 85 g

### Context 1011

1 horse incisor  
 1 bird fragment  
 2 medium-sized mammal fragments  
 Weight identified = 10 g  
 Weight unidentified = 16 g

### Context 2002

1 medium-sized mammal fragment  
 Weight = 5 g

### Context 3001

1 sheep/goat mandible (with teeth)  
 Weight = 33 g

### Context 3003

1 cow femur  
 1 cow tibia  
 1 cow metacarpal (m)  
 1 cow mandible (with teeth)  
 3 large mammal fragments  
 Weight identified = 174 g  
 Weight unidentified = 31 g

### Context 3004

1 cow maxillary molar  
 1 cow metacarpal (m)  
 1 sheep/goat mandible (with teeth)  
 Weight identified = 122 g

### Context 4007

1 cat tibia (m)  
 1 Canid ulna  
 1 pig humerus  
 1 sheep/goat metatarsal (m)  
 1 sheep/goat humerus (m)  
 1 sheep/goat radius  
 2 cow phalanges  
 1 cow incisor  
 1 cow femur  
 1 fallow deer calcaneum (m)  
 2 large mammal fragments  
 1 medium-sized mammal fragment  
 Weight identified = 168 g  
 Weight unidentified = 25 g