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**Evaluation of vertebrate remains from Fawcett Street, York
(site code 1998.693)**

by

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Summary

A very small vertebrate assemblage was examined and a basic archive produced. The variable angularity (appearance of broken surfaces) of the bone fragments within contexts supports the pottery evidence as an indication of the reworked nature of the deposits. This factor combined with the small size of the assemblage renders the vertebrate remains of little interpretative value.

As the excavated deposits appear to be at least partly reworked, the sediment samples were deemed to be of limited bioarchaeological potential and hence they were not examined.

KEYWORDS: FAWCETT STREET; YORK; VERTEBRATE REMAINS; ROMAN TO POST-MEDIEVAL; EVALUATION.

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Introduction

An evaluation was carried out by York Archaeological Trust at the Old Canteen in Fawcett Street, York. Three trenches were excavated and deposits of various dates recovered. Dating ranged from the Roman period to post-medieval/modern deposits. Many of the deposits contained residual pottery, indicating a degree of reworking of material. Seven sediment samples and a single box (approximately 16.5 litres) of bone were presented for analysis of bioarchaeological potential.

Methods

Sediment samples

All seven sediment samples were inspected in the laboratory and on the basis of this inspection, four were chosen as representative. A description of the lithology of these samples was recorded using a standard *pro forma*. No further work was undertaken.

Vertebrate remains

Vertebrate data were recorded electronically directly into a series of tables using a purpose-built input system and *Paradox* software. For each context, subjective records were made of the state of preservation, colour of the fragments, and the appearance of broken surfaces ('angularity'). In addition, semi-quantitative records were made of fragment size, and of burning, butchery, fresh breakage and dog gnawing.

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).

Measurements for mammals were taken, (where appropriate) according to von den Driesch (1976), with additional measurements following those outlined Dobney *et al.* (forthcoming). Weights of identified and unidentified fragments were also recorded.

Results

Vertebrate remains

Overall preservation was fair, with colour described as brown (of varied shades). Angularity (appearance of broken surfaces) was recorded as variable, with most contexts containing spiky, rounded and battered fragments.

Dog gnawing, butchery, and burning were present on 0-10% of the fragments and fresh breakage was evident on 10-20%. A high degree of fragmentation was noted, with more than 20% of the material from nine of the 13 contexts being less than 5 cm in maximum dimension and no fragments being greater than 20 cm in a maximum size from any context.

In total, 177 fragments (weighing 2883 g) were recovered, of which 50 (1503 g) were identified to species. Table 1 gives the numbers of mandibles and teeth, and subadult bones, total numbers of fragments and weights by species. Table 2 gives the measurements taken on the mammal bones.

Mammal bones recovered included the remains of cattle (40), Caprovid (5), pig (4) and a single horse fragment. In addition, 127 unidentifiable mammal fragments were recorded.

Discussion and statement of potential

Sediment samples

The dating of the deposits from the pottery evidence suggests that the material contained within them is at least partly reworked. Hence the sediment samples were deemed of limited bioarchaeological potential and no further work was undertaken on them.

Vertebrate remains

The variable angularity (appearance of broken surfaces) of the bone fragments within contexts supports the pottery evidence as an indication of the reworked nature of the deposits. This factor, together with the small size of the assemblage renders the vertebrate remains of little interpretative value.

Recommendations

No further work is recommended on the sediment samples or on the present vertebrate assemblage. If further excavation were to take place, the samples and bone

assemblage recovered would only be of value if primary contexts were recovered and a tighter dating framework achieved.

Retention and disposal

Neither the samples nor the vertebrate remains need 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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References

- Dobney, K. M., Jaques, S. D. and Johnstone, C. J. (Forthcoming). [Protocol for recording vertebrate remains from archaeological sites].
- 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. The vertebrate remains from Fawcett Street, York.

Species		No. unfused	No. juvenile	No. mandibles	No. teeth *	Total	Weight (g)
Horse	<i>Equus f. domestic.</i>	-	-	-	-	1	83.2
Pig	<i>Sus f. domestic</i>	-	-	1	1	4	49.1
Cow	<i>Bos f. domestic</i>	-	1	-	4	40	1324.3
Sheep/goat	Caprovid	1	-	-	1	4	21.3
Sheep	<i>Ovis f. domestic</i>	-	-	-	-	1	24.9
Subtotal		1	1	1	6	50	1502.8
Large mammal		-	-	-	-	76	
Medium sized mammal		-	-	-	-	41	1380.1**
Unidentified		-	-	-	-	10	
Subtotal		-	-	-	-	127	1380.1
Total		1	1	1	6	177	2882.9

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

** = Weight represents all categories of unidentified material

Table 2. Measurements of bones from Fawcett Street, York.

Context	Date	Species	Element	Measurements (mm)		
1005	10th/11th C	horse	Radius	Bp=73.88	BFp=69.35	
1005	10th/11th C	cow	Horncore	41=42.44	42=31.22	BC=120
3011	?	sheep	Horncore	41=27.24	42=18.99	BC=76.51
3011	?	cow	Humerus	BT=68.50	HTC=30.28	HT=40.89