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An assessment of intestinal parasitic nematode egg remains from excavations at Common Parts Basement, Spital Square, London E1 (site code: SRP98)

by

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Summary

Thirty-three small samples of sediment (of which fourteen were 'control' samples) from deposits excavated at Common Parts Basement, Spital Square, London, were submitted for an assessment of their potential for analysis of intestinal parasitic nematode eggs.

All of the samples were examined. Only two of the samples contained remains that may have been very poorly preserved Trichuris eggs and these were of no interpretative value.

Keywords: COMMON PARTS BASEMENT; SPITAL SQUARE; LONDON; ASSESSMENT; INTESTINAL PARASITIC NEMATODE EGGS; ?*TRICHURIS*

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Introduction

Excavations at Common Parts Basement, Spital Square, London E1, undertaken by Museum of London Archaeology Service yielded nineteen samples of sediment from deposits around the pelvic areas of human burials and an additional fourteen 'control' samples. These have been examined for the eggs of intestinal parasitic nematodes.

Methods

Thirty-three samples of sediment ('SPOTs' *sensu* Dobney *et al.* 1992) were submitted. All of the samples were examined for the eggs of intestinal parasitic nematodes using the 'squash' technique of Dainton (1992).

Results

The results of the investigations are presented in Context number order in Table 1.

Although primarily for the detection of intestinal parasitic nematode eggs the 'squash' technique routinely reveals other microfossil remains, where present these have also been noted.

Discussion and statement of potential

The examined samples were effectively barren of interpretable microfossil remains—only two of the samples (Sample 91, Context 1563 and Sample 107, Context 1716) contained remains that may have been *Trichuris* eggs. These were too poorly

preserved to be positively identified and hence of no interpretative value.

Recommendations

No further work is recommended on these samples.

Retention and disposal

Any remaining sediment samples may be discarded.

Archive

Paper and electronic records pertaining to the work described here are currently stored in the Environmental Archaeology Unit, University of York,

Acknowledgements

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References

Dainton, M. (1992). A quick semi-quantitative method for recording nematode gut parasite eggs from archaeological deposits. *Circaea* **9**, 58-63.

Dobney, K., Hall, A. R., Kenward, H. K. and Milles, A. (1992 for 1991). A working classification of sample types for environmental archaeology. *Circaea, the Journal of the Association for Environmental Archaeology* **9**, 24-6.

Table 1. Intestinal parasitic nematode eggs from Common Parts Basement, Spital Square, London (with notes on other observed remains).

Key: c - control sample; f - few; g - 'gut' sample; i - inorganic; l - a little; t - trace

Context	Sample(s)	Type of sample	Main component	Organic content	<i>Trichuris</i>	<i>Ascaris</i>	Fungal spores and/or hyphae	Non-fungal spores/pollen	Notes
?	90, 91, 92	c	i	t	-	-	-	-	1 fragment of ?arthropod cuticle
1052	46	g	i	t	-	-	f	-	
1052	46	c	i	t	-	-	f	-	1 live soil nematode seen
1073	47	g	i	t	-	-	-	-	
1166	49	c	i	t	-	-	-	-	
1312	61	c	i	t	-	-	f	-	
1313	60	g	i	l	-	-	-	-	a few fragments of plant silica
1315	64	c	i	t	-	-	f	-	
1316	63	g	i	t	-	-	f	-	
1320	58	g	i	t	-	-	-	-	
1320	59	c	i	t	-	-	f	?1	
1340	56	g	i	t	-	-	f	-	
1393	57	c	i	t	-	-	-	-	
1407	66	g	i	t	-	-	-	-	
1408	67	c	i	t	-	-	-	-	
1560	90	g	i	t	-	-	f	-	

Context	Sample(s)	Type of sample	Main component	Organic content	<i>Trichuris</i>	<i>Ascaris</i>	Fungal spores and/or hyphae	Non-fungal spores/pollen	Notes
1563	91	g	i	t	?1	-	f	-	
1566	92	g	i	t	-	-	-	-	
1569	93	g	i	-	-	-	-	-	
1582	110	g	i	t	-	-	-	-	
1584	112	g	i	t	-	-	f	-	
1582 + 1584	111	c	i	t	-	-	-	-	
1715	108	c	i	t	-	-	-	-	
1716	107	g	i	t	?1	-	f	-	
1773	117	g	i	t	-	-	-	-	
1774	117	c	i	t	-	-	f	-	
1840	134	c	i	-	-	-	-	-	
1841	135	g	i	t	-	-	-	-	
1843	132	c	i	t	-	-	f	f	
1844	133	g	i	t	-	-	-	-	
1853	125	g	i	t	-	-	f	-	
1912	130	c	i	t	-	-	-	-	
1913	131	g	i	t	-	-	-	-	