APPENDIX 10: ASSESSMENT OF WORKED BONE

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Conservation by Liz Barham

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Two bone artefacts were recovered from ARC 330 98 and one from ARC WNB 98.
- 1.2 The bone accessions were recovered by means of hand excavation.
- 1.3 The bone artefacts may assist with the following fieldwork event aims:
 - To recover dating evidence from the features located to enable a chronology for the division of the landscape to be established
 - To determine the function of these areas and changes through time

2. Methodology

- 2.1 All of the bone artefacts from the Zone 3 sites were retained and no sampling was undertaken.
- 2.2 All of the bone artefacts from the sites in Zone 3 were accessioned and the records entered onto the MoLAS Oracle relational database, subsequently transferred to RLE Datasets.

3. Quantification

3.1 The worked animal bone from Zone 3 are quantified in the tables below:

Context	Special Number	Material	Count	Period	Comments (Description)
250	70	Bone	1	IA	Pin/needle; the lower half and point of a shaft with a slightly flattened oval section
250	86	Bone	1	IA	Tool or point; a hollowed sheep/goat metacarpus cut diagonally across the shaft to form a scoop-type blade. The head is perforated

 Table 46: Assessment of Worked Bone from ARC 330 98
 Image: Comparison of Worked Bone from ARC 330 98

Context	Special Number	Material	Count	Period	Comments (Description)
413	132	Bone	1	UN	Waste; horse metacarpus, distal end (identification by Kevin Rielly); sawn through with a metal blade

 Table 47: Assessment of Worked Bone from ARC WNB 98

4. Provenance

- 4.1 The bone pin/needle and the tool from ARC 330 98, were both recovered from context [250], the fill of a pit, which produced pottery dating to the 3rd to 1st century BC. The fragment of bone waste from ARC WNB 98 was recovered from context [413], the fill of a pit and may be rubbish cleared from elsewhere. The pit fill also contained a mid- to late Iron Age loom weight fragment.
- 4.2 The bone is in a stable condition.

5. Conservation

- 5.1 The worked bone is stable and packed appropriately for archive.
- 5.2 All of the bone accessions should be retained.

6. Comparative material

6.1 Both the pin/needle and the tool/point are objects commonly found on Iron Age sites (Coles 1987, 51). Comparison should be made with other Iron Age assemblages recovered both from the surrounding area and elsewhere. It would also be of interest to see if there is any evidence for bone working from sites in the vicinity.

7. **Potential for further work**

- 7.1 The bone accessions may assist the following landscape zone aim:
 - Farming communities: determine how settlements were arranged and functioned over time (2000 100BC)
- 7.2 The two bone artefacts provide further evidence, along with the pottery and the other Iron Age finds from sites within Zone 3, of human activity and occupation in the area. Both are types frequently found on Iron Age sites and, therefore, would probably have been common implements in use at that time. The tool or point was probably a multi-functional implement, summed up by Coles as 'the prehistoric Swiss army knife' (1987, 53) and similar implements have been found in large numbers on other Iron Age sites (ibid, 51).
- 7.3 The bone artefacts from ARC 330 98 may assist with the following fieldwork event aim:
 - To recover dating evidence from the features located to enable a chronology for the division of the landscape to be established
- 7.4 The two artefacts provide further evidence of the occupation and use of this area during the mid- to late Iron Age. They are both common types of artefacts found in the Iron Age and together with the pottery provide dating for the pit fill from which they came. Further investigation of similar bone artefacts may be able to refine their dating.

- 7.5 The bone waste from ARC WNB 98 can assist the following fieldwork event aim:
 - To determine the function of these areas and changes through time
- 7.6 The bone waste would suggest that bone working was taking place in the vicinity of the site.
- 7.7 It is recommended that the following further work is undertaken:
 - Compare the artefacts with other published assemblages
 - Catalogue and text
 - It is recommended that all three bone accessions are illustrated.

8. Bibliography

Coles, J, M, 1987 Meare Village East; the excavations of A. Bulleid and H. St. George Gray 1932-1956 Somerset Levels Papers no. 13