

THE ANIMAL BONE FROM GREAT ARNOLDS FARM

Site code: R-126

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CHRONOLOGICAL NARRATIVE

Not located

Pit fill [394] produced a single fragment of ox calcaneum (heel) and two fragments of ox mandible (lower jaw), all probably from adult animal(s).

Not located

Pit [451] produced a fragment of ox mandibular (lower jaw) tooth.

Open Area 301

Group 13: pit

Pit [23]

Fill [424] included single fragments of ox maxillary (upper jaw) tooth and femur (thigh bone), both probably from adult animals.

Group 14

Pit [24]

Fill [419] produced a fragment of 'ox-sized' tooth enamel.

Open Area 303

Group 22

Pit [35]

Fill [375] produced approximately 15 fragments of horse maxillary (upper jaw) and mandibular (lower jaw) tooth enamel.

Structure S303

Group 3

Enclosure ditch [3] (for possible medieval farm)

Fill [281] produced three fragments of ox maxillary (upper jaw) and mandibular (lower jaw) tooth.

Group 4

Ditch [4]

Fill [323] produced only a fragment of ox femur (thigh bone).

Structure S307

Group 8

Pit (possible well) [16]

Fill [444] produced five fragments of adult ox derived from the mandible (lower jaw), humerus (upper fore leg), ulna (lower fore leg) and inominate (pelvis).

Structure S309

Group 11

Ditch [19]

Fill [332] produced a single worn fragment of horse tooth.

DISCUSSION

At assessment, this site produced 1.333 kg, then estimated as approximately 213 fragments, of animal bone generally in a moderate or poor state of preservation. Much of this assemblage consisted of unidentifiable 'crumbly' bone impossible to assign even to the approximate category 'cattle-sized', other groups were recorded as components of the bone from which they had become detached. As a result, at post-assessment level the assemblage produced an identifiable fragment count of 34 of which 30 derived from located contexts (Table 1 summarises this assemblage). The condition of more than 95% of the bone is so poor that no accurate fragment counts were possible due to constant crumbling of the fragments when touched. Table 1 provides a summary of the approximate quantification for each group and taxon. The state of the bone prevented identification of much of the assemblage beyond the approximate categories 'ox-sized' mammal although some fragments were identifiable as ox *Bos taurus* and horse *Equus caballus*. There was no recovery of any other domesticates or of wild species. No human fragments were recovered. The aggressive soil chemistry to be expected from a gravel soil is responsible for the distinctive biases seen in taxonomic, skeletal and age representation. The assemblage derives entirely from large robust adults with virtually no

evidence for younger mammals. Identifiable fragments are confined to small pieces of teeth and tooth enamel with occasional elements of the upper and lower jaw and the major robust longbones e.g. humerus, ulna, pelvis, femur and calcaneum; probably a reflection of taphonomic factors at least equally as much as of deliberate selection of these durable skeletal elements of good or moderate meat-bearing value.

Extensive surface erosion has resulted in loss of all evidence of *post-mortem* modification; butchery, working, gnawing and burning.

Beyond simple demonstration of the presence of adult ox and horse from some of the group assemblages, the bone group consists largely of a background 'noise' of highly eroded and fragmented unidentifiable and 'ox-sized' longbone and other fragments which does not permit analysis in terms of skeletal representation, age-selection or butchery; and does not justify *intra-site* comparison on the basis of temporal change or feature type.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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BAR International Series 533

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TABLES

	FRAGMENTS									TOTAL
LANDUSE			S303	S303	S307	S309	OA301	OA301	OA303	
GROUP	not located	not located	3	4	8	11	13	14	22	
FEATURE	pit	pit	ditch	ditch	pit	ditch	pit	pit	pit	
CONTEXT	394	451	281	323	444	332	424	419	375	
TAXON										
ox	3	1	3	1	5		2			15
ox-sized								3		3
horse						1			15	16
TOTAL	3	1	3	1	5	1	2	3	15	34

Table 1: The animal bones from R-126/fragment counts