

A NOTE ON BONE SKATES FROM LONDON

BARBARA WEST

In 1976, Arthur MacGregor published his excellent summary of the historical and archaeological evidence for bone skates (MacGregor 1976; see also MacGregor 1975). As he noted, virtually all the examples from museum collections in Britain (including 168 from the Museum of London) must be regarded as unstratified. He lists 37 stratified skates from the British Isles in the appendix to his article (none of which are from London), and calls for further information on more recent finds.

The following short descriptions of the seven stratified bone skates from London can now be added to MacGregor's list. The distal end of the bone is here designated as the 'toe', and the proximal end as the 'heel', in reference to the attachment of the skate to the foot.

Department of Urban Archaeology Excavations,
Museum of London.

1. Pudding Lane, 1981 (G. Milne). Context 276 (Acc. No. 40), dated *c.* late 10th–11th century. Horse metatarsal. Toe chopped and broken. Axial heel hole. Anterior surface highly polished and flattened with wear.

2. Swan Lane, 1981 (G. Egan). Context 341 (Acc. No. 65), dated *c.* late 12th century. Cow radius (immature). Toe upswept, but not pointed. Heel slightly upswept. No holes. Slight anterior wear flattening.
3. Lloyds, 1978 (K. Flude). Context 50 (Acc. No. 15), dated *c.* 11th–12th century. Horse metacarpal. Flat, pointed toe with transverse hole. Axial heel hole. Moderate anterior wear flattening.
4. Watling Court, 1978 (D. Perring). Context 1137 (Acc. No. 1279), dated *c.* 11th–12th century. Cow metatarsal. Upswept, pointed toe very roughly shaped and cut. No holes. Posterior surface flattened with wear, mostly towards the heel.
5. Watling Court, 1978 (D. Perring). Context 2526 (Acc. No. 1030) dated *c.* 13th century. Horse metacarpal. Upswept, asymmetrically-pointed toe. Heel broken. No holes. Moderate anterior wear flattening.
6. Watling Court, 1978 (D. Perring). Context 2526 (Acc. No. 1190), dated *c.* 13th century. Cow metacarpal. Flat, pointed toe. Heel slightly narrowed. No holes. No anterior wear flattening (*i.e.* unused).
7. General Post Office, 1975 (S. Roskams). Context 540 (Acc. No. 3671), dated *c.* 1175–1200. Horse metatarsal. Upswept, pointed toe. No holes. Very slight anterior wear flattening. Represents an extremely small pony, with an estimated withers height of only 91 cm (smaller than the average Shetland pony). Made for a child, but hardly used.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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