

Woodbridge Quarry Animal Bone Remains

Assessment by Geoff Bailey

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Description of material

The material that I was given to examine comprises 7 small plastic snap-top bags, each containing material from a different context.

The total quantity of material is estimated at c. 200 bone fragments, many of which may be the broken remnants of larger pieces.

The condition of the material is very poor. The bone is heavily fragmented, and most fragments are in the 0.5 cm to 2 cm size range. Most fragments are white in colour with cracking on the larger pieces, suggesting considerable degradation from a combination of burning and/or soil acids or weathering.

The fragments include cranial and postcranial material from small to medium-size (sheep-goat sized) animals. Only one specimen is certainly identifiable to anatomical part and taxon, a complete unfused epiphysis from the proximal end of a humerus. This looks to me to be big enough for a cow, but this needs checking. A second piece is the fragment of the proximal epiphysis of a long bone, and should be identifiable to anatomical element and probably species. A third specimen is the ramus of a jaw, and looks to be sheep-goat and it should be possible to identify this with reasonable confidence to species. Several other pieces may be identifiable with a lot of effort and comparison.

Assessment

This bone collection is about as meagre as it gets. The best that can be hoped for is to confirm identifications on the three potentially identifiable pieces noted above. This might take at most an hour of someone's time with access to a good comparative collection.

Addendum: Thirlings bone material

Just three small bags of material, as follows:

Context 643 7 white bone fragments, including a chunky shaft fragment (~ 1 cm dimensions), probably of the limb bone of a sheep-goat-sized animal, and probably the best bet for radiocarbon dating.

Context 803/4 3 very small bone fragments (< 0.5 cm), two quite white in colour

Context 587 About 20 small bone fragments, mostly white in colour. They include postcranial material, and many fragments may be the broken pieces of larger fragments

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