

**Boston Road, Sleaford,
Lincolnshire (EPBR 08)**
The Faunal Remains
By Jennifer Wood

Introduction

A total of 103 (2035g) fragments of animal bone were recovered by hand during archaeological trial trenches undertaken by Pre-Construct Archaeology Lincoln.

The remains were recovered from a series of pits and ditches predominantly dated from the 2nd – 3rd century Roman period.

Methodology

The entire assemblage has been fully recorded into a database archive. Identification of the bone was undertaken with access to a reference collection and published guides. All animal remains were counted and weighed, and where possible, identified to species, element, side and zone (Serjeantson 1996). Ribs and vertebrae were only recorded to species when they were substantially complete and could accurately be identified. Undiagnostic bones were recorded as micro (rodent size), small (rabbit size), medium (sheep size) or large (cattle size). The separation of sheep and goat bones was done using the criteria of Boessneck (1969) and Prummel and Frisch (1986) in addition to the use of the reference material. Where distinctions could not be made the bone was recorded as sheep/goat (S/G).

The quantification of species was carried out using the total fragment count, in which the total number of fragments of bone and teeth was calculated for each taxon. Where fresh breaks were noted, fragments were refitted and counted as one. The data produced the basic NISP (Number of Identified Specimen) counts.

The condition of the bone was graded using the criteria stipulated by Lyman (1996). Grade 0 being the best preserved bone, and Grade 5 indicating that the bone had suffered such structural and attritional damage as to make it unrecognisable. Also fusion data, butchery marks (Binford 1981), gnawing, burning and pathological changes were noted when present.

Tooth eruption and wear stages were measured using a combination of Halstead (1985), Grant (1982), Levine (1982) and Payne (1973), and fusion data was analysed according to Silver (1969). Measurements of adult, that is, fully fused bones were taken according to the methods of von den Driesch (1976), with asterisked (*) measurements indicating bones that were reconstructed or had slight abrasion of the surface.

Results

The remains were generally of a moderate condition, averaging at Grade 3 on the Lyman criteria (1996).

A total of 4 fragments of bone recovered from pits [1411], [1107] and ditches [1111] and [1209] displayed evidence of butchery. The butchery marks were consistent with disarticulation/jointing of the carcass and meat removal.

A single equid first phalanx recovered from late 3rd-4th century pit [1107] showed some remodelling of the medial side of the distal articulation, possibly a result of slight trauma or as a reaction to mechanical strain from traction.

A total of seven fragments of bone recovered from late 3rd-4th century pit [1107], and late 2nd – middle 3rd century pit [1313] displayed evidence of burning, possibly indicating hearth cleaning episodes or incidental burning events.

Carnivore gnawing was noted on three fragments of bone recovered from ditch [1111] and pit [1403].

A single rabbit bone was recovered from early Roman ditch [1507]. Rabbits are considered to be an introduced species attributed to the Norman period. Several incidences of rabbit remains have been reported from Romano-British contexts; however these cases have not as yet been securely dated and due to the burrowing nature of the species, could very well indicate intrusive material into the assemblage.

Cattle are the more abundant species identified, followed by sheep/goat, one fragment positively identified as sheep, equid, pig, dog and domestic fowl.

The assemblage provides limited information on the animal utilisation and husbandry practices undertaken on site save these presence and use of the identified species.

In the event of further works, the site is liable to yield further bone of a moderate condition with a very good potential to provide further information on the diet economy, animal utilisation and husbandry practices for the site.

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Taxon	Date											Total	
	Early 2 nd Century	Early-Mid 2 nd Century	Mid 2 nd Century+	Mid-Late 2 nd Century	Mid -Late 2 nd Century+	Mid 2nd – Early 3 rd Century	2 nd Century	Late 2nd- Early 3 rd Century	Late 2nd- Mid 3 rd Century	Late 3 rd – 4 th Century	Romano- British		Undated
<i>Equid</i> (Horse Family)		1					1			1	2		5
Cattle	1	11		1			1			4	5	5	28
Sheep/Goat		3	2			1	1	2		4	1		14
Sheep		1											1
Pig					1							1	2
Dog									1	1			2
Domestic Fowl (<i>Gallus Sp.</i>)	1												1
Rabbit (<i>Oryctolagus cuniculus</i>)	1												1
Large Mammal	1	2		1						19			23
Medium Mammal		1							6	12		1	20
Unidentified		1								5			6
Total	4	20	2	2	1	1	3	2	6	46	9	7	103