

ANCIENT MONUMENTS LABORATORY

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SERIES/No CONSULTANT - ANIMAL BONES

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BONES FROM GODMANCHESTER
1971-3

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BONES FROM GODMARCHESTER, 1971-3

By D. Westley, B.Sc., F.Z.S.

This osteological material, submitted in 1973, ~~XXXXXXXXXXXX~~
~~XXXXXXXXXXXX~~ comes from five areas, which have been separately
treated. They are as follows:

Stiles II, 1971-3	Fauna of Man, cattle, sheep, pig, Red deer, dog, cat and bird
Stiles III, 1973	Fauna of Man, cattle, sheep, pig, dog.
St. Ann's Lane, 1972-3	Fauna of Cattle, sheep, pig, bird
Piper's Lane, 1973	Fauna of horse, cattle, sheep, pig
Post Street, 1973	Fauna of Man; horse, cattle, sheep, pig, dog, bird.

The material is almost entirely fragmentary and mostly of the
food animals, and as there is little to excite comment, it has been
incorporated in the attached tables, with the following brief remarks:-

Food animals (Cattle, sheep, pig) Again, cattle predominate
considerably over sheep in numbers, with sheep similarly exceeding pigs.
From the material examined, I do not think it is possible to give useful
percentages, though the "minimum number" of individuals is marked on the
tables. The cattle are small, the usual "Celtic ox" type and the sheep
seem to vary considerably in size. It might well be that goat is also
present, but not distinguishable in this material. Most of the animals
have been slaughtered in their second year.

Man is present only in the occasional fragment, always difficult
to interpret, e.g. a distal part of the humerus from Post St., Bag 30,
and infant bones from Bag.16. Such a proportion of human remains is
very usual from Roman sites.

Horse is present only in small quantities and fragments, usually teeth and vertebrae, giving little indication of size or type. An exception is the horse material from Pipers Lane (bag 12) which is the remains of one old animal - not chopped or jointed and obviously not food. Many of the fragments of the cattle, sheep and pig bones bear knife marks and are certainly the remains of joints, possibly cooked. There is no means of ascertaining, at present, whether archaeological bone has been cooked or not. The horse remains from Post Street (B77) are also of an old animal, in this case the mandible.

Fowl Almost every stratum contains bones of domestic fowl, apparently a staple food. There is also the occasional cock spur, which may well indicate the breeding of fighting cocks, but the majority of bones belong to quite small hens.

I cannot distinguish any differences in the 1st and 4th century assemblages of bone, nor any evolution of size or new characters in the animals, but this could hardly be hoped for in material consisting of well chopped-up food bones, for the greater part. The sheep (goat?) seem to be of differing sizes but there is no indication that the larger ones come later.

There is almost complete absence of wild fauna, such as birds, fish, fox, badger, rodents, beaver, wolf, elk, bear and other animals which we know to have existed in Britain at this time. There is just one example of Red deer, from Stiles II, no doubt sought as game. It would seem that the Godmanchester district was well populated with the human race.

The bones are curated at the British Museum of Natural History.

Bones from Post Street, Godmanchester.

Bag	Man	Horse	Cattle	Sheep	Pig	Dog	Bird
36	-	-	12 (1)	9 (1)	2 (1)	-	-
67 F042	-	-	20 (2)	13 (2)	4 (1)	-	-
69 F043	-	-	20 (3)	17 (3)	1	-	2
45 F027	-	-	83 (7)	59 (5)	13 (2)	-	-
41 F027	-	-	89 (6)	37 (5)	7 (1)	-	6
98 (4)	-	-	24 (2)	22 (3)	2 (1)	-	2
77 F046	-	2 (1)	12 (1)	19 (3)	2 (1)	-	-
40 F049	-	6 (1)	43 (3)	14 (2)	4 (1)	1	-
74 F045	-	-	11 (1)	3 (1)	-	-	-
15 F007	-	3	38	16	2	-	Rems.?
16 F007	2	3 (1)	46 (3)	35 (6)	5 (1)	1	-
30	1	-	30(3)	26(3)	3(2)	-	-
31 F021	1	-	-	-	-	-	-

TABLE OF BONES FROM STILES 11, GODMANCHESTER, 1971 - 3

Bag	Man	Cattle	Sheep	Pig	Red Deer	Dog	Cat	Bird
10b 4 Bd 2	-	36 (4)	3 (1)	5 (1)	-	-	-	-
17 F 002	-	88 (6)	11 (3)	5 (1)	-	-	-	2
9 (2)	-	46 (2)	10 (3)	2 (1)	1 ?	-	-	2
4 Pit RI	-	105 (6)	17 (3)	9 (1)	-	Rems. of 2	-	1
13 F00 I	1	174 (5)	22 (2)	15 (1)	-	Rems. of 2	2	6

The figures refer to fragments and not complete bones, except for the dogs, where "remains of 2" means partial skeletons of 2 animals. The figures in brackets beneath the numbers, in the case of the food animals, give the lowest possible number of individuals represented by the anatomical parts.

The fragment under "man" is an infant femur, probably newborn.

TABLE OF BONES FROM STILES III, GORMANCHESTER.

Bag	Man	Cattle	Sheep	Pig	Dog
11 FO06	1	105 (9)	39 (7)	5 (1)	12 (1)
9 (Tr2) 3	-	3 (1)	1	-	-
4 (Tr1) 4	-	28 (2)	-	-	-
27 FO15	-	35 (4)	8 (3)	4 (1)	-

The figures refer to fragments, and not complete bones. The figures in brackets below the numbers of the food animals give the lowest possible number of individuals anatomically represented.

The one human fragment is the shaft of an adult femur.

TABLE OF BONES FROM ST. ANN'S LANE, GODMANCHESTER.

Bag	Cattle	Sheep	Pig	Bird
202c (17)	-	8 (3)	-	-
218b (14)	22 (2)	6 (1)	2 (1)	1
212 F112	40 (4)	6 (2)	-	2

The figures refer to fragments, not complete bones.
 The figures in brackets below the numbers of the food animals indicate
 the lowest possible number of individuals anatomically represented.

BONES FROM PIPERS LANE, GOLDMANCHESTER.

Bag	Horse	Cattle	Sheep	Pig
33 F036	-	10 (1)	14 (2)	-
8 F007	-	14 (1)	6 (2)	2 (1)
12 F010	13 (1)	-	-	-

The figures refer to fragments, not complete bones. The figures in brackets below the numbers of the food animals give the lowest possible number of individuals anatomically represented.