

A summary of the animal bone finds

The collection of bone from this site was mainly recovered from the excavations of the enclosure ditch around the settlement. The superficial nature of the rest of the site had lead to its disturbance by ploughing and very little animal bone was found. The collection was itself very small and of the 382 bones and fragments found only 40 percent. were identified to species.

Table of the bone fragments from the Coxhoe excavations

	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>
Ox	6 (1)	11 (1)	14	20 (2)	15	1
Sheep/G	8 (1)	2 (1)	1	3	30	3
Pig	1	2		2 (1)		
Horse		2 (1)	4	11	6	1
Dog			2		1	
L.Anim. 24		10	13	8	9	26
M/L.Anim.1		1	2	4	49	14
Med.Anim.5			11	3	16	
L.Ung. 2		1	9	4	14	
M/L.Ung.				1		
Sm Ung. <u>1</u>						
Totals	50	32	56	59	140	45

(1-Enclosure ditch,south side; 2-Enclosure ditch,east side south of butt end; 3-enclosure ditch,south butt end; 4-enclosure ditch,north butt end; 5-enclosure ditch,NE corner; 6-Area I ,others)

If we take all the material to be of similar date the proportions of the major domestic animals in terms of percentage number of fragments are cattle- 47, sheep or goat-32, pig-4 and horse 17. This would suggest a dependence on cattle for the main source of food, however a study of the table above illustrates that the proportions of these domestic species vary markedly in each section of the enclosure ditch excavated and serves to illustrate the difficulty of drawing conclusions from small samples or those collected from a portion only of the site.

Some of the horse bones from the north butt end of the ditch came from one animal and may represent a burial or more probably debris from a disturbed burial. A very high percent. of the bones of cattle and sheep are teeth. This is normally a factor of preservation, and the eroded texture of many of the long bones is evidence for the poor preservation of bone. The occurrence of bone in a ditch may also suggest a secondary

derivation of material that would usually be dumped in pits, middens or on the fields...Derivation tends to increase fragmentation which would favour the survival of teeth and may also be a factor in their abundance at this site.

The sample is too small for further comment.

A. L. H. H.
May 1981