

ANCIENT MONUMENTS LABORATORY

REPORT

4006

SERIES/No	CONTRACTOR	
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SHACKERLEY: THE ANIMAL BONES.

by Alison Locker.

A small quantity of animal bones (337) was recovered by hand and machine during the excavation. The following species were identified: ox (Bos sp., including ox-sized fragments 37.4%), ovicaprid (Ovis sp./Capra sp., including sheep-sized fragments 17.8%), pig (Sus sp.), horse (Equus sp.), roe deer (Capreolus capreolus), red deer (Cervus elaphus), fallow deer (Dama dama), dog (Canis sp.), domestic fowl (Callus sp.), goose (Anser sp.), and domestic duck/mallard (Anas sp.).

The bones identified are itemised in the table.

All the bone was recorded and measured using the method of Jones et al (1978). The bone has been treated as a single group since comparison of those from contexts of different periods did not reveal any significant differences. This may in part be due to the small size of the sample. Contexts 301 and 304 (a refuse dump), produced 29% of the bone including the birds and a few vertebrae of eel (Anguilla anguilla) and herring (Clupea harengus). The latter two species were found in a column sample through the refuse dump and so were not included in the table.

All the mammal bones showed evidence of butchery except for dog and horse, and evidently represent food debris. Sheep was positively identified in the ovicaprids by a single horn core. Ox and pig bones include a high proportion of mandible fragments, representing primary butchery debris, however none of the deer bones were from the head area except for fallow deer which was solely represented by two loose teeth.

A large number of pig bones were from immature animals, 30% of them showing some sign of immaturity. All the mature pig bones lay within the size of domestic pigs as stated by Clason (1967), and there was no evidence from the site for the hunting of wild boar.

Measurements on two horse bones (radius and metacarpal) from two different contexts gave similar withers heights of 148cm and 146cm (Kieswalter 1974). Allowing for slight discrepancies in the method these two animals were the size of a large pony/small horse.

It is quite unusual to find all three species of native British deer in such a small collection of animal bones. Many of the bones showed signs of butchery and imply that hunting was important in the economy of this site. Both dogs and horses would have been used in this pursuit. Up until the thirteenth century hunting would have taken place in the Royal forest of Brewood, but this was then disafforested. However the Eastern part of Shropshire was 'covered with an almost unbroken forest and the rivers ran through extensive tracts of marshy ground', an ideal habitat for deer until the greater part of the forest was cut in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, (Whitehead 1964). The marginal areas of the forest would also have provided ideal pannage for pigs.

The herring vertebrae are probably the remains of salted or pickled fish that would have been stored in barrels. Eels could have been caught locally in streams, or may have been part of a

live fish store in ponds.

Since this sample only represents a very small proportion of the bone that would have been recovered had the whole site been excavated it is not possible to suggest the relative importance of different species to the economy.

REFERENCES.

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- Kieswalter 1974 In von den Driesch A, & Boessneck J, Kritische Anmerkungen zur widerristhohenberechnung aus Längenmassen vor-und fruhgeschichtlicher Tierknochen. Säugetierkundliche Mitteilungen, 22, 325-348.
- Whitehead CK, 1964. The Deer of Great Britain and Ireland. Routledge and Kegan Paul.

TABLE 0

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	TOTAL
SKULL	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
JAW	7	-	9	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	17
SCAPULA	2	-	2	-	-	-	-	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	10
HUMERUS	1	-	6	-	-	-	2	1	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	12
RADIUS	2	2	2	1	-	-	2	1	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	12
ULNA	1	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	4
METACARP.	2	-	-	3	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6
1ST PHAL.	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
OS COXA	-	-	2	1	1	-	-	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	7
FEMUR	2	-	-	2	-	-	-	4	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	10
TIBIA	3	3	1	2	1	-	-	2	7	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	21
FIBULA	-	-	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4
CALCANEUM	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3
ASTRAGAL.	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3
METATAR.	1	-	-	-	1	-	2	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5
MAXILLA	-	-	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3
HORN CORE	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
RIB	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	20	19	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	40
VERTEBRAE	-	-	-	4	1	-	-	6	2	-	-	-	-	-	4	2	20
TOOTH FR.	-	-	4	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6
FRAGMENT	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	14	-	-	63	-	-	-	-	-	77
L. BONE FR	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	37	20	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	58
SKULL FR	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	2
TOTAL	30	6	46	15	4	2	6	96	53	3	64	2	1	1	4	2	337
%	8.9	1.8	13.6	4.4	1.2	0.6	1.8	28.5	15.7	0.9	19.0	0.6	0.3	0.3	1.2	0.6	

KEY: 1 = OX 9 = SHEEP-SIZED FRAGMENT
 2 = OVICAPRID 10 = DOG
 4 = HORSE 11 = UNIDENTIFIABLE FRAGMENT
 5 = RED DEER 12 = DOMESTIC FOWL
 6 = FALLOW DEER 13 = GOOSE
 7 = ROE DEER 14 = DOMESTIC DUCK/MALLARD
 8 = OX-SIZED FRAGMENT 15 = EEL
 16 = HERRING