FAUNAL REMAINS UNIT
DEPARTMENT OF ARCHAEOLOGY
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHAMPTON

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ANIMAL BONES FROM EXCAVATIONS IN BELL STREET, ROMSEY, HAMPSHIRE, 1981

TEST VALLEY ARCHAEOLOGICAL COMMITTEE

POST-EXCAVATION PROGRAMME

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A small collection of animal bones was retrieved from 3 layers above silt and peat layers in a river channel. The bones were recorded and measured and may go for carbon 14 analysis.

The lowest layer, 320, was of fine grey soil with much flint gravel and contained the 42 fragments listed in Table 1 and contained Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age pottery. Most of the bones were very fragmentary and provided little evidence for age, size, and useage. The horse, cattle and pig represented were probably all domestic and the large and small artiodactyl bones (labelled LAR and SAR, respectively, in Table 1) probably came from these species.

All the pig bones probably came from the same animal which may have been a burial rather than food remains (although there was possible evidence of the use of an implement on one of the thoracic vertebrae). Fragmentary cranial remains matched the mandibles in age, showing wear on the first deciduous incisor, fourth deciduous premolar, and first molar. The second molar was erupted but not worn and the second permanent incisor and canine not erupted. The mandibles represented a stage of tooth wear with a Grant numerical value of 15 (Grant 1975) and, together with the state of fusion of the long bones and vertebrae, suggest an immature pig aged between 6 months and 1 year.

There was a single fragment of red deer, Cervus elaphus and the ulna of a mature beaver Castor fiber with both ends of the bone fully fused. The greatest length of the ulna was 124 mm and its distal end showed marks which might have been made during skinning. Beaver has been found from several Wessex locations and survived in the region at least until the Middle Saxon period (Coy 1980). A small fragment of mammalian long bone in the same layer could belong to beaver.

The tufaceous marl Layer 327 above this contained the femur of a small piglet, a cattle upper premolar, and a small artiodactyl rib. The coarser sand Layer 328 above that contained a slightly fossilised fragment of large artiodactyl tibia.

The excavators hope that the bones will go for carbon dating as this represents the earliest phase of domestic occupation yet found in Romsey and the pottery appears to be unparalleled elsewhere.

References

Coy J.P. 1980 The animal bones.In Excavation of a mid-Saxon iron smelting site at Ramsbury, Wiltshire (J. Haslam) Medieval Archaeology 24, 41 - 51.

Grant A. 1975 The animal bones. In Excavations at Portchester Castle, Volume I: Roman (ed. B. Cunliffe). Society of Antiquaries, Research Report 32, 409 - 415.

TABLE 1 ANIMAL BONES FROM LAYER 320

	horse	cattle	pig	Cervus	Castor	LAR	SAR	TOTAL
horn core	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	1
cranium	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1
mandible	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	2
vertebra	1	-	6	-	-	1	-	8
rib	-	-	6	-	-	1	-	7
radius	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1
ulna	-	-	1	-	1	-	-	2
pelvis	-	-	1	-	-	1	-	2
femur	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	2
tibia	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	1
calcaneum	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1
metapodial	-	-	3	-	-	-	-	3
loose teeth	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	1
l.b.fragments	-	-	-	-	1	1	2	4
fragments	-	-	-	-	-	6	-	6
TOTAL	1	3	23	1	2	10	2	42