Report 1901 28/75

DENNY ABBEY CHURCH ANIMAL BONES REPORT APRIL 1975

Introduction

The animal bone material from this part of the Denny Abbey excavation comes from within the boundary walls of the "church". The material is extremely fragmentary and it has thus been impossible to do more than to identify the bones to part of the anatomy and to species. No measurements have been possible. Because of the material's fragmentary nature it has been almost impossible to form any clear impression of the numbers or of the stature for any of the species. Four periods have been recognised; Pre 1340, Pre dissolution, Post dissolution and a small group indeterminate between pre and post dissolution. Due to the fragmentary nature of the material it has not been feasable to produce a more conventional type of report, I have therefore summerised my findings. Complete records are available.

Pre 1340

The three major domesticated mammals, cattle, sheep/goat and pig are present. The cattle (Bos sp.) were mostly recognised from their ribs and vertebrae fragments and therefore no indication of numbers or of age can be given. A fragment of the parietal bone from the skull of a new born or feotal Sheep/Goat (Ovis/Capra sp.) was recognised. Pig (Sus sp.) was recognised from fragments. The presence of Rabbit (Oryctolagus cunuculus) may indicate some disturbance and intrusion into the period levals.

Pre dissolution

In this period the majority of fragments of bone belong to cattle, sheep/goat, and pig. All of the cattle fragments appear to have come from animals aged some-thing less than about three years at the time of death. There was possibly a minimum number of three individuals but this is difficult to assess on such fragmentary material and may lead to erroneous conclusions. Similar comments

can be made about the sheep/goat and pig groups, Possible minimum numbers, for Sheep/Goat is two (one aged at one year and one at about two years), and for Pig it is two (one at one year and one at two years). Other than these three species there were at least one dog (Canis ps.), one Horse (Equus sp.), one Roe deer (Caprelus capreolus), two Fallow deer (Dama dama), one Red deer (Cervus elaphus), two Rats (Rattus sp.) and one Rabbit. The presence of Rabbit again could infer disturbance of the deposit.

Post dissolution

Cattle, Sheep/Goat and Pig are again present although very fragmentary those of Cattle being rather few (5). The Cattle bones were from at least two animals one of which was more than three years old and the other new born. Three individuals of Sheep/Goat could be distiguished two of which were above two years while the third was new born. In the Pigs an almost complete foetus was recovered (and therefore probably not used as food) and the fragments of an older animal making a total of at least three individuals. Other species included two cats (Felis sp. one adult and one new born), one Horse, one Fallow deer, two Red deer (one animal less than three years old and the butchered tibia of an adult), two Rats and four Rabbits. Again the presence of Rabbit could infer disturbance.

Pre/Post dissolution material

Very fragmentary material and very few fragments could be identified. The fragments of cattle suggested one individual, those of Sheep/Goat two individuals those of Pig one individual, those of Red deer one individual, those of Dog one individual, those of Rat one individual, those of cat one individual (new born) and those of Rabbit three individuals. Similar comments apply to Rabbits as before.

Summary

No reliance is to be placed on any minimum number count; the material is toofragmentary and there is toolittle of it. However a good species list is produced and the presence of a butchered Red deer tibia is of interest.

R T JONES BSc