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Animal Bones from Holbeach

There were one hundred and thirty identifiable bones in this collection but this figure is falsely inflated because eighty eight were from one dog skeleton which, apart from the numerous small bones of the feet, was substantially complete. Thus only forty two specimens were contributed by the other species present which were cattle, sheep, pig, horse and fish. Three bovine astragali had a maximum lateral length of 62, 63, and 64 mm; two ovine tibiae had distal articular widths of 24 and 28 mm, the latter unusually large for the Roman period. A complete horse metacarpal was 223 mm. in total length, 49 mm. proximal width, 32 mm. midshaft diameter and 47 mm. in distal articular width, indicating a pony of about 14 hands (143 cms.) in height.

The dog skeleton was that of a male of about 22 ins. (56 cms.) shoulder height. The tibiae showed an abnormal feature in that they and the fibulae were fused. These two bones in the Canidae are normally in close contact but joined only by connective tissue and not, as in this animal, by bone. The total length of the major long bones was: humerus 178 mm, radius 174 mm., ulna 204 mm., femur 185 mm. and tibia 192 mm. All, except the ulna, had a midshaft diameter of 12 mm.

Holbeach - I can't say what was found where but
✓ this needn't worry anybody because with
only 42 non-dog specimens the group is far
too small to make subdivisions or think
in terms of concentrations.

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6.11.70

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