

11 FEB 1974 11 FEB 1974

PND/MAJ

Ind. PA
"15.7"
(G51)

Animal Remains from Bronze Age

Barrows, near Amesbury, Wiltshire.

Excavated by Paul Ashbee, 1956-1960

by

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Animal remains from the following sites have been identified:

{ Earls Farm Down, Sites I, ^{IB,} and III, 1956
 { BM (NH) Reg. No. ARC 1974 R5000-5008

{ Site G 51 (H.36), 1960
 { ARC 1974 R5009 - R5018

{ Site G72 B4 - Twin bowl barrow
 { ARC 1974 R5019-5022

{ Site G58 B1 - Bell barrow
 { ARC 1974 R5023 - 5029

{ Site G61 B3 - Bowl barrow
 { ARC/¹⁹⁷⁴R5030-5037

The mammalian remains are very fragmentary and their incidence was sporadic, as is usual with burial sites where there is no evidence of contemporary habitation.

A skull and nearly complete skeleton of a sub-adult badger (Meles meles) ^{were} ~~was~~ found in the Central Hollow of Site I, Earls Farm Down. This was intrusive and must be considerably later than the Bronze Age, as are the rabbit bones from the plough-soil of Barrow G51.

The following mammalian species have been identified from the ^{seven} ~~six~~ barrow sites.

DOMESTIC DOG. One metapodial bone from Earls Farm Down. Site IB, (Bag 24, rabbit holes in turf mound). This bone was diseased and shows exostosis of the shaft.

HORSE (DOMESTIC?)

Nine upper and lower cheek teeth of horse were dispersed throughout the different levels of the sites. Fragments of limb bones are also present but it is not possible to distinguish between horse and ox for these.

DOMESTIC PIG. One small complete tusk was found in Site G72, B4 (Bag no. 13, W barrow, N panel). Another small tooth, an incisor, was found in the filling of the pit in Site G61 (Bag no. 42), and fragments of a mandible with lower molars 1 and 2 were found in layer 3 of the same barrow.

Capreolus capreolus (ROE DEER)

An almost complete left antler attached to part of the frontal bone was in the loam core of the mound of site G51 (bag no. 60). This antler probably came from an adult male deer.

Cervus elaphus (RED DEER)

Fragments of a metapodial bone.	-	Earls Farm Down Site III (bag no. 27).
Proximal end and shaft of a metatarsal bone	-	Site G51, chalky silt of ditch (bag no. 45)
Distal end and shaft (chopped) of a tibia	-	Site G51, on top of loamy ditch silt (bag no. 44).
Shaft of a metatarsal bone	-	Site G58 (New Barn Down, bell barrow). SW Quadrant (bag no. 47)
Distal end and shaft of tibia	-	Site 61 (New Barn Down, bowl barrow) Turf mound (bag no. 21).

DOMESTIC OX. The bones of domestic cattle ~~numbered~~ outnumbered those of the other species of mammal, there being approximately 29 bones and teeth. Each of these specimens is likely to have represented one individual animal.

Apart from the following exceptions, that are listed, the bones are in a very fragmentary condition. They are all from small domestic cattle, however, and there is no evidence for the presence of Bos primigenius as there was at the neighbouring barrow sites of Snail Down, Wiltshire, (excavated by N Thomas, unpublished). (Mr

(Jewell, 1963)

Proximal part of a horn core with fragment of frontal bone	-	Site G51, below the pelvis of human burial A (bag no. 57)
Left and right rami of mandible with all the cheek teeth except for the lr RM1 and the lr LP1. Adult.	-	Site G51. Ditch silt (bag nos. 45 and 39)
Distal end of humerus	-	Site G51. Loam core of mound (bag no. 58)
Proximal end and part shaft of radius (chopped)	-	Site G51. Turf core of mound (bag no. 53)
Proximal end and shaft of metatarsal	-	Site G51. Turf core of mound (bag no. 61)
Articular end of scapula	-	Site G74, B4. W E ditch intersection (bag no. 17)
Distal end of humerus	-	Site G74, B4. E S topsoil and barrow material (bag no. 7)
1st phalanx	-	Site G61, B3. N E quadrant, body of mound (bag no. 23).

DOMESTIC SHEEP/GOAT

The finds of sheep/goat are listed below:

Earls Farm Down, Site I (bag no. 23). Central Hollow.

A humerus, radius, and scapula of a foetal or newborn lamb or kid.

Jewell, P.A. (1963) Cattle from British archaeological sites. In: Man and Cattle. Ed. Momant, A.E. & Zeuner, F.E. Roy. Anthr. Inst., 80-101.

Also parts of the skeleton of an immature lamb or kid, a complete adult radius of a sheep and four first phalanges of an adult sheep.

Site IB. Rabbit holes in turf mound (bag no. 24)

Incomplete remains of the skull, horn cores, and skeleton of a sheep that was probably less than three years old at the time of its death.

If these sheep remains were found associated with the badger skeleton in Site I and the rabbit holes in Site IB it is possible that they are intrusive and the relics of the meals of foxes and badgers ~~are~~ rather than of Bronze Age people.

Site G51. Topsoil (bag no. 11)

~~Remains~~
Fragments of the skeletons of two foetal or newborn lambs or kids, one slightly older than the other. As these bones came from the topsoil, they may likewise be intrusive and much later than the Bronze Age, especially as a rabbit mandible was found with them.

Site III "B" ditch (bag no. 24)

Four cheek teeth and fragments of bone of a sheep or goat. These appear to be the only sheep/goat remains that can be authenticated as Bronze Age.

Oryctolagus cuniculus

A scatter of rabbit bones was found in the plough-soil level of Barrow G51.

This small collection of animal remains is unlikely to reflect the proportions of animals killed for food by the builders of the barrows. It may be noted, however, that there is perhaps an unusually high number of horse teeth, and a low percentage of pig. It is not possible to ascertain whether the horses were wild or domestic.

Note: Some preliminary sorting of the material was carried out by Miss Alison Gabbels, Institute of Archaeology, London.