

Stratford House, Buckingham (BUS 03)

Animal Bone Report by Emma-Jayne Evans

Introduction

This report encompasses animal bones from the site at Stratford House, from which a total of 22 (137 g) fragments of bone and teeth were excavated.

Methodology

Identification of the bone was undertaken at Oxford Archaeology with access to the reference collection and published guides. All the animal remains were counted and weighed, and where possible identified to species, element, side and zone (Serjeantson 1996). Ribs and vertebrae were only recorded to species when they are substantially complete and could accurately be identified, or were from an identifiable articulated skeleton in which there could be no doubt as to their species. Undiagnostic bones were recorded as small (small mammal size), medium (sheep size) or large (cattle size).

The condition of the bone was graded using the criteria stipulated by Lyman (1996). Grade 0 being the best preserved bone and grade 5 indicating that the bone had suffered such structural and attritional damage as to make it unrecognisable.

The quantification of species was carried out using the total fragment count, in which the total number of fragments of bone and teeth was calculated, and this figure broken down into the total number of fragments identifiable to each species.

Tooth eruption and wear stages were measured using a combination of Halstead (1985) and Grant (1982), and fusion data was analysed according to Silver (1969).

Results

The bone from this site survived in good condition, with the majority of the bone scoring 2 using Lyman's method. Although the bone was in good condition, the assemblage largely comprised small unidentifiable fragments, resulting in only 8 bones (36.4%) identifiable to species, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Total fragments identifiable to species and date

	S/g	Pig	Cattle	Dog	Bird	Unid	Total
Medieval	2	2			1	11	16
Post medieval	1		1	1		3	6
Total	3	2	1	1	1	14	22

No gnawing, butchery, pathology or burning were noted on any of the bones present. Age at death could be ascertained for 1 sheep/goat mandible, giving an age of 5 - 8 years. One fragment of worked bird bone was present, a bone whistle (Leigh Allen, pers comm) probably made from a tibio-tarsus.

Given the small sample size of this assemblage, interpretation of the animal bones is unreasonable. It may only be noted that the main domestic species are present, and the bones may represent general domestic waste.

References

Grant, A, 1982 'The Use of Tooth Wear as a Guide to the Age of Domestic Ungulates', in B Wilson *et al.* *Ageing and Sexing Animal Bones from Archaeological Sites*, BAR British Series 109, 91-108, Oxford

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