

Seagrang Road, Baldoyle Dublin 13  
Licence no: 13E238  
Licensed director: Paul Duffy

## REPORT ON ANIMAL BONES

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### INTRODUCTION

The archaeological excavation at Seagrang Road, Baldoyle, Dublin 13 generated a small animal bone assemblage comprising 40 fragments (814g) (Table 1; Table 2). The bones were recovered from six contexts within three trenches, and were of good preservation. The remains are contextually of a broad medieval to post-medieval date. Directly targeted radiocarbon dates of samples from the animal bone material will however be undertaken to discern chronological phases of the material deposits.

### METHOD

Bones were identified to species and element, and quantified by fragment count (NISP) and weight. Measurements were taken in accordance with von den Driesch (1976) (Table 4), and estimation of age-at-death was based on dental eruption, wear and stage of epiphyseal fusion (Habermehl 1975; Silver 1969) (Table 3). Taphonomic markers such as animal gnawing and butchery marks were also recorded, if present.

### RESULT

A total of four species were identified in the material: cattle (*Bos taurus*), caprovine (*Ovis aries/Capra hircus*), pig (*Sus scrofa* sp.) and horse (*Equus caballus*). As the material is of such small quantity, it is not possible to explore any stratigraphical or chronological differences or patterns in the assemblage. The results are therefore only presented by context:

**C1:** This context was a mixed layer comprising topsoil and construction debris within Trench 1. It contained the proximal portion of a right ulna from a juvenile cattle aged less than 42–48 months. The bone had been sawn transverse across the olecranon, through the ulnar notch, from the process of segmentation of the carcass at the elbow joint. As the bone had been sawn through and not segmented with a cleaver, it is likely to be of post-medieval or modern date.

**C2:** This was a plough-soil layer exposed within Trench 1, which included other than ten animal bone fragments included 12<sup>th</sup>–13<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup>–20<sup>th</sup> century pottery. Three animal bones were identified as cattle, comprising a neck fragment of a right scapula and two tooth fragments. One rib fragment and a complete second phalanx bone were identified as caprovine. The rib displayed a transverse cut across the angle, and a fine knife cut mark was observed on the inferior margin of the neck; both which are indicating filleting. The remaining five fragments could not be identified to species, although four derived from a large sized mammal and the fifth fragment from a medium sized mammal.

**C4:** This context was the upper fill of a gully (C3) exposed within Trench 2. It contained eight animal bone fragments, of which three could be identified to species. These included a rib fragment and a distal portion of an ulna from cattle. The ulna derived from a juvenile animal aged less than 2 years at the time of slaughter. No butchery marks were observed on the fragment. This deposit also included a large fragment of a horse mandible. As the first permanent molar was in eruption, it could be concluded that the mandible derived from an animal aged around 12 months. The remaining fragments derived from unidentified large and medium sized mammals.

**C5:** This context was the lower fill of gully C3, exposed within Trench 2. It contained a fragment of a right coxae of cattle, the distal half of a left caprovine humerus, and an unidentifiable fragment of a large sized mammal. The cattle coxae displayed a congenital foramen (5x3mm) through the medial wall of the acetabular surface.

**C7:** This context was the upper fill of a shallow pit cut by gully C3 within Trench 2. It included 15 animal bone fragments, of which three were identified as cattle, three as caprovine, two as pig and seven unidentified of which one derived from a large sized mammal and five from a medium sized mammal. The cattle bones were a proximal portion of the ilium of a left coxae, and two cranial bones. The caprovine bones included a cranial fragment, fragments of a right mandible, and an acetabular fragment of a left coxae. The pig bones were a mandibular incisor tooth and right mandible fragment from a juvenile animal. No butchery marks were observed on the remains.

**C9:** This context was a redeposited layer containing modern debris found located underneath a construction debris layer (C1) within Trench 3. It contained a left mandibular molar and a right patella from cattle. No butchery marks were noted on the fragments.

## **SUMMARY**

The small animal bone assemblage does not allow for any conclusions other than the presence of cattle, caprovine, pig and horse on the site. The former three species evidently contributed to the diet, however to which relative degree is impossible to determine. The fact that the horse bone derived from a juvenile animal is interesting, as these animals would normally have been allowed to reach adulthood. There is no evidence to suggest that hippophagy took place, and it seems most likely that the bone derived from an animal that died from either disease or by accident.

## **Recommendations**

Other than as reference material for future radiocarbon and isotopic analyses, there is little academic value for the future retention of the material. It is therefore recommended that the bones are disposed of, once the necessary additional scientific analysis of the remains has been undertaken.

## **REFERENCES**

- Grant, A. (1982). 'The use of tooth wear as a guide to the age of domestic ungulates'. In B. Wilson, C. Grigson and S. Payne (eds.) *Ageing and sexing animal bones from archaeological sites*, pp. 91–108. Oxford: British Archaeological Reports.
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- Silver, I. A. (1969). 'The ageing of domestic animals'. In D. R. Brothwell and E. S. Higgs (eds.) *Science in archaeology: A comprehensive survey of progress and research*, pp. 283–302. London: Thames & Hudson.
- von den Driesch, A. (1976). *A guide to the measurement of animal bones from archaeological sites*. Harvard: Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology/Harvard University.

Table 1. Identified animal species by context. BOS = cattle; O/C = caprovine; SUS = pig; EQU = horse; LM = large sized mammal; MM = medium sized mammal; INDET = indeterminable

Context	BOS	O/C	SUS	EQU	LM	MM	INDET	Total	Weight (g)
C1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	56
C2	3	2	-	-	4	1	-	10	72
C4	2	1	-	1	1	4	-	9	285
C5	1	1	-	-	1	-	-	3	177
C7	3	3	2	-	1	5	1	15	182
C9	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	42
<b>Total:</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>814</b>
<b>Weight (g):</b>	<b>427</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>245</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>814</b>	
%NISP	30.00	17.50	5.00	2.50	17.50	25.00	2.50	100.00	
%Weight	52.46	4.30	7.00	30.10	4.30	1.60	0.25	100.00	

Table 2. Identified animal species by skeletal element in the total assemblage. BOS = cattle; O/C = caprovine; SUS = pig; EQU = horse; LM = large sized mammal; MM = medium sized mammal; INDET = indeterminable.

Element	BOS	O/C	SUS	EQU	LM	MM	INDET
Cranial	2	1	-	-	-	-	-
Mandible	-	1	1	1	-	-	-
Loose teeth	3	-	1	-	-	-	-
Rib	1	1	-	-	-	-	-
Scapula	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
Humerus	-	1	-	-	-	-	-
Ulna	2	-	-	-	-	-	-
Coxae	2	2	-	-	-	-	-
Patella	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
Phalanx 2	-	1	-	-	-	-	-
Indet.	-	-	-	-	7	10	1
<b>Total:</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>MNI:</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	-	-	-
<b>Weight (g):</b>	<b>427</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>245</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>2</b>

Table 3. Dental wear data. SUS = pig; BOS = cattle; O/C = caprovine. For definitions of wear stages, see Grant (1982)

Context	Species	Element	Side	P <sub>4</sub>	M <sub>1</sub>	M <sub>2</sub>	M <sub>3</sub>	MWS.
7	SUS	Mandible	R	d	f	c	1/2	23
9	BOS	M <sub>3</sub>	L	-	-	-	k	-

