

**Title: THE ANIMAL BONES FROM CYRIL JACKSON SCHOOL,
LIMEHOUSE CAUSEWAY, LONDON E14, LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER
HAMLETS (LHC93)**

Author: Alan Pipe (Osteology Section, Museum of London Archaeology Service)

Date: September 2007

© Alan Pipe, 2007

This research forms part of an Arts and Humanities Research Council funded study 'Living in Victorian London: Material Histories of Everyday Life in the Nineteenth-Century Metropolis' Award Number AH/E002285/1 led by Dr Alastair Owens in the Department of Geography at Queen Mary, University of London.. This funding is gratefully acknowledged. For further information see www.geog.qmul.ac.uk/victorianlondon



Arts & Humanities
Research Council



Queen Mary
University of London

MUSEUM OF LONDON
ARCHAEOLOGY

THE ANIMAL BONES FROM CYRIL JACKSON SCHOOL, LIMEHOUSE CAUSEWAY, LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS (LHC93)

1. Introduction

This short report quantifies, identifies and interprets the animal bone recovered by hand-collection from [1] LHC93. Each bone is described directly onto the MoLAS Oracle animal bone post-assessment database in terms of species, skeletal element, body side, epiphysial fusion, tooth eruption and wear, and modification.

2. Methodology

All identifications of species and skeletal element follow Schmid 1972 and refer to the MoLSS reference collection. Description and interpretation of epiphysial fusion follow Amorosi 1989; and Schmid 1982; dental eruption and wear recording and interpretation follow Amorosi 1989; and Grant 1982.

3. Results

3.1 Preservation

Bone preservation was generally very good, and all fragments were identifiable to species and skeletal element. All butchery marks, fusion lines and dental wear stages were clearly visible.

3.2 The fauna

Context [1] produced a small, well-preserved group of ten fragments of animal bone derived from ox *Bos taurus*, sheep *Ovis aries*, pig *Sus scrofa* and rabbit *Oryctolagus cuniculus* (Table 1).

3.3 Skeletal representation (Table 2)

Ox produced only a single third phalange (terminal toe joint); sheep produced a tibia (shin bone) and a first phalange (basal toe joint); pig produced two (left) mandibles (lower jaws), a thoracic (chest area) vertebra, a humerus (upper fore leg) and a tibia (shin bone); rabbit produced a skull and a scapula (shoulder blade). Recovery of two left pig mandibles indicates disposal of elements from at least two animals.

3.4 Age at death (Tables 2 and 4)

Evidence from epiphysial fusion indicated that the majority of the bones probably derived from at least subadult, and probably older, individuals. There were no foetal, neonate or infant animals. The ox phalange derived from an animal of at least 1.5 years; the sheep tibia and phalange from animals of at least 3.5 years and 0.5 years respectively. The

unfused proximal pig humerus would have derived from an animal younger than 3.5 years.

Tooth eruption and wear evidence from both pig mandibles indicates subadults between six months and one year old.

3.5 Butchery (Table 3)

Clear butchery marks are visible on the sheep tibia, and on three pig bones; mandible, thoracic vertebra and tibia. The sheep tibia (shin) had been partially sawn through at the midshaft and then snapped, perhaps during preparation of a leg of mutton joint. The pig mandible had been split midline at the 'chin' suggesting division of the head to allow removal of the brain; it also showed lateral knife cuts suggesting removal of the large masseter (chewing) muscles. The pig thoracic vertebra had also been split down the midline, probably during division of the carcass into 'sides'. The pig tibia had been sawn through at the proximal and distal ends of the midshaft, and also shallowly knife cut on the midshaft, perhaps during preparation of a small gammon hock joint for roasting or braising.

5. Discussion

These well-preserved ten fragments offer some interesting clues as to the local Victorian meat diet. They demonstrate consumption of beef, mutton, pork and/or bacon, and rabbit, predominantly from adult animals but with an emphasis on subadult pigs. The carcass part recovery of the major domesticates shows selection of areas of very good (pig vertebra) and more moderate (sheep tibia; pig mandible and tibia) meat-bearing quality, but also areas (cattle and sheep feet) often either discarded as primary butchery waste or consumed as cheap cuts of comparatively poor meat-bearing value, indeed, significant components of head and foot elements in an archaeological animal bone assemblage are often interpreted as indications of local primary butchery or of low economic status of the consumer (e.g. Davis 1987, 190). Cattle and sheep feet are still offered for sale by butchers and in markets throughout the East End of London, e.g. Queens Market, Upton Park, London E6 (Pipe, pers. obs.) and are still esteemed in that area as an ingredient for making stews, and as a source of marrow and gelatine in jellied dishes. Although too small to justify much definite comment, this tiny group appears to give a 'snapshot' of a varied diet combining meat of obvious quality with thrifty use of cheaper and perhaps less generally desirable carcass areas.

6. Bibliography

Amorosi, T, 1989 A post-cranial guide to domestic neo-natal and juvenile mammals: the identification and ageing of Old World species
BAR International Series 533

Davis, S, 1987 *The archaeology of animals*
London. Batsford.

Grant, A, 1982 The use of tooth wear as a guide to the age of domestic ungulates
In: Wilson, R; Grigson, C; & Payne, S (eds.) 1982 Ageing and sexing animal bones from
archaeological sites
BAR British Series 109; 91-108

Schmid, E, 1972 *Atlas of animal bones for prehistorians, archaeologists and Quaternary
geologists*
London. Elsevier

7. Tables

Table 1: Hand-collected animal bone from LHC93 [1]/summary

*Table 2: Hand-collected animal bone from LHC93 [1]/skeletal representation, body side,
age and fusion*

Table 3: Hand-collected animal bone from LHC93 [1]/butchery

Table 4: Hand-collected animal bone from LHC93 [1]/dental eruption and wear