

Lyminge 2010 Analysis of Fish Remains from Environmental Samples

By Rebecca Reynolds, January 2013

Introduction and Methods

The material came from the heavy residues of the environmental samples taken from various sunken featured buildings excavated during the summer of 2010. The heavy residue was sorted prior to analysis and only the bags labelled as fish were analysed. The material was studied in the Bioarchaeology laboratory of the University of Nottingham using the reference collection held there. The material was identified to element and species where possible.

Results

Overall the material demonstrated very good preservation levels. Most of the vertebrae were not fragmented and some of the cranial elements of fish recovered such as the herring maxilla were complete. This element is particularly delicate and its presence indicates that the material has not suffered from too much fragmentation. No butchery marks were noted on any of the fish bones, the herring vertebrae from sample 69, SFB 4 were burnt and one was calcinated.

A total of 75 fish bones with 54 identified to species or family level. The most common species was herring followed by plaice/flounder (Table 1). Only very small numbers of eel and cyprinids were found. Vertebrae were the most common element though cranial elements were also found indicating that the whole fish was present on the site.

Several bags were labelled as containing otoliths, unfortunately these are not otoliths but slug plates. Many of the samples also contained small bird and rodent elements.

Discussion

Fish bone assemblages are rare from the early Anglo-Saxon period. A review of all assemblages by the author has shown that the absence of fish from early Anglo-Saxon assemblages is affected by the lack of bulk sieving but also the focus of excavation on SFBs as opposed to rubbish pits (Reynolds *in prep.*). Nevertheless, interesting assemblages have been found. Early Anglo-Saxon assemblages have been characterised as being primarily made up of freshwater fish such as at West Stow, Suffolk (Crabtree 1989). The assemblage from Carlton Colville (Parks and Barrett 2009) also in Suffolk is similar to that from Lyminge in that it is dominated by marine fish.

Previous excavation at Lyminge have recovered a rich fish assemblage dominated by marine fish (Reynolds 2009). The finds from the 2010 excavation season allow for an insight into the beginning of fishing and fish consumption at this site and when phasing and dates are available it will also allow for an insight into the dynamics of fishing in early Anglo-Saxon England.

References

- CRABTREE, P. (1989) *West Stow. Early Anglo-Saxon Animal Husbandry*. East Anglian Archaeology Report No. 47.
- REYNOLDS, R. V. (2009) *Surf 'n' Turf: The Components and Influences of a Middle Anglo-Saxon Diet from Lyminge, Kent*, University of Nottingham. Unpublished MSc Dissertation.
- REYNOLDS, R. V. (In prep.) *Food for the Soul: The social dynamics of marine fish consumption in Anglo-Saxon England from AD 400 to AD 1100.*, University of Nottingham, Unpublished PhD Thesis.
- PARKS, R. & BARRETT, J. (2009) Fish Remains. IN LUCY, S., TIPPER, J. & DICKENS, A. (Eds.) *The Anglo-Saxon Settlement and Cemetery at Bloodmoor Hill, Carlton Colville, Suffolk*. Cambridge, Cambridge Archaeological Unit.

Site Code	SFB	Quad	Sample No	Context	Species	Element	Quantity
LYM10	3	B	146	2163	Slug	plate	15
LYM10	3	B	146	2163	Herring	Vertebra	1
LYM10	3	B	66	2548	Slug	plate	7
LYM10	3	B	66	2548	Herring	Vertebra	5
LYM10	3	B	88	2601	Slug	plate	3
LYM10	3	B	88	2601	Unknown	tooth	1
LYM10	3	C	48	2163	Slug	plate	3
LYM10	3	A	80	2642	Herring	Vertebra	3
LYM10	3	A	80	2642	Unknown	tooth	1
LYM10	3	B	65	2693	Slug	plate	12
LYM10	1	B	76	2583	Slug	plate	5
LYM10	1	C	56	2556iC	Herring	Vertebra	2
LYM10	1	C	62	2681	Herring	Vertebra	1
LYM10	1	C	62	2681	Slug	plate	7
LYM10	1	A	2	2588	Slug	plate	4
LYM10	1	A	2	2588	Herring	Vertebra	1
LYM10	1	C	64	2683	Slug	plate	7
LYM10	1	C	53	2556iC	Herring	Vertebra	1
LYM10	1	C	53	2556iC	Unknown Fish	Vertebra	1
LYM10	1	C	53	2556iC	Slug	plate	12
LYM10	1	A	1	2587	Slug	plate	2
LYM10	1	A	1	2587	Herring	Vertebra	1
LYM10	1	no quad given	83	2722	Herring	Vertebra	10
LYM10	1	no quad given	83	2722	Unknown Fish	Vertebra	1
LYM10	1	no quad given	83	2722	Slug	plate	9
LYM10	1	no quad given	83	2722	Herring	Articular	1
LYM10	1	no quad given	83	2722	Fish	Spines	3
LYM10	1	no quad given	83	2722	Unknown	Fragments	4
LYM10	1	B	71	2555	Herring	Vertebra	3
LYM10	1	B	71	2555	Slug	plate	12
LYM10	1	B	71	2555	Unknown Fish	Vertebra	1
LYM10	1	B	71	2555	Unknown Fish	Spines	3
LYM10	1	B	71	2555	Unknown	Fragments	3
LYM10	1	C	55	2556iC	Herring	Vertebra	4
LYM10	1	C	55	2556iC	Slug	plate	19
LYM10	1	B	38	2508	Horse	Vertebra	1

					mackerel		
LYM10	1	B	38	2508	Herring	Maxilla	1
LYM10	1	B	38	2508	Slug	plate	12
LYM10	1	C	32	2556	Slug	plate	7
LYM10	1	C	52	2556iC	Slug	plate	12
LYM10	1	no quad given	9	2238	Slug	plate	18
LYM10	1	C	36	2556	Slug	plate	11
LYM10	1	B	75	2555	Herring	Vertebra	1
LYM10	1	B	75	2555	Eel	Vertebra	1
LYM10	1	B	75	2555	Unknown Fish	Spines	3
LYM10	1	B	75	2555	Herring	Articular	1
LYM10	1	B	75	2555	Slug	plate	5
LYM10	1	B	44	2163	Herring	Vertebra	1
LYM10	1	B	44	2163	Slug	plate	4
LYM10	1	no quad given	37	2508	Herring	Parasphenoid	1
LYM10	1	no quad given	37	2508	Herring	Vertebra	1
LYM10	1	no quad given	37	2508	Slug	plate	2
LYM10	1	no quad given	37	2508	Unknown	Fragments	1
LYM10	1	B	74	2585	Herring	Vertebra	2
LYM10	1	B	74	2585	Slug	plate	15
LYM10	1	B	72	2556	Slug	plate	2
LYM10	1	C	34	2556	Slug	plate	10
LYM10	1	C	34	2556	Herring	Dentary	1
LYM10	1	C	35	2556	Slug	plate	9
LYM10	1	no quad given	9	2274	Slug	plate	3
LYM10	1	B	39	2508	Herring	Vertebra	1
LYM10	1	B	39	2508	Slug	plate	9
LYM10	1	B	39	2508	Unknown	Fragments	1
LYM10	1	B	41	2508	Slug	plate	8
LYM10	1	B	41	2508	Unknown	Fragments	7
LYM10	1	C	54	2556iC	Herring	Vertebra	1
LYM10	1	C	54	2556iC	Unknown Fish	Spines	3
LYM10	1	C	54	2556iC	Slug	plate	15
LYM10	1	A-B	84	2580	Herring	Vertebra	4
LYM10	1	A-B	84	2580	Slug	plate	9
LYM10	1	A-B	84	2580	Unknown	Spines	2
LYM10	1	A-B	84	2580	Herring	Dentary	1

LYM10	1	B	40	2508	Slug	plate	8
LYM10	2	no quad given	93	2634	Unknown Fish	Spines	1
LYM10	2	no quad given	93	2634	Slug	plate	4
LYM10	2	no quad given	93	2634	Cyprinid	Vertebra	1
LYM10	2	A	30	2293	Slug	plate	4
LYM10	2	A	94	2707	Herring	Vertebra	5
LYM10	2	A	94	2707	Unknown Fish	Spines	2
LYM10	2	A	94	2707	Slug	plate	4
LYM10	2	A	94	2707	Slug	plate	4
LYM10	2	A	94	2707	Unknown Fish	Fragments	1
LYM10	1	no quad given	82	2721	Herring	Vertebra	46
LYM10	1	no quad given	82	2721	Cyprinid	Vertebra	1
LYM10	1	no quad given	82	2721	Slug	plate	10
LYM10	1	no quad given	82	2721	Unknown Fish	Spines	17
LYM10	4	B	15	2608	Slug	plate	3
LYM10	4	4	69	2705a	Herring	Vertebra	7
LYM10	4	A	68	2704a	Slug	plate	10
LYM10	4	A	68	2704a	Herring	Vertebra	4
LYM10	4	A	68	2704a	Herring	Vertebra	5
LYM10	4	A	68	2704a	Unknown Fish	Vertebra	1
LYM10	4	A	68	2704a	Unknown Fish	Fragments	2
LYM10	4	A	16	2656	Slug	plate	4
LYM10	2	no quad given	21	2518A	Eel	Vertebra	1
LYM10	2	no quad given	21	2518A	Plaice/flounder	Vertebra	2
LYM10	2	no quad given	21	2518A	Unknown Fish	Vertebra	1
LYM10	2	no quad given	21	2518A	Slug	plate	4
LYM10	2	no quad given	21	2518A	Unknown Fish	Spines	3
LYM10	2	D	57	2541	Slug	plate	5
LYM10	2	D	58	2541	Plaice/flounder	Vertebra	2
LYM10	2	D	58	25411	Slug	plate	4
LYM10	2	A	29	2293	Slug	plate	4
LYM10	2	D	59	2541	Plaice/flounder	Vertebra	1

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LYM10	2	D	59	2541	Slug	plate	4
LYM10	2	D	59	2541	Plaice/flounder	Pre-opercular	1
LYM10	2	no quad given	93	2634	Herring	Vertebra	1
LYM10	2	no quad given	93	2634	Unknown Fish	Vertebra	1
LYM10	2	no quad given	93	2634	Slug	plate	3
LYM10	2	C	14	2362	Slug	plate	2
LYM10	2	D	61		Plaice/flounder	Vertebra	2
LYM10	2	D	61		Eel	Cleithrum	1
LYM10	2	D	61		Unknown Fish	Spines	1
LYM10	2	no quad given	93	2634	Eel	Vertebra	1
LYM10	2	no quad given	93	2634	Plaice/flounder	Supracleithrum	1
LYM10	2	no quad given	93	2634	Slug	plate	4
LYM10	2	D	60	2541	Plaice/flounder	Vertebra	2
LYM10	2	D	60	2541	Plaice/flounder	1st Anal Pterigyophore	1
LYM10	2	D	60	2541	Slug	plate	4
LYM10	2	D	60	2541	Unknown Fish	Spines	4
LYM10	2	A	28	2293	Slug	plate	7
LYM10	2	A	28	2293	Plaice/flounder	Opercular	1
LYM10	2	A	31	2293	Plaice/flounder	Vertebra	3
LYM10	2	no quad given	93	2634	Slug	plate	8
LYM10	2	no quad given	93	2634	Eel	Cleithrum	1
LYM10	2	D	91	2709	Eel	Vertebra	1
LYM10	2	D	91	2709	Slug	plate	6
LYM10	2	D	91	2709	Unknown Fish	Fragments	1
LYM10	2	no quad given	75	2560	Slug	plate	8
LYM10	2	no quad given	75	2560	Plaice/flounder	Vertebra	9
LYM10	2	no quad given	75	2560	Herring	Vertebra	1

LYM10	2	no quad given	75	2560	Eel	Vertebra	2
LYM10	2	no quad given	75	2560	Unknown Fish	Vertebra	1
LYM10	2	no quad given	75	2560	Unknown Fish	Spines	18
LYM10	2	no quad given	75	2560	Plaice/flounder	Opercular	1
LYM10	2	no quad given	75	2560	Plaice/flounder	Cleithrum	1

Table 1. Identification data