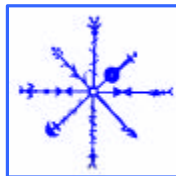


Report of Bones from Saltvík, Northern Iceland

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NORSEC

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Background

On August 9th 2004 Adolf Friðriksson of the Archaeological Institute Iceland revisited probable pagan burials near the farm of Saltvík just south of Husavík. The site has been subject of survey and test excavation in 2003 (Vésteinsson et al 2004) and three complexes of long hall and pit houses have been documented and tested, revealing an occupation just after the mid-10th c Veiðivötn tephra. During the 2003 season, two pre-christian graves were located and excavated, both proving to have been boted in the later Middle Ages just prior to the 1477 tephra fall. In 2004 Adolf was able to recover additional bone material from the robbers' spoil heap associated with burial KUML 1, including both horse and human bones. This report documents the zooarchaeological portion of this grave find.

Report

The bones included in this disturbed grave lot represent two species, human (*Homo sapiens* L.) and horse (*Equus caballus* L). Human bone (identified by Hildur Gestsdóttir) comprises multiple fragments of long bones, rib, cranium, and vertebral column, and are reported separately.

Horse Bones

- 2 Scapulae (Right and Left) fully adult
- 2 Innominate halves (Right and Left), fully adult
- 2 Incisors, adult with moderate – heavy wear
- 1 Occipital condyle
- 1 Phalanx 1, fully fused, metrics (Von den Dreisch 1976) Bp 50.0, SD 34.7, GL 76.6, Bd 44.0
- 3 cervical vertebrae, fully fused
- 4 thoracic vertebrae, fully fused
- 1 sacrum (fragmentary)
- 3 vertebral fragments
- 1 Radius + Ulna, Right, (fused), radius Bp 79.0, SD 39.0
- 1 Femora left, whole, fully fused proximally and distally. SD 40.00, GL 290.0, Bd 90.09 (NB no osteometric box available, GL approx.).
- 2 Mandible halves (Right and Left), match at mental symph. Fully adult dentition, moderate to heavy wear (ca “g” in Grant system).
- 2 Maxilla halves (Right and Left) match along palate. Fully adult dentition, moderate to heavy wear (ca “g” in Grant system).

Total NISP = 23 horse bones (matched mandible and maxilla are counted as single elements).

Discussion: This disturbed horse skeleton probably represents a single individual, with the matching tooth rows and fully consistent aging pattern

suggesting a fully mature animal of at least five years. Adult but not aged, this horse is approximately the size of many modern Icelandic horses.

References

Vésteinsson, Orri (ed) 2004 *Fornleifarannsóknir í Saltvík 2003*, Fornliefastofnun Íslands FS246-03271, Reykjavík 2004

Von den Dreisch, Angela, 1976 *Measurement of Animal Bones from Archaeological Sites*, Peabody Museum monographs.