

Late Antiquity animal remains of the military settlement near Barkach village (Pleven Region, CN Bulgaria)

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Abstract. A total of 86 bones and bone fragments of wild and domestic mammals collected in the Late Antiquity military settlement near Barkach village (Pleven Region, CN Bulgaria) have been identified as 9 species of 4 orders. Most numerous are the remains of Donkey and the Red deer. The record of the Fallow deer proves the species occurrence in the Late Antiquity in the North Bulgaria.

Key words: Subfossil mammals, Late Antiquity, Fallow deer.

Introduction

Region of the Barkach village (Central Northern Bulgaria) lies 7 km from the Vit River and provided an important subfossil fauna. A military settlement was built in the vicinities of the village. It is believed that the settlement was inhabited for a short period and soon after it was abandoned because of the invasion of the Goths.

Material and Methods

The animal material (bones, bone splinters and teeth) was collected in the spring of 2019 during the archaeological excavations led by the archaeologist Dr. Katya Melamed, who dated it Late Antiquity (4th century A. D.). Location of the site: 43°17'N, 24°26'E. The material was handed for examination in August 2019. It originates from 11 samples of the excavations of 1.89 to 2.33 m depth.

Results and Discussion

Remains of domestic mammals number 19 finds, while those of wild mammals are 17 (Table 1). The majority of bones are heavily damaged. So, the unidentifiable bone splinters represent 55.8 percent. Three bones of *C. elaphus*, *Capra hircus* and *Ovis/ Capra* are burnt. No other traces on bones are found. Two human bones (partial radius and thoracal vertebrae) are identified too. The share of deer (*C. elaphus*, *D. dama* /Fig. 1 – A, B/) in the bone material is surprisingly high. Both species represent up to 28.9 percent of the identified remains. Wild and domestic mammals are almost equally represented.

Table 1. Animal representation in the collected archaeozoological material from the Late Antiquity military settlement (4th century A. D.) near Barkach village, Pleven Region (CN Bulgaria).

No	Taxa	English Name	Number of bone finds
Artiodactyla			
1.	<i>Bos taurus</i> Linnaeus, 1758	Domestic cattle	2
	<i>Bos cf. taurus</i>	Domestic cattle	4
2.	<i>Cervus elaphus</i> Linnaeus, 1758	Red deer	8
	<i>Cervus cf. elaphus</i>	Red deer	1
3.	<i>Dama dama</i> (Linnaeus, 1758)	Fallow deer	2
4.	<i>Sus scrofa scrofa</i> Linnaeus, 1758	Wild boar	4
	<i>Sus scrofa scrofa/ domestica</i>	Wild boar / Domestic pig	1
5.	<i>Capra hircus</i> (Linnaeus, 1758)	Domestic goat	1
	<i>Ovis / Capra</i>	Sheep/ Goat	1
Perissodactyla			
6.	<i>Equus ferus caballus</i> Linnaeus, 1758	Domestic horse	1
7.	<i>Equus africanus asinus</i> Linnaeus, 1758	Donkey	9
Carnivora			
8.	<i>Canis lupus</i> Linnaeus, 1758	Gray wolf	2
Primates			
9.	<i>Homo sapiens</i> Linnaeus, 1758	Wise man	2
	Unidentifiable bone splinters		48
	Total		86

The relative abundance of the remains of deer, wild boar (and gray wolf), representing 44.7 percent of all identified bone remains, suggests vast woodland landscape in the settlement's surrounding. Even more, all these species are the only wild animals found in the studied material. All other animals are domestic forms. Donkey (Fig. 1 – C) was the most numerous among all species/domestic forms.

At present the largest oak (*Quercus* spp.) forests in the Dolni Dabnik Municipality survived in the region of the Barkach and Sadovets villages (Nikiforov 2017).

As human and animal bone remains were deposited in the same place, we could conclude that the excavations uncovered a former dump, where debris of any kind were dumped.

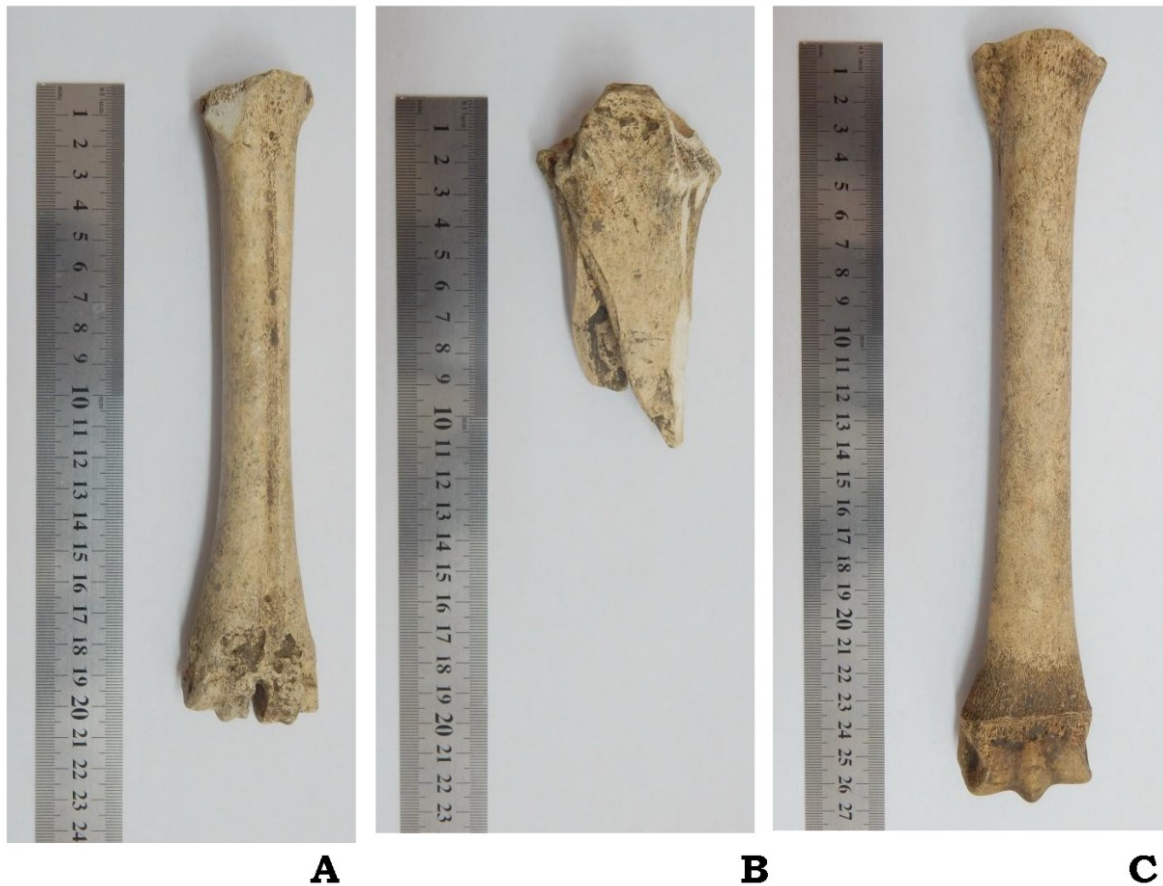


Fig. 1. Some bone finds from the Late Antiquity military settlement near Barkach village (Pleven Region): *Dama dama* – metacarpus dex. (A), ulna sin. dist. (B); *Equus africanus asinus* – metatarsus sin. juv. (C). Photo: Z. Boev.

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References

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