

Animal Bones from the Roman Imperial Period Settlement at Apagy in Barbaricum

In 1936-37 archaeological finds and animal bones were collected from a settlement of Roman Imperial Period in Apagy, Peckés rét (Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg County, NE-Hungary). In the selected bone material there were remains of six domestic animals: cattle, sheep, goat, pig, horse, dog; five wild animals: aurochs, red deer, roe deer, wild boar and brown bear; and remains of a marsh tortoise (Table 1.).

On the basis of osteometric examination of cattle bones we can assume that ethnic groups of the Barbaricum in the II-V cc. A.D. kept several types of cattle. Roman Age large cattle and oxen found outside the great Sarmatian entrenchment in N-NE-Hungary – among them the ones from Apagy – are not of Pannonian origin. Roman large cattle appears in Pannonia in the IInd c. A.D.

Sarmatian livestock trade was directed not from Pannonia towards Barbaricum as S. BÖKÖNYI has suggested (1972. 130., 1976. 46-72.), but on the contrary: cattle livestock must had been driven from the Great Hungarian Plain – brightly suitable for extensive animal husbandry – to the market places of the Danube limes.

Besides *small* and *short* slim bodied Sarmatian horses (about 1200-1360 mm withers height) there were also *middle* height horses in the territory between the Danube and Tisza. We have no information about big bodied „Roman military horse” from the Barbaricum (wrong data – BÖKÖNYI 1976. 50.).

The big dog skull from Apagy belonged to a sheep dog.

The most important domestic animal was *cattle*, next ones were pigs and sheep/goats. The most important meat stock was cattle, but primarily it was used in many ways as livestock animal. Drought strength of bulls and oxen was used besides the agriculture in transportation of goods.

Remains of *pigs* represent their meat stock character.

Sheep and *goats* gave milk, wool, meat, fur and skin.

Saddle backed and riding *horse* was the most important animal of the army. Also its meat was used for eating regularly.

Sheep dog supplied the safety and directing of cattle herd.

In Apagy we meet all the four large wild animals of the Carpathian basin: *aurochs*, *red deer*, *roe deer* and *wild boar*. Brown bear lives in woods, in the mountains. Big games were hunted for their meat, trophy and skin/fur.

Bone-processing activity of the settlement is proved by carved and polished cattle and horse metapodia. Red deer antlers were also cut to pieces.

It is interesting to examine the composition of species and relative proportions of animal bone remains from the settlements of Roman Imperial Period in the Barbaricum (Table 5, 6.): the frequency order of domestic animals in the

Sarmatian settlements between the Danube and Tisza, the Tisza basin and East from Tisza (this is the territory closed by the Sarmatian entrenchment which in its tendency follows the border between the fields soil of the Great Hungarian Plain and the closed wood-woody steppe) is the following: *cattle-sheep-pig* (Table 6.); and in the Sarmatian settlements of the Roman Imperial Period outside the great entrenchment (N-NE-Hungary): *cattle-pig-sheep* (Table 5.). Horses were met in all settlements, but *asses* only inside the entrenchment. Sheep dogs were not met everywhere, but *greyhounds* were found primarily inside the entrenchment.

Besides the four *big games* there were animals hunted for their fur: e.g. remains of *fox, badger, brown bear, beaver, hare* and *polecat* are known.

Red deer comes from closed woods, *roe deer* and *wild boar* from brushwoods, *aurochs* from woody steppe. Except for hare all the other fur animals come from wood milieu.

A head of a *hunter polecat* (skull + a pair of mandibula) found in grave 7., barrow II. in Tiszaeszlár, Szellóhalom shows a special way of hunting.

Domestic animals of Barbaricum that come from Roman import are *cat* and domestic *goose*. Import animals can be Roman military horses and pigeons.

The number of poultry is very low, as well as the number of wild birds and fish.

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