

## 14. ARCHAEOBOTANY

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### 14.1 Introduction

A total of 321 bulk environmental samples were taken during the excavation at St Mary's (Leith). The majority were taken from the grave pits; therefore, taken for the recovery of human bone. Six samples from non-grave fills were selected for further analysis of their palaeoenvironmental remains; all were from Phase 3.

### 14.2 Methodology

The bulk environmental samples were processed at Wardell Armstrong LLP with methodology outlined in the original post-excavation assessment (WA 2016: 51).

The plant remains and charcoal were identified to species as far as possible, using published literature and academic texts as well as the author's reference collection (Hather 2000; Schoch et al 2004; Jacomet 2006; Cappers et al 2012; Cappers & Neef 2012; Cappers & Bekker 2013). Nomenclature for plant taxa followed published academic literature (Stace 2010; Cappers & Neef 2012).

### 14.3 Results

A total of 761 uncharred plant remains were observed in these six samples along with a single charred barley (*Hordeum* sp.) grain. The greatest yield was from environmental sample <4>, C105 fill of Robbing Cut C104 with 382 individual fruits/seeds observed. The smallest yield was from environmental sample <26>, C176 fill of Pit C172 with only three examples of goosefoot (*Chenopodium* sp.) fruits present. The full results can be observed in Table 12. The preservation of all fruits/seeds was good to excellent.

### 14.4 Discussion

All uncharred plant species observed may be found in waste ground. The presence of shrubs such as red elderberry (*Sambucus racemosa*), elderberry (*S. nigra*), brambles (*Rubus* sp.) and guelder-rose (*Viburnum opulus*) may have suggested that hedgerows were present. However, in consideration with the other species observed, they are more likely to be representative of an overgrown waste area; especially after the pits had gone out of use for their intended purpose.

The presence of the single charred barley grain does not shed any light on crop husbandry practices or diet and is likely to be there by chance.

Table 12 Archaeobotanical results showing count of fruits and seeds

		<>	2	4	26	30	44	80
		Fill	100	105	176	206	232	292
		Cut	104	104	172	181	230	291
Binomial name	Common name	Waterlain deposit	Fill of robbing Cut [104]	Lower fill of Pit [172]	Fill of Pit [181]	Lower fill of Pit [230]	Upper fill of Pit [291]	
<b>Un-charred</b>								
	Daisy family	29						1
<i>Sambucus racemosa</i>	Red elderberry	47			150			
<i>Sambucus nigra</i>	Elderberry				2			
<i>Rubus</i> sp.	Bramble		11		7			
<i>Viburnum opulus</i>	Guelder rose		12					
<i>Raphanus raphanistrum</i>	Wild radish	2						
<i>Chenopodium</i> sp.	Goosefoots		49	3	2			
<i>Fallopia convolvulus</i>	Black bindweed		251					
<i>Rumex</i> sp.	Docks		10		2	8		
<i>Stellaria media</i>	Common chickweed		49		13	91	16	
<i>Carex</i> sp. (bi)	Sedges				5	1		
<b>Charred</b>								
<i>Hordeum</i> sp.	Barley							1
Totals		78	382	3	181	101		17