

Bison menneri from the North Sea ?

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Summary

A metacarpus of *Bison* from the North Sea is compared to *B. menneri* Sher, 1997 from Untermassfeld. Pending clarification of the position and validity of *B. menneri* the North Sea find is classified as *Bison* sp.

Samenvatting

In dit artikel wordt een metacarpus van *Bison* uit de Noordzee vergeleken met *B. menneri* Sher, 1997 uit Untermassfeld. Aangezien de positie van *B. menneri* nog altijd onduidelijk is, wordt het Noordzeebot voorlopig geclassificeerd als *Bison* sp.

Bison from the North Sea

In an inventarisation of Pleistocene fossil material dredged from the North Sea, Drees (1985, 1986) mentioned the occurrence of a heavily fossilised metacarpus of a *Bison* sp.. Based on the degree of fossilisation this specimen was placed in a faunal assemblage of early Waalian to Cromerian age (Cromerian complex sensu Zagwijn (1996)). This faunal assemblage further consisted of *Mammuthus meridionalis*, *Stephanorhinus*

cf. *etruscus*, *Cervalces latifrons*, *Hippopotamus major*, *Equus* sp., *Praeovibos* sp. and a cervid.

The metacarpus was exceptionally long (283 mm) but morphological features left no doubt as to a determination to *Bison*. No reference was known to the author at that time of a very large *Bison* of late Early or Middle Pleistocene age. Only the Taubach material (Flerov, 1976) was comparable in size. However this material was of much more recent age (Eemian).

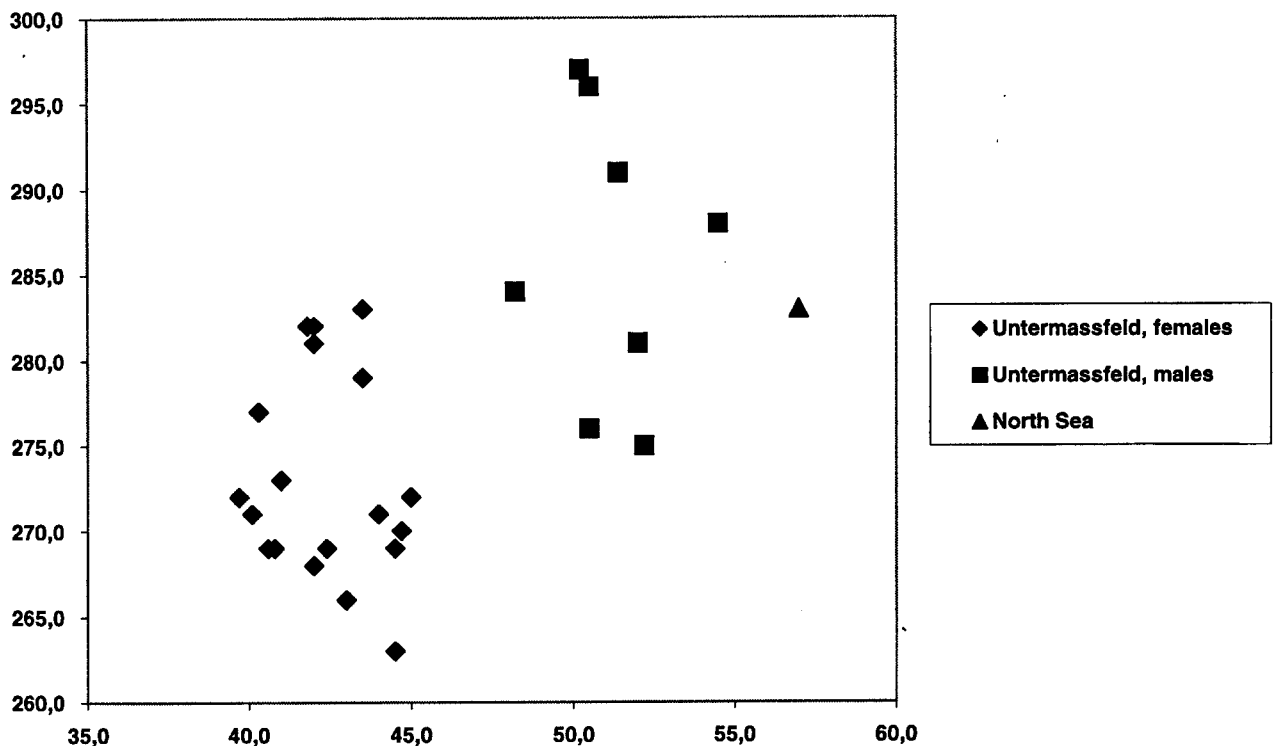


Fig 1 Metacarpus of *Bison menneri* from Untermassfeld and *Bison* sp. from North Sea. Plot of length (Y-axis) against transverse diameter at mid-shaft (X-axis).

Metacarpus van *Bison menneri* van Untermassfeld en *Bison* sp. van de Noordzee. De lengte (Y-as) is afgezet tegen de dwarsdoorsnede op het midden van de schacht (X-as).

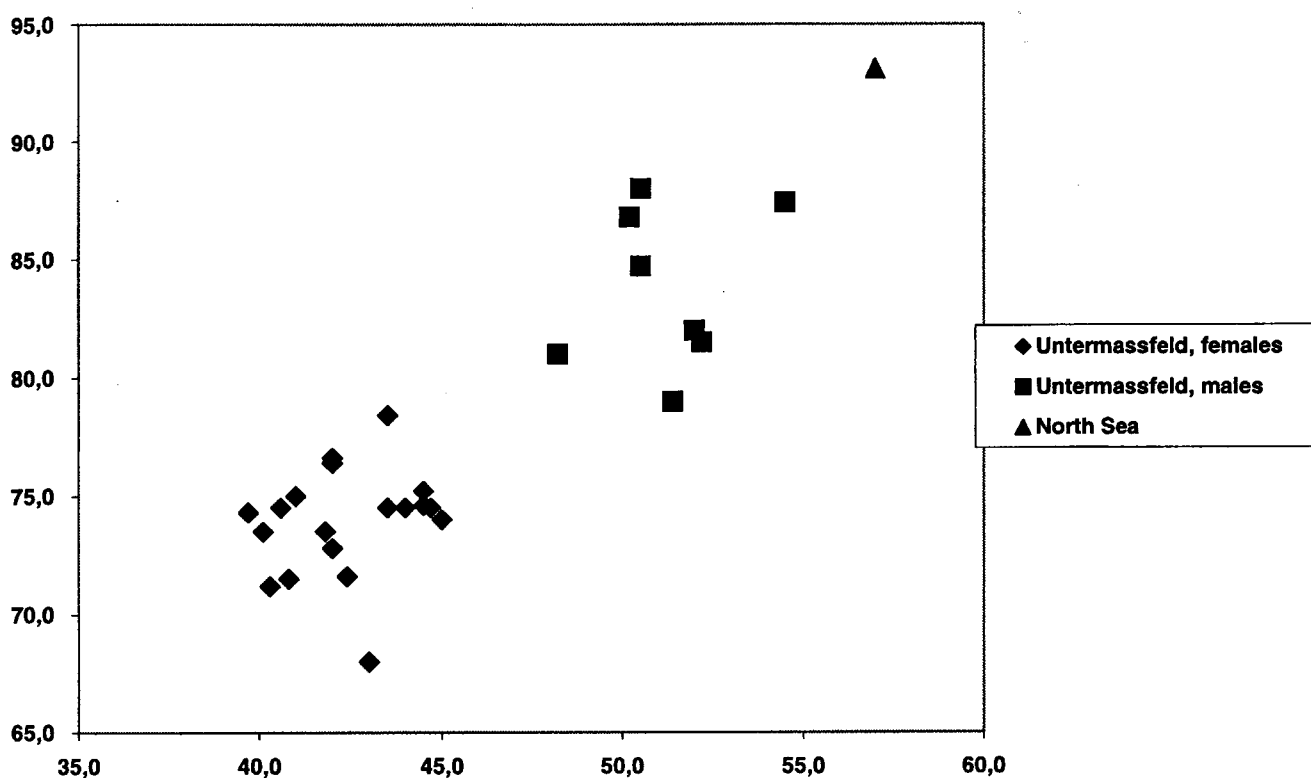


Fig 2 Metacarpus of *Bison menneri* from Untermassfeld and *Bison* sp. from North Sea. Plot of proximal transverse diameter (Y-axis) against transverse diameter at mid-shaft (X-axis).

Metacarpus van *Bison menneri* van Untermassfeld en *Bison* sp. van de Noordzee. De dwarsdoorsnede aan het proximale uiteinde (Y-as) afgezet tegen de dwarsdoorsnede op het midden van de schacht (X-as).

Bison menneri Sher, 1997

Only recently material of comparable size and age was described by Sher (1997). In his article on the *Bison* material from Untermassfeld he postulates a new species (*Bison menneri* based on the size and gracile constitution of the fossil material.

Based on morphometric similarities (Figs. 1 and 2) it is possible to attribute the North Sea metacarpus to this new species. In addition, *Mammuthus meridionalis* as well as *Stephanorhinus* cf. *etruscus* and an equid are found at Untermassfeld. Furthermore, the fossil remains of Untermassfeld are of comparable age.

However, only one large and heavily fossilised metacarpus is present in the North Sea material. Furthermore, the validity of *Bison menneri* is in the opinion of the present author not yet certain. Because of these a determination of the North Sea metacarpus to the species level is not recommended for the moment.

Future research will clarify the position and validity of *Bison menneri*. Hopefully, additional material will also improve our understanding of the position of the early *Bison* material from the North Sea.

References

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