

**THE SOCIAL CONTEXT OF EATING AND DRINKING
AT NATIVE SETTLEMENTS IN EARLY ROMAN BRITAIN**

by

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**The Social Context of Eating and
Drinking at Native Settlements in Early Roman Britain**

Karen Ingrid Meadows

Abstract

Observation of the presence and absence of Roman-style goods and structures has guided much of the analysis of imperialism in Roman Britain and other parts of the Empire. Wealth and power have been assumed to correlate with the extent to which a group's material culture and lifestyle appeared 'Romanized'. The concept of 'Romanization' has become the primary measurement of change in the lives of the people who were conquered: and where there was only slight evidence of Romanization, there is an assumption that the lives of people were little changed and continued much as they did before the conquest. Many of the signifiers used to describe 'Romanization' are tied to the consumption of food and drink. Eating and drinking, however, is much more than the observance of particular ingredients and containers – it is also the consideration of how and where one eats and drinks, and with whom and why. Rarely is the totality of food and drink consumption in Roman Britain considered. This study challenges the inventories of 'Roman' and 'native' material culture, so as to incorporate different types of settlements and the experiences of people of different socio-economic backgrounds into discussions of Roman Britain.

This thesis develops a methodological approach to the analysis of the social contexts of the consumption of food and drink at 'native type' settlements during the post-conquest period in an attempt to access the localized effects of imperialism. This approach was realized through an in-depth analysis of four sites in the Upper Thames Valley. The four sites selected for analysis are: Barton Court Farm, Roughground Farm, Old Shifford Farm, and Claydon Pike.

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Definitions

Given that many of the terms used in this thesis have multiple meanings, even within the discipline of archaeology, below are some key definitions that will help to explain what I mean when I use a given word. However, as is often the case in archaeology, many of these words are highly problematic because the sociopolitical, temporal, or physical phenomena they represent are not straightforward, and are not fully understood; please see the text for a more full discussion of such problems.

native

I use ‘native’ in reference to the indigenous population of Roman Britain. The term also has political connotations when it is used to characterize the social contexts of imperialism.

native-type settlement (Chapter 3 and 4)

A settlement that is described as ‘native’ usually refers to a non-villa settlement.

Romanization (Chapter 2)

“We must thus see Romanization as a process of dialectical change, rather than the influence of one ‘pure’ culture upon other. Roman culture interacted with native cultures to produce the synthesis that we call Romanized” (Millett 1990b:1).

household (Chapter 3 and 4)

The “group who *used* and resided within a single house or group of closely related buildings” (Hingley 1990a:128 [my emphasis]).

native continuity (Chapter 2)

Native and Roman are generally thought of in terms of continuity and change – *continuity* as the continuation of later Iron Age and native traditions, and *change* as all that which is brought about by the arrival of the Romans.

consumption (Chapter 3)

In this study, I use the word ‘consumption’ as it pertains to food and drink consumption, unless otherwise stated.

‘special deposits’ (after Hill 1995) (Chapter 5)

The dividing of deposits into ‘special’ and ‘ordinary’ is not wholly appropriate; however, I considered deposits as ‘special’ when there were specific groupings of particular types of artefacts and/or particular species and/or body parts, or a specific type of butchery practice (or no butchery practice), in particular contexts.

late Iron Age

Late first century BC to the mid-first century AD

early Roman period

Mid-first century AD to the mid-second century AD

Upper Thames Valley (Chapter 4)

The Upper Thames Valley cuts across southern-central England from the source of the River Thames in the west, one hundred kilometres eastwards. The region was within the first wave of conquest after the Roman invasion of 43 AD, although evidence of Roman and/or continental influence has been identified at some late Iron Age sites. Military sites were established at points around the valley, at Dorchester, Gloucester (*Glevum*) and at Cirencester (*Corinium*). A series of well established trackways and roads linking settlements with local centres, such as Abingdon Vineyard, and the River Thames provided communication routes throughout the Valley and beyond.

Was there a more boring place in the world than the British Museum? If there was, Will would not want to know about it. Pots. Coins. Jugs. Whole rooms full of plates. There had to be a point to exhibiting things, Will decided (Nick Hornby *about a boy* 1998:302).

A Chinese friend once told me that he had offered a pig to the dead. 'A whole pig?' I asked, somewhat surprised, since I knew he was far from being a rich man. He laughed. 'No. We fool them. What we do is offer the head and the tail, maybe the feet. Then they fill in the blanks and assume we gave the rest too' (Nigel Barley *Dancing on the Grave: Encounters With Death* 1995:77-8).

Roman Britain is too important to be left to the Romanists! (Barry Cunliffe 1979)

To the memory of Barbara Meadows

Chapter 1

Introduction

Our vision of the Romano-British world is expanding as surely as did the Roman Empire itself. It is becoming more politicized through increased consideration of the wide-ranging effects of imperialism, and more inclusive in terms of the range of people who are considered. The effect of the Roman conquest of Britain on native populations is increasingly perceived as a viable and worthwhile area of study; as a consequence, the lives of all who lived in Roman-era Britain can be scrutinized. We now have the opportunity to explore more aspects of the lives of the people who lived at non-Roman-like settlements in Roman Britain, and in the process examine and challenge many of the stereotypes that have resulted from the absence of in-depth analysis.

This thesis is a response to my initial queries about how one might study the effects of Roman imperialism on the day-to-day lives of the indigenous people of Britain. What I hoped to realize was some sense of the negotiation and resistance that inevitably must have occurred at all levels of native society, not just among those with power and wealth. There were two main challenges involved: the methodological and the conceptual. Thus, a substantial portion of this research involved the formulation and testing of a methodology for the analysis of social change at non-Roman settlements. Only then could I undertake the conceptual and interpretive task of addressing the array of responses to the Roman presence, responses that touched all aspects of life, including the mundane or everyday. The approach that I have developed in this instance is geared towards the study of native settlements in the early Roman period but it has applications for other periods and for other types of settlements, particularly those that are considered more Roman-like. Many assumptions are made about the significance of Roman style goods and structures at these types of settlements (for example 'villas') and in some instances the social contexts of these structures have yet to be considered.

1.1. Roman Things

Observation of the presence and absence of Roman-style goods and constructs has guided much of the analysis of imperialism in Roman Britain and other parts of the Empire (see for example Haselgrove 1984b; Millett 1990a; Trow 1990; Woolf 1988). Wealth and power have been assumed to correlate with the extent to which a group's material culture and lifestyle appeared Romanized (Millett 1990a, 1990b:38). The concept of 'Romanization' has become the primary measurement of change in the lives of the people who were conquered: and where there was only slight evidence of Romanization, there is an assumption that the lives of people were little changed and continued much as they did before the conquest (albeit with better tools and nicer pots). A number of scholars are now challenging this assumption and this study contributes to the on-going exploration of the wide-ranging effects of imperialism (Hingley 1996, 1997; the papers in Webster and Cooper 1996; Barrett 1997a, 1997b; Mattingly 1997b; Webster 2001). Clearly, we need to consider the social context of the use or non-use of Roman style goods – this thesis aims, therefore, to focus our attention on the conditions that surround consumption practices.

The omnipotence of Roman-style goods in Romano-British studies has nonetheless helped to construct this approach to the study of social change. Spurred on by the fact that many of the signifiers used to describe 'Romanization' are tied to the consumption of food and drink, I decided to focus on eating and drinking habits, which are particularly sensitive to periods of social change. The consumption of food and drink is much more than the observance of particular ingredients and containers – it is also the consideration of how and where one eats and drinks, and with whom and why. This study of consumption practices at native settlements enables us to consider possible effects of imperialism that might otherwise be ignored because the settlements appear to exemplify native continuity.

1.2. The Scope of this Research

There are a number of studies of consumption habits during the Roman period in Britain but they have a tendency to focus on individual aspects of food and drink, such as the presence of Roman-style pottery or animal species. Rarely is the totality of consumption considered

(although see Rippengal 1995; Hawkes 2001). This is partially attributable to the nature of site analysis, which separates ingredients and containers for individual interpretation by specialists. This is of course necessary, as analysis of excavated material requires different areas of expertise; however, there is often neither the time nor the budget to allow the artefacts and remains to be theoretically returned to their archaeological contexts for integrated analysis. Given the luxury of time that independent longer-term research allows, I have formulated a methodology that attempts to do just that.

This thesis therefore examines the social contexts of the consumption of food and drink at 'native type' settlements during the post-conquest period in an attempt to access the localized effects of imperialism. This requires consideration of ideas on the social significance of consumption habits in terms of the theories of social change in Roman Britain, which up until recently were contained within the concept of 'Romanization'. It also requires assessment of the relationship between the presence of Roman-style goods and the consumption practices that are generally associated with them. Consideration of anthropological works on the areas of social change and consumption has helped to interrogate a number of the assumptions about the use of goods of the dominant culture; these works have also provided much of the stimulus to considering human responses to profound changes in their social conditions.

A study of the social contexts of eating and drinking is both broad and detailed and requires the acknowledgement of the many ways to interpret animal bones, plant remains, and their containers, and the problems and benefits inherent in considering the artefacts and remains within their archaeological contexts. However, it is through examining how we interpret archaeological remains that we can consider the social significance of the treatment of artefacts and remains in, for example, different parts of a settlement as well as in the way food and drink were prepared and served over time.

My approach to the study of social change was realized through an in-depth analysis of four sites in the Upper Thames Valley. The case study element of this thesis concentrates, for the most part, on sites that were occupied in both the late Iron Age and early Roman periods. This not only provides a setting for the study of social change but it situates the research in the immediate post-conquest period – a pivotal time that is generally presumed to be

exceptionally enigmatic in the archaeological record of native settlements except in a very few cases. The Upper Thames Valley was chosen as a study area for several reasons. The extraction of gravel has necessitated the excavation of a wealth of native settlements; the site archives were accessible; and the Oxford Archaeological Unit were very willing to let me plough through their various records of sites for which post-excavation work is still in progress. The four sites selected for analysis are: Barton Court Farm, Roughground Farm, Old Shifford Farm, and Claydon Pike.

1.3. The Data

As many published site reports do not emphasize the archaeological contexts of artefacts and remains, I have relied on the site archive and primary records for each of the case studies. An important component of this research is understanding the impetus behind excavation and interpretation. I can, after all, only comment on what has been recorded. Barrett states that “Objectivity is not a matter of ‘unbiased’ observation, rather it is concerned with the self critical evaluation of the way observations are collected and used to construct an understanding of the past” (1987:409); the sites consulted in this thesis came pre-packaged and an important aspect of each case study was to examine the nature of that package.

I do, however, believe that we can re-visit site archives and published reports and ask new questions. My particular interests in the pots, bones, and plant remains are not necessarily the interests of the specialists or the directors of excavations. The latter affects what is recorded, but as much of what is contained in the site archives does not reach the published site report, there exists an opportunity to compile new observations on the data and thereby consider the excavated material in different ways.

It remains for me, however, to emphasize what this thesis is not.

This thesis is *not* a correction of what was done before. It is not meant to supersede the work of others but rather to complement it. I therefore do not consider my analysis of the sites as a reinterpretation of the excavated material, but rather as a series of ‘newly collected

observations' (after Barrett 1987:422). I would be very pleased if this thesis is viewed as a companion to the published reports.

1.4. An Outline of the Thesis

The structure of this thesis follows the course of my deliberations on how one goes about studying social change within an imperial context.

Chapter 2 – *'Romanization' and the Study of Social Change* – establishes the motivation for this thesis, which stems from my own uncertainties about the concept of 'Romanization' and the way it has been applied to the study of social change. The chapter essentially follows the course of my internal dialogues on imperialism (after Mattingly 1997a) and in so doing presents the various works that have guided this research.

Chapter 3 – *Towards an Archaeology of Food and Drink Consumption* – sets out the methodological approach of this thesis by discussing how studying the consumption of food and drink can forge a way to understanding the localized effects of imperialism at a household level.

Chapter 4 – *The Upper Thames Valley* – provides the setting for the four sites under scrutiny. I also present a number of the current interpretations on settlement in the Valley in the late Iron Age and early Roman periods and reflect on how the characteristics of excavation and preservation, unique to the Valley, have helped to refine my approach to the study of imperialism.

The four case studies that constitute the body of this thesis are outlined in Chapters 5 through 8. They are presented in the order of their analysis. The four sites are: *Barton Court Farm* (Chapter 5); *Roughground Farm* (Chapter 6); *Old Shifford Farm* (Chapter 7) and *Claydon Pike* (Chapter 8). There is much to digest in the case study element of this thesis. An approach that considers the social context of food and drink consumption has many tentacles and the presentation of the data in all of its various guises has been central to the development of my methodological approach. In an attempt to aid the reader, I provide a road map of sorts through

a detailed table of contents at the beginning of each case study and through a series of summaries in the discussion of each site.

In Chapter 9 – *Food and Drink Consumption and the Study of Social Change* – I consolidate some of the detail found in the case studies into a discussion on the social context of food and drink consumption for both the late Iron Age and early Roman periods.

In Chapter 10 – *Concluding Remarks* – I offer some comments about where the study of social change in Roman era Britain might go from here.

Chapter 2

'Romanization' and the Study of Social Change

2.1. Introduction

In my original research proposal, I put forth my intentions of studying the “*effects of Roman imperialism on the British*”. Shortly after my arrival in Sheffield, my research focus evolved into a study of the “effects of *Romanization* on the British”, and later to how one would go about such a study (Meadows 1994). Discussions about the whys and wherefores of ‘Romanization’ abound in the archaeological literature. This chapter will set out the course of my deliberations on the subject. It is not an exhaustive literature search on the theories of Romanization, nor is it a complete history of the cumulative events that now dispute the whole concept of Romanization (for discussions on the chronology of ‘Romanization’ see Hanson 1994; Woolf 1995; Rippengal 1995; and particularly Webster 2001); rather, it is an account of my own dissatisfaction with this ubiquitous term. Put another way, this chapter sets out why ‘Romanization’ was eventually removed from the title of this thesis.

2.2. The Study of Social Change in Roman Britain and the Theory of ‘Romanization’

For the past one hundred years, theories of Romanization have structured the way social change in Roman Britain is described and explained. Recent discourse on the term ‘Romanization’ has highlighted many of the problems of its usage, but the premise on which the concept of Romanization was based has been the subject of intense debate for decades, particularly since the 1970s. A number of these debates helped to structure my ideas on how to study the effects of imperialism and they will be discussed below; however, before we proceed with a contextual analysis of the concept of Romanization, we must first define the term.

Romanization – defined

The choice of definitions is of crucial importance, not because of what it explains, but because of what it excludes – in other words, definitions determine the scope and limits of an investigation (Gregory and Altman 1989:9).

‘Romanization’ was initially coined by British historian Francis Haverfield in terms of a civilizing mission:

It has been said that Greece taught men to be human and Rome made mankind civilized. That was the work of the Empire; the form it took was Romanization (1912:11).

The civilizing mission of the Romans has been redefined by scholars many times over the years and a chronological selection of statements and definitions¹ will help to illustrate many of the points that will be made throughout this chapter, as well as highlight the diversity of opinion that still exists in the field.

“Romano-British culture arose from the impact of the civilisation of Rome upon the Celtic people of Britain; the result, however, was not a replacement of cultures, but rather what can broadly be described as a synthesis” (Frere 1974:342)

“In the *coloniae*, civilized life was predominantly Romanized from the start, but in the early *civitas* capitals it was something new, which the natives had to learn, and the life there might at first be better described as progress towards Romanization” (Wacher 1974:45).

“...Romanization is defined as being contact between...the native and the Roman, and all the consequences the contact had for both cultures” (van Es 1983:5)

“Romanization, the process of change through the interaction of pre- and proto-historic societies with the Roman Empire” (Slofstra 1983:71)

“Romanization, better described as the fusion of imperial and local institutions and cultures, was the joint product of central government and local initiatives”(Garnsey and Saller 1987:202).

¹ It is only quite recently that scholars have felt the need to define explicitly what they mean when using the term ‘Romanization’.

“Romanizing – a tendency to homogenize the material culture of the island of Britain, or parts of it with the material culture of the nearby provinces of the Roman Empire” (Reece 1988:11)

“[Romanization] a one-sided form of acculturation” (Okun 1989:13)

“[Romanization] the study of the two-way process of acculturation” (Millett 1990b:37)

“...Romanization should be viewed as just one part of the broader strategies adopted by various groups in the playing out of tensions within a complex hierarchical structure” (Rippengal 1995)

Through the course of my preliminary reading, Romanization was to become almost indefinable as it so clearly meant different things to different people. I had yet to encounter or establish a definition with which I felt completely comfortable. In my initial attempts at defining Romanization I found van Es’ definition (see above) the most palatable because it did not specify the type of contact necessary for Romanization to occur; and by considering all the consequences for both groups it did not place a value on the importance of one over the other. The definition also did not contain the word that puts fear in the hearts of anthropologists – *acculturation* and its association with progress (Moore 1987:86; Wilk 1990:41; Barrett 1989a) – and it did not, I theorized, come equipped with its own generalized conclusion that precluded specific application.

It is essential to avoid judgements about the form and process of Romanisation in Britain. Romanisation has many different forms and encompasses all of the consequences – the occasional and the commonplace as well as the dramatic and the ordinary – brought about by the infiltration of the Roman world (Meadows 1994:133).

However, in establishing a context for the study of Romanization that emphasized the dynamic between Roman and native, I was to realize that the concept was not an appropriate account of cultural change.

2.2.2. The context of my 'Romanization'

Since the late 1970s, many Romano-British scholars have reacted against the notion that Roman imperialism and Romanization were synonymous; and that the study of Romanization should be viewed only from a Roman standpoint, starting essentially at the point of conquest. Romano-British studies, it was argued, were preoccupied with the assertions of contemporary sources (Caesar's *The Conquest of Gaul*, Cassius Dio's *The Roman History: The Reign of Augustus*, Strabo's *Geography* etc.) and particularly with Tacitus's account of an imperial policy of Romanization in Britain (*Agricola*) (Reece 1979:230; Burnham and Johnson 1979:2; Millett 1990b:36; Branigan 1991:92; Hingley 1991:93; Scott and Gaffney 1987). It was further argued that the classical interpretation of Roman Britain had produced a seemingly static characterization of Roman Britain that was one-sided and effectively discounted the roles and experiences of the majority of British people (particularly those situated in the north of the province) and their daily habits (Barrett 1989a, 235-36; Hingley 1989:3).

An emphasis on the dynamic between Roman and native, however, required a different approach to, and new agents of, Romanization. Garnsey and Saller (1987), in looking at the efforts of the empire to Romanize, regarded the empire's role as limiting because of its imperial policy. They concluded that Romanization was primarily "self-directed ... after Rome made its initial impact" (1987:203; for similar comments see Millett 1990a:7; Millett 1990b:37; Haselgrove 1990:45). Others argued that Romanization received important direction from the pre-existing social structures that were themselves adaptable to the Roman way (Haselgrove 1984b:6; 1990:45-6; Collis 1987:36; Millett 1990b:37). In pushing the point of enquiry back into the Iron Age, Romanists were introduced to the thoughts and ideas of pre-historians, with some amusing consequences: "Roman Britain is too important to be left to the Romanists" it was claimed (Cunliffe 1979:359; see also comments in Bradley 1990). It was no longer appropriate to look at evidence through purely Roman eyes.

Native peoples were now seen to have had an important role in their own Romanization, especially native elites (Millett 1990b:38). The emphasis was on continuity as well as change (Branigan 1981:94-5; Collis 1987:36) and many 'native' and 'Romanized' sites were re-examined for their significance in the process of Romanization (Branigan 1981:83;

see also Slofstra 1983:97). Additionally, earlier interpretations of typically Roman constructs were challenged, as exemplified by the reconsideration of the origins of towns from the native perspective (Burnham 1979:255; Todd 1985:187). Models were developed that emphasized the control that native elites had in the Romanizing process. The exchange of raw materials for prestige Roman goods (known as the 'prestige goods model' – core/periphery model), for example, was seen as the means by which both Rome and native elites increased their power through the monopolization of the goods (Haselgrove 1984b; 1989).

Romanists looked to the past to substantiate pre-existing theories. They examined the infrastructure of Iron Age society to correlate the process of Romanization with the pre-existing society. It was generally assumed that fast, effective Roman occupation was conditional on a minimum level of social complexity (Groenman-van Waateringe 1980:1037; Roymans 1983:56-7; Hanson 1988:66; Millett 1990a:40). The two essential prerequisites were: 1) an economic/agrarian infrastructure capable of feeding and supplying the Roman army and 2) a social structure that could accommodate the Roman administration (Groenman-van Waateringe 1980:1038). Discussion evolved around whether late Iron Age society measured up to the requirements of Rome, resulting in a tug of war across the divide of Iron Age and early Roman society. Romanists, for example, using their definitions of urbanism, equated urbanization in Britain with the Romans (Wacher 1974:36-7 although see Burnham and Wacher 1990:8; Frere 1974:273; Branigan 1994:10-11) while Iron Age specialists considered the *oppida* an urban settlement (Collis 1979; 1984:2; Cunliffe 1976:135). Further debate along these lines sought to determine whether Iron Age society had what it took to provision the four legion strong army (cf. Millett 1984:68-9 and Fulford 1984:131; also Jones 1991:25). The result was that both late Iron Age and early Roman society were being ill defined. Haselgrove spelled out the dangers of proceeding on such as course:

...archaeologists working on both periods have taken up entrenched positions in relation to the achievements and complexity of late Iron Age society, an opposition which, if it is allowed to persist, can only hinder our understanding of Roman Britain (Haselgrove 1984b:5; for similar comments see also Woolf 1993:213).

Regardless of the intentions, how we have subsequently defined the structure of late Iron Age settlement patterns, social complexity and subsistence potential has been in relation to the up and coming Roman period.

The point at which I entered the debate on Romanization saw Richard Reece (1990) in his article “Romanization: a point of view” attempting to uncover the best vantage point from which to view Romanization objectively. He argued that researchers should go beyond the amalgamation of native and Roman and look at Romanization as part of a process that went beyond Rome (1990:31). Haselgrove (1990) was suggesting that we stop viewing Romanization as a single phenomenon experienced by all and to the same degree, and instead consider it as something that was adapted and adopted in different ways, not only from province to province, but also from group to group. Millett (1990a), probably one of the most influential scholars on Romanization at the time, was arguing, in his influential book *The Romanization of Britain*, that Romanization was a process of “dialectical change, rather than the influence of one ‘pure’ culture upon others” (1990a:1). At the same time, Hingley (1991; 1989; 1988) was stressing that current studies of Romanization, focused only on the wealthy and powerful and contained within them notions of progress and advancement. Barrett (1989a) was questioning the relevance of the concept of Romanization itself, because of its static, one-sided characterization of the phenomenon of imperialism (Barrett 1989a, 235-6). The views of Reece, Haselgrove, Millett, Hingley and Barrett depict a general dissatisfaction, which as we have seen had been brewing for a number years (see in particular articles in Burnham and Johnson 1979), with the study of Roman Britain. The dissatisfaction with the theoretical underpinnings of Romanization echo, at least in part, the concerns expressed by other disciplines (for example anthropology and sociology) with providing an indigenous perspective to their work and perhaps more generally a rejection of western imperialism in the world (Hingley 1991:97; Hanson 1994:149; Webster 2001:7).

A new venue for Romanists to vent this dissatisfaction was established in the early 1990s – the annual Theoretical Roman Archaeology Conference (TRAC). TRAC provided (and continues to provide) a much-needed arena for the integration of theory and Roman archaeology. Eleanor Scott, the originator of TRAC, observed in the first publication of the proceedings that “The underlying concept of ‘Romanization’ was ever-present, and with it

was a clear understanding that this is more than just a useful term: it is a process which must be described and defined” (1993:1).

The debates about the structure of pre- and post- colonial Britain nevertheless helped to reveal actually how little was known about the inner workings of Romano-British settlement and society in general (Bradley 1984:151; Trow 1990:109; Gosden 1989:381; Haselgrove 1989:11). Scrutiny of the evidence, for instance, has shown that Roman imports were actually quite low in number and localized in distribution (Millett 1990a:30; Woolf 1988:3; Sharples 1990; Hill 1989). The over-estimation of the number of Roman imports and therefore the impact of the control of trade goods has consequently weakened the ‘prestige goods model’. Additionally, it has been shown that the model failed to address or explain the continued use of British prestige goods well into the Roman period (Collis 1987; Gregson 1988:22-3). One of the main problems with models such as the core/periphery-prestige goods model and other assumptions about the impact of Rome was that they reduced societies to ‘sameness’ (J.D. Hill pers. comm.). This is especially evident in the assumptions made about native society in the theory of Romanization. Through a desire to shift the balance of power from Romans onto natives, the *effects* of imperialism have, I would argue, been neglected (see below). One of the aims of this thesis is to demonstrate that in viewing native (and ‘Romanized’) settlements as homogeneous entities we are ignoring the diverse experiences of imperialism (Mattingly 1997b:9).

It is also the case that the late Iron Age and early Roman periods in Britain have largely been defined by the logistical requirements of Rome. The intricacies of inter- and intra- regional similarities and differences for both periods have been neglected in order to show that the late Iron Age and early Roman native society was not populated by the “uncivilized” as Caesar and some Romanists would have us believe. Native and Roman are still generally thought of in terms of continuity and change – *continuity* as the continuation of later Iron Age and native traditions (which ironically have been defined by their proximity to the Roman period), and *change* as all that which is brought about by the arrival of the Romans. This is a false dichotomy that assumes that both ‘native’ and ‘Roman’ were stable and static when of course all societies are in a state of change (Shanks and Tilley 1987:130; Jones 1997:134; Woolf 1995:346-7). Another aim of this thesis, therefore, is to chart some of the

changes and discontinuities of *non-Roman* settlements, to include somewhat paradoxically, the social contexts of the *use* of Roman-style things.

2.2.3. Roman 'things'

Goods are neutral, their uses are social; they can be used as fences or bridges (Douglas and Isherwood 1978:12).

...there is no logical reason why the historical processes which brought the Roman province [in Britain] into being need have correlated directly with the categories of the material evidence with which we choose to work today (Barrett 1993:344).

It was, ironically, the consideration of Roman-style goods in the late Iron Age period that ultimately decided how I was to view the concept of Romanization. The chronology of Romanization (and hence its association with imperialism) was obscured by the notion of '*pre-Romanization*'. As so much of what has been used as evidence of Romanization during the Roman period was derived from the presence of Roman things, the debate surrounding the concept of '*pre-Romanization*' was to help clarify my position on the subject. Woolf (1988) was critical of the whole idea of pre-Romanization for the very reason that it led to a simplistic association between the use of Roman things and Romanization. For Woolf, Romanization was as much the "transformation of customs and values" as it was the adoption of Roman material culture (1988:9). He argued:

the selective adoption of some Roman goods, without the information that governed their use and value in the classical world, does not constitute Romanization in any meaningful sense (1988:9).

This is an important consideration in any study of Roman imperialism, but one, I would argue, that would be impossible to make at the point of defining Romanization. As Freeman has observed, the current dispute with traditional Romanization studies "...questions the very evidence used to characterize and measure and quantify Romanization" (1997a:28).

'Roman' has come to have less connection to the city of Rome than it once had (Reece 1988:11; Freeman 1991:135). Reece has suggested that we view 'things Roman' as "material better known inside the Roman empire than outside" so that it is the empire and its provinces that define what is Roman rather than the city of Rome: "Britain became more Gaulish, more Rhinelandish, more Spanish, a little more Italian, a very little more African and a little more Danubian" (Reece 1988:11) in the process of becoming Roman. In response to Reece, Barrett argues "The problem, however, is that Reece simply replaces one questionable category with a string of equally problematic ethnic labels" (1997a:51). He states:

I do not doubt that cultural change occurs, but I will argue that apparently homogeneous cultural systems are in reality unstable internally and multifaceted in terms of their meanings. We should therefore question whether the concept 'Roman' is a useful starting point in any analysis (1997a:51).

Reece's observation that many of the markers used to characterize a Roman lifestyle are from the Roman provinces rather than from Rome is, nevertheless, an important one (see also Hingley 1999:142; Jundi and Hill 1998:134; King 1999:189). Native and Roman culture were not static and recently scholars have been arguing that an imperialized culture is neither native nor Roman as both were changed by conquest (Woolf 1995:341; Grahame 1998:4). Cooper (1996), for instance, argues that the labelling of material culture in the Roman period as 'Roman' is a mistake when what archaeologists actually mean is "the material culture of Britain during the time it was part of the Roman Empire" (1996:86) adding, "the material culture of conquered populations must therefore be seen to have remained their own even when it adopted external elements and styles" (1996:86). Reece, Barrett and Cooper, in different ways, demonstrate how 'Roman', could mean different things to different people in different contexts and ultimately why these terms *should* be too difficult to define.

My struggle with defining Romanization was directly related to my desire for some sort of social context for imperialism. 'Roman-style things' found in a native burial were obviously meaningful, but were the objects meaningful because they were *known* to be Roman, because they were foreign, a gift, or because they were chosen and placed in the grave by someone significant? Conversely, was it at times the contents of the Roman-style vessels

that were important rather than the container itself? Moreover, what was the actual significance of Roman things within the context of everyday life? Were they incorporated into the daily rituals of living or were they just used on particular occasions and with particular people? Does the use of Roman-style utensils necessarily signify a change in the social contexts of eating and drinking? How does the use of non-Roman things in Roman ways fit into the current understanding of Romanization? As Webster has recently argued, current interpretations of 'Roman' and 'native' material culture leave no room for ambiguity (Webster 2001:9). The notion that there was a shared understanding of Roman culture throughout the Roman Empire only goes against the conception of alternative experiences of imperialism (Barrett 1997b:7; Mattingly 1997b:9; Hingley 1999:143).

Freeman (1993) and Cooper (1996) have argued that the adoption of Roman-like accoutrements could have more to do with availability and access, than with a desire to emulate 'Roman' practices. This could very well have been the case at some settlements but as Hingley has pointed out, we must not negate the "active role of native society in defining the function, value and role of its own possessions" (1996:42; for similar comments see Grahame 1998:2). Emulation of a lifestyle considered 'Roman' is one likely factor in the use of Roman-like things for some people. The problem has been that emulation has been the prevailing assumption and has led to a one-dimensional view of social change. Mattingly has called for a more introspective consideration of the material culture of the Roman period: "...there were many divergent approaches and value-systems at work rather than a simple pattern of emulation behaviour" (1997b:17; for similar comments see Hingley 1999:144; Webster 2001:8; Miller 1995:27). Moore (in reference to the concept of 'westernization') has argued that too many assumptions are made when emulation is used as an explanation of social change (1987:86) adding, "similarities in the indices of social change should not be allowed to mask differences between the processes of change they represent" (1987:85). Foremost, we need to consider the cultural implications and social context of any Roman-like material culture. What is perhaps most apparent in all of the debates about Romanized material culture is that the 'shopping-list' approach to the study of social change in Roman Britain requires a radical rethink.

2.2.4. To Romanize or to not Romanize

The theory of Romanization is currently at a crossroads. Do we redefine Romanization and make it relevant or do we decide that the term has been too used and abused to ever be relevant? One of the main criticisms of the concept of Romanization has been that it is evolutionary in its thinking and evaluates material culture while reducing the active role played by ordinary people and their daily habits. This concept of Romanization is still alive: “Changes in culture and everyday life still seem to be considered as a product – perhaps even as froth on top – of large scale, impersonal, social and economic transformations (or just another manifestation of a prestige goods system)” (Hill 1997:97; see comments by Woolf 1998:5-7). Mattingly in the introduction of *Dialogues in Roman Imperialism* (1997b) suggests that the Roman Empire is still viewed as a conglomerate; he explains, “part of the problem lies in the monolithic nature of most visions of Roman imperialism, whether praising it or damning it utterly” (1997b:7). He argues that the term ‘Romanization’ encourages this vision through its implied “unilateral transfer of culture” and the experiences of imperialism thus become standardized (1997b:9).

However, would the removal of the term from our vocabulary eliminate the idea of Romanization? Perhaps, although I believe we need to dismantle the concept of Romanization rather than present a false sense of profundity through proscribing others the use of the term. The effects of the theory of Romanization are in all of us who study Roman Britain, including the excavations on which our theories are currently based that continue to emphasize Roman settlements and Roman material culture (Jones 1997:36-8; Hingley 1999:141; 2000:149-50). The term has nevertheless begun to lose its applicability, and when it is used, scholars now feel compelled to define their usage of the term (see for example Hanson 1994:150; Rippengal 1995; Haussler 1998:10; Woolf 1998:7; Turner 2001:2; and Hingley 2000:112 who only uses the term in the context of his critique of the concept of Romanization). If we are to further the dialogue on imperialism we might do better to demonstrate, rather than dictate, how the basic concept of Romanization does not fit our various models of imperialism (for similar comments see Webster 1996:15 note 8).

Our goals with respect to the study of the past are changing. We are perhaps more comfortable with the knowledge that there is not one model to fit all of the experiences of

Roman imperialism. “Too often, perhaps, scholarship creates dichotomies where there are in fact a range of possible actions, reactions, and perceptions in between the extremes of the argument” (Mattingly 1996:64; see also comments by Scott and Gaffney 1987:85). These are healthy contradictions (Webster 1996:1-2), as there will always be people that see ‘Romans’ and others that will see ‘natives’.

2.3. The Study of Social Change in Roman Britain: Negotiation and Resistance

...surely only a people like the British, with a recent history of empire, could accept the construct of the *Pax Romana* so uncritically that with a few noble exceptions the archaeology of resistance to Rome still remains outside the mainstream of study (Webster 1996:4-5).

With the first line of my original thesis proposal, I stated my interest in studying the *effects* of imperialism. My subsequent doubts over the concept of Romanization have strengthened and helped to refine the following study of the social context of imperialism. However, I also bring to this thesis many of the ideas and arguments that I formed whilst an undergraduate majoring in anthropology in Ontario, Canada where I studied societies before and after the European colonization of what is now Latin America. As an English woman born to Welsh parents, and now a resident of a former British colony that is physically, economically and emotionally attached to the United States, my influences are many. Increasingly, it is being recognized that our knowledge of the Roman Empire and Roman Britain is influenced by our own history, politics and education (see Hingley 1993; 1996; particularly 2000; Barrett 1997b; Webster and Cooper 1996; and for archaeology in general Gero 1996). Roman studies have lagged behind many other disciplines, such as anthropology, that are more willing to deconstruct their existence. Hingley has made a strong argument that the history of the British Empire’s ‘civilising mission’, is still reflected in our benevolent accounts of *what the Romans did for us* (1993; 1996:41, see also Freeman 1996).

In many respects, the preoccupation with Romanization has skewed our consideration of what the Romans did *to* us. In our efforts to incorporate native elites into the process of Romanization, we have forgotten that the Roman conquest of Britain involved the social

and political control of people (Hingley 1997:82). In order to recognize evidence of the many experiences of imperialism, especially evidence for resistance, this evidence must first be acknowledged. Only then can it be 'seen' in the archaeological record:

Perhaps the poor and the powerless subtly resisted change, but how can we challenge the progressive model of Romanization outlined by Haverfield, Millett and others if we do not excavate their homes (Hingley 1997:85).

Settlements, when they are inventoried primarily for their Roman-like accoutrements are too often discarded if they fall outside of the boundaries of a theory of Romanization. After all, native settlements are native settlements are native settlements (to paraphrase Freeman 1997b:9). Some of these settlements will be represented in this study. It is at these abandoned 'non-Romanized' settlements, where the majority of people lived, that daily acts of resistance might be found (Webster 1997:180) and it will become apparent that I see a number of the changes in settlement pattern and consumption practices at some of the sites as evidence of resistance to the Romans. Acts of resistance, however, are not only to be found in the use of particular 'native' icons (Hingley 1999:144); a resistant ideology might also be expressed through the tactical negotiation of a variety of cultural symbols including 'Roman' ones (Webster 2001). However, it is also essential that we do not replace one monolithic model based on emulation with another based on opposition (Hingley 1996:44; Kurchin 1995:124-5; Mattingly 1996:64); or likewise establish a new 'Romanization'/'resistance' dichotomy along the lines of the Roman equals change/native equals continuity dichotomy described above (see comments in Woolf 1995:340-1; 1998:22-3; Webster 1997:167). Grahame has argued that the changes found in the archaeological record "are not the result of Roman 'domination' or native 'resistance', but rather document the social politics of Roman Britain" (1998:8). The material culture of Roman Britain nevertheless needs to be approached from within the context of imperialism, and I will go as far to suggest that the consideration of the social contexts of material culture could potentially challenge many (if not most) of our current perceptions of Roman Britain.

2.4. Conclusion

Many aspects of the Romanization of Britain, including the use of the term itself, are currently under scrutiny. The scope of my own work – the effects of imperialism in early Roman Britain – has evolved in accordance with my own uncertainties regarding the concept of Romanization. Throughout, I have been motivated by what I saw as a lack of emphasis on the possible diversity of Romanization, on the imperial experiences of the non-elites, and on localized responses to the Roman presence. Underlying my approach have been nagging doubts about the cultural evolutionary tone of a discourse on Romanization that equates Romanization with ‘progress’. Barrett (in reference to definitions of ritual) has also been critical of approaches to the past whereby a phenomenon is first defined and then applied to a particular set of circumstances: “such studies give the unfortunate appearance of knowing already what it is they are attempting to discover” (1991:1). The current round of dialogues on ‘Romanization’ largely instigated by those of us who believe the concept is ill conceived and outmoded, forces us to justify and explain our usage of the term. However tempting it is for me to give up the language of Romanization (because I agree with most of the criticisms of its usage) I do believe that, unchallenged, the underlying concept of Romanization would survive, albeit incognito. I will argue instead, that Romanization is too simplistic an explanation for the social change of the majority of the Romano-British population.

There is a tendency in Romano-British studies to equate ‘change’ with Romanizing urban/villa-owning indigenous elites and ‘continuity’ with rural non-Romanized natives. This imposed dichotomy is also used to describe the nature and extent of Romanization, which is currently the principal model used to describe social change during the pre/post conquest period (see for example Slofstra’s definition of Romanization above). The exploration of social conditions during this period of imperial domination has consequently been sidelined by efforts to allocate particular cultural achievements, such as urbanism, to either the late Iron Age or Roman periods. This tug of war across the lines of history and between ‘natives’ and ‘Romans’ has served its purpose by exposing the cultural evolutionary tone of many of the arguments, but the time has come to move on.

We must challenge the inventories of 'Roman' and 'native' material culture, so that we can incorporate different types of settlements and the experiences of people of different socio-economic backgrounds into discussions of 'Roman' Britain. However, as this study of the social context of eating and drinking will illustrate, we also need to develop paradigms for social change that account for the experiences of imperialism. An all-encompassing concept of Romanization will ultimately not have a place in such discussions. Nevertheless, before we dispose of the term, we must deconstruct the concept and acknowledge the role it has played in the construction of *our* Roman Britain.

In the following chapter, I will chart my approach to the study of social change in early Roman Britain.

Chapter 3

Towards an Archaeology of Food and Drink Consumption

3.1. Introduction

The Roman conquest of Britain had an impact on the daily lives of the people who lived there – an obvious statement perhaps, but one which has yet to be incorporated into our accounts of the lives of the majority of the native population (Scott and Gaffney 1987:85; Branigan 1991; Rippengal 1991:222; Hingley 1997:84). It was a general discontentment with the polarization of ‘Romanization’ and ‘native continuity’ that initially led me to consider whether the subtleties of diet and culinary practices at the household level could provide some insight into the early experiences of imperialism. People of all backgrounds eat and drink in culturally specific ways, and many of the items used to gauge the impact of Rome are those which are used when consuming food and alcohol.

The accumulation of daily life and the extent to which it is repeated is significant to the structure of society (Heller 1984; Conkey and Gero 1991:15-6; Johnson 1989:208). Day-to-day life and its socio-political-economic context are of course inseparable: “social structures...are the medium as well as the outcome of social practice” (Moreland 1992:116; see also Barrett 1989b); however, the analysis of the daily habits of life is the fundamental level at which specific and diverse aspects of society and hence the localized effects of imperialism can be explored.

This chapter is essentially an outline of my route into the study of the effects of imperialism. It provides the framework and some of the thinking behind my methodological approach to the study of social change. I will first explain why the household has been selected as the primary locus for study. Following this, I will focus on the benefits of looking at the dynamics of eating and drinking in providing an alternative perspective of imperialism. I

will then discuss the practicality of integrating the social context of food and drink with the vagaries of the archaeological record.

3.2. Towards a Study of Social Change at Native Settlements in Roman Britain

3.2.1. The household

The household has been adopted as a primary unit of analysis because it is a focal point in the enactment of daily life. Two factors render the *household* an ideal concept for archaeological interpretation. First, it immediately establishes the organizational and conceptual level of analysis. Second, it emphasizes the actions of *people* within a specific context as opposed to just the context itself; it signifies a less contained view of domestic life – “people do not live in, or act exclusively in, single buildings” (Rapoport 1990:12; see also Scott and Gaffney 1987:87; Lawrence and Low 1990:461; Allison 1999:4-5; Hayden and Cannon 1983:160). The non-contained nature of the archaeological record partly reflects this movement of people within their living environment as the isolation of remains and features to individual houses and their associated buildings in space and time is problematic (Smith 1992; Maltby 1985a; Branigan 1981; Hayden and Cannon 1983:160; Hirth 1993). As a workable concept, the household is thus particularly viable because, while its primary locus is the house and its associated environment, it does not expect artefact sets to be confined to their activity areas. This flexibility in expectations of the archaeological record does not of course eliminate the uncertainty behind artefacts and their contexts, an issue which will be discussed below. Nevertheless, the discordant nature of the archaeological record never seems to hinder the generation of syntheses on a grand scale (R.F.J. Jones 1979:3; Conkey and Gero 1991:7).

The importance of the workings of the household to archaeology is now being realized with the movement away from the view that the domestic side of life is natural, familiar and constant (Tringham 1991:100; Moore 1988:55; Carsten and Hugh-Jones 1995:4-5; Allison 1999:2). Archaeologists have tended to focus on the big economic and political picture, moving rather quickly from the so-called private domestic sphere into the public sphere

(Tringham 1991:120; Allison 1999:2; see also Yanagisako 1979:189). Specific studies of households, however, have revealed that the standard distinction between public and private life is not quite so rigid (Moore 1988:30; Yanagisako 1979:191). An illustration of this can be found with the study of households in the Mantaro Valley in Peru immediately before and after the arrival of the Inka. Through studying the consumption patterns of both 'elite' and 'commoner' households, it was possible to recognize a change in the shifts of power. Before the arrival of the Inka, the elites were the predominant users of highly decorated storage vessels, and consumed a higher proportion of preferred foods such as maize, chilli peppers and coca. After the conquest, the distinction between the two social groups in their the use of these items was less acute. How these goods were stored also changed. The Inka constructed large storage buildings on the outskirts of the community, which displaced the domain of household storage of preferred goods from the local elites to the governing Inka. It was concluded that the changes in consumption patterns reflect a shift in the control over access to prestige goods, where local leaders no longer derived their status from the community, but from the Inka state (Costin and Earle 1989; see also Hastorf 1990).

The study of where and how people live can be used to generate new ideas about how people view their world (e.g. Parker Pearson and Richards 1994; Samson 1990; Carsten and Hugh-Jones 1995:3). For those interested in the effects of imperialism, as was seen above in the case of the Inka, the household can provide an ideal setting for studying localized effects and responses (Hastorf 1990:262). It may also be possible to identify subtle acts of resistance to outside forces from within the security of the household environment (Webster 1997:180). In many agrarian societies, the household is the basis for production and consumption – areas that are particularly sensitive to what is occurring in the community and beyond (Smith 1987:297). It is an ideal unit for comparison and, as most people live in some form of dwelling, is especially suited to studies interested in crossing the social spectrum (Smith 1987:297; Hirth 1993:21). A study of households can also shed light on attitudes held by the group which may not find expression elsewhere (Ardener 1993:14). Their examination can help to reveal some of the traditions and customs that serve to socialize members in the ways of the group, community and/or region. Finally, and of particular interest to this study, changes in the household environment often reflect changes

in the political environment of a society, although not necessarily in an obvious, straightforward manner (Johnson 1993:30).

3.2.2. Houses and Roman imperialism– from rounded to rectangular

Building – is a process that is continually going on, for as long as people dwell in an environment. It does not begin here, with a pre-formed plan, and end there, with a finished artefact. The ‘final’ form is but a fleeting moment in the life of any feature, when it is matched to a human purpose, likewise cut out from the flow of intentional activity (Ingold 1995:78)

Romano-British houses commonly feature in studies of Romanization. Roman and non-Roman types have been characterized, and their form and distribution have been used to assess the nature of the British response to the Roman conquest and how the Roman world was interpreted. The switch from rounded to rectangular houses is characteristic – though by no means universal (Hingley 1997) – of the Roman period in southern England and is often viewed as a sign of Roman and/or continental influence. In the early Roman period, the construction of rectangular buildings was more sporadic, and as such, interpretations of their presence often point to varying degrees of Romanization. The term ‘Romanization’, however, is misleading and its use as a barometer of change does not provide an adequate account of many of the structural changes that took place at settlements, including those in this study, during the early Roman period. The term also does not promote alternative explanations for the presence of Roman style buildings. It has been suggested, for example, that the deviation from the classical villa building in Britain points to a non-Roman type of occupation based on joint ownership by extended families (Smith 1978; see Rippengal 1993 for critique of this view). The emergence of the basic rectangular corridor house is considered Roman-like in terms of construction techniques but its design, according to Blagg (1990:206), does not appear to facilitate the Roman custom of regular entertainment of guests or clients in the home (see also Black 1994:106-7 on ‘Celtic feasting’ at villas). It has further been suggested that the interior of rectangular structures might have been organized in a way that was more reminiscent of Iron Age circular structures, i.e. central public (cooking and eating) spaces and peripheral private (sleeping) spaces (Hingley 1990a see also Lyons 1996:366). The shift from rounded to rectangular has also been considered as

evidence of a profound change in mindset, evoking a movement towards a more permanent and constructed living environment (Rippengal 1993; although see Clarke 1998:35). Conversely, the persistence of the round house during the Roman period is increasingly being considered as a statement of identity and resistance (Hingley 1997, 1999; for examples of round houses in the Roman period see Harding 1984:18-20; particularly Keevill and Booth 1997) and even as a form of social control (Keevill and Booth 1997:41).

Lyons (1996) in her case study of house shapes in Northern Cameroon argues that the shift by some groups from rounded to rectangular structures was more complex than the general belief that changes in settlement are simply the result 'outside influence'. She concluded that changes in living space were part of a conscious, outward-looking strategy to appear both 'modern' and on the side of the governing group (1996:365). She notes that rectangular structures were often built at the front of the family compound and that those who lived in visual range of the highway built rectangular structures (Lyons 1996:364-5). In concordance with Hingley (1990a) (above), Lyons argues that the change in house shape did not appear to have altered the 'integrity' of the inner working of the household (1996:366). Lyons' work illustrates the importance of considering the shape of a structure from within the social context of the whole settlement (and region). Equally, the reconfiguration of a settlement without an attendant change in house shape is as significant as a settlement whose composition during this period of political turmoil changes dramatically or appears on the outside to be little affected. As Wilk reminds us: "The house...faces both inward and outward, to the household and to the rest of society" (1990:40); this is equally true of the settlement (Scott and Gaffney 1987:87). The redefinition of categories is perhaps an additional area where households can be useful units of study, as through their analysis it is possible to scrutinize conventional stereotypes.

3.2.3. The non-Roman Romano-British household

In the closing sections of Chapter 2, I discussed how there has been a general neglect of Romano-British houses associated with the poor. This not only distorts our perception of the power structure in Roman Britain, but also directs attention away from the study of non-

Roman type houses (Hingley 1989:23-4; 1991:96; Clarke 1998). The variability between the types of houses and determinations of wealth in Roman Britain is far from standardized (Hingley 1989; Branigan 1981; Hingley 1999:145). Settlements with both rounded houses and villa-like structures have been identified (Keevill and Booth 1997) and wealth differentiation on non-Roman type settlements has been established (see Hingley 1989:31, 80; Leech 1982; Branigan 1981). It has also been shown that the apparent transformation of native farmsteads into Romanized villas was highly variable (Branigan 1981).

Parker Pearson *et al.* (1996) argue that our approach to the labelling of structures is often based on our own 'common-sense' observations and notions of classification: "Houses may serve not simply as places to live but as embodiments of myth, places of worship, calendars and generally guides to the social and cosmic order" (Parker Pearson *et al.* 1996:61). Furthermore, attitudes expressed through architecture might be quite different from attitudes expressed through consumption practices for example. Houses are not households (Allison 1999:4). The acknowledgement of, and study of, the full cultural range of Romano-British *households* would help to re-focus our attentions towards the inhabitants rather than the structures in isolation. If, in the study of the Inka discussed earlier, the focus had been on elite Inka households alone, the power structure of the elites would have been distorted and the changing alliance and wealth of the elites and commoners – in relation to access to preferred foods – would have been missed. However, just as neither the division between Roman and non-Roman or rich and poor should not be viewed as absolute, nor should specific notions of wealth and manner of conspicuous consumption (Appadurai 1986:40; Hingley 1989:160). The 'social life of things' is determined, not by the things themselves, but by the people who use and ascribe a value to them (Appadurai 1986).

3.2.4. Diet and culinary practice

Material things – become important through their very ordinariness. They stand for the vast underside of cultural action, for values and aspects of their personality and world-view which men and women could not or would not express in words (Johnson 1993:xi).

Forget that commodities are good for eating, clothing and shelter; forget their usefulness and try instead the idea that commodities are good for thinking; treat them as a non-verbal medium for the human creative faculty (Douglas and Isherwood 1978:62).

An indiscriminate comparison of households is perhaps not the most rigorous method by which to uncover diversity. My emphasis on diet and its culinary manifestations was brought about, in part, by the simple fact that all people eat and drink, and tend to do it in a particular way. However, more than that, I wanted to explore a theme that was not only common to all households but also transcends them. While archaeologists have been captivated with how food was obtained and the extent of its relationship to the economy, less attention has been placed on the cultural dynamics surrounding its preparation and consumption (Hastorf 1991:153; Hawthorne 1998:164). Indeed, it has been argued, successfully I believe, that we must understand the processes of consumption of food and drink at the household level before we dare to extrapolate on such themes as species populations and animal husbandry (Rackham 1983:273; Branigan 1988:42-43; King 1988:52; Huelsbeck 1991:66; Reynolds 1995a:188; see also comment by Barthes 1979:169). Food and drink undergo a variety of transformations from production to consumption and these points in transformation can be significant to studies of cultural practices (Barrett 1989b; Gregory and Altman 1989:188; Messer 1984:223; Hill 1995). An emphasis on the diet and culinary habits of the various types of 'non-Roman' Romano-British households while serving to redress current bias towards 'Roman' households will also help to reveal the diversity *between* 'native' settlements.

Anthropological and historical studies of diet have shown culinary habits to be very informative. Goody, in *Cooking, Cuisine and Class* (1982), and Mennell, in *All Manners of Food* (1985), both illustrate how the production of food can be influenced by the nature of the political economy and the historical and social development of society. Food distribution is tied up with the social politics involved in food allocation, as well as economic factors surrounding market forces, tribute and taxes. Food preparation is linked to gender relations, labour service and cultural and social ideas about the way food should be flavoured, cooked, served and eaten. Finally, that the consumption of food and drink is affected by national and group differentiation and identity, group competition, notions of hospitality and sharing, together with the establishment of specific forms of etiquette, and food taboos (Goody

1982:38-40; Mennell 1985). I am especially interested in how groups differentiate themselves and establish their own identity within an imperial context through what and how they eat and drink. Both Mennell and Goody essentially wanted to determine why, in pre-colonial African state societies (Goody) and post-medieval Britain (Mennell), a differentiated *haute cuisine* did not emerge in the same way as it did in Eurasian states (Goody) and in post-medieval France (Mennell). Both show how the emergence of a differentiated cuisine is more complex than an association with social hierarchy. Factors such as the formalized control over the access to certain resources, the switching of cooking activities from the domain of wives into the domain of servants or specialists with increasing status, cultural mores on what was considered acceptable culinary behaviour, and the extent of cultural literacy and emulation can all influence the range of culinary differentiation (Goody 1982; Mennell 1985). While not all of these factors might be relevant or recognizable in Roman Britain, Goody's and Mennell's observations demonstrate the importance of context when determining the significance of how and why cuisines differ.

How and what people eat and drink is a form of communication (Barthes 1979; Mintz 1996:13). The development of a cuisine involves a whole range of decisions leading from its 'raw' to 'cooked' state. These decisions distinguish cuisine and cultures: "specific foods, their uses, and associations communicate, reaffirm, and aid in the construction of the cultural system, acting as a system of signs containing social messages" (Hastorf 1991:135). Day-to-day decisions on where, what, when, how and with whom to eat and drink are ritualized (Hamilakis 2000; Douglas and Isherwood 1978:155; Douglas 1984:3) and provide sustenance to household relationships (Sherratt 1995:11). In studies looking at the effects of imperialism, when one society is politically subsumed by another, individual and group interpretation of the rules and histories surrounding an invasive cuisine can vary substantially. Just as a house faces both inwards and outwards to the community, the consumption of food and drink exists in both the public and private domain (Wilk 1990; Smith 1987:312-13). The nature and extent of imperial contact, the status, occupation, rituals, traditions and preferences of the people involved, together with their propensity to follow culinary, as well as imperial, 'rules' all influence the composition of cuisine (Messer 1984:222-6; Garnsey 1999:6-7). Cuisines are fluid, they are not transplanted untouched by

time or space (Revel 1982:19) and it is in their various manifestations that different types and layers of communication can be inferred.

3.2.5. Diet, culinary practices and imperialism

What and how we consume is therefore socially, culturally, economically and politically motivated. The few studies that approach imperialism through the consumption habits of the conquered emphasize the otherwise neglected localized conditions of conquest and imperialism (see for example Hastorf 1990; Costin and Earle 1989; Brumfield 1987; 1996). As a number of these studies have shown, analysis of consumption at the household level can illustrate how imperialism might affect the daily rituals of habitation (Hastorf 1990; Costin and Earle 1989). Consumption's politicized dimension puts constraints, such as availability and access, on what and how we consume (Sherratt 1995:12; Goody 1982:37; Dietler 1990:370; Garnsey 1999:5-6).

3.2.6. 'Roman' consumption habits

Ancient texts that describe the customs and habits of conquered peoples have played a role in defining the ways that Romans and non-Romans, i.e. 'barbarians', approached the consumption of food and drink. The diet of the 'barbarian' is generally depicted against the civilized diet of the Roman urban elite (Reynolds 1995b:303; Garnsey 1999:62). Barbarians were drinkers of milk and ate too much meat. They ate food without spices and sauces and used animal fat instead of olive oil; they drank alcohol made from grains rather than grapes and when barbarians consumed wine, they did so inappropriately. Barbarians also lacked table manners and they consumed meat from the bone as animals did (Tierney 1959-1960; Chapman 1992:166-170; Reynolds 1995b:314; Garnsey 1999:67-8, 124-7). A few of the classical authors make specific reference to the eating and drinking habits of British people. Caesar in *Gallic Wars* refers to the Britons as having a taboo on the consumption of hare, chicken and goose and states that they raised them for their amusement and pleasure. He also classes the British as being consumers of milk and of

meat rather than corn. Strabo in *Geography* refers to the British as producers of grain, cattle and exporters of hunting dogs – Ireland cites a number of classic texts that comment on British hunting dogs (1986:224-5). Strabo also comments on the lack of cheese-making by the British in spite of an abundance of milk. In reference to the ‘hostile’ northern British tribes, Dio Cassius in *The Roman History: The Reign of Augustus* remarks that the inhabitants lived off their flocks and wild plants and did not consume fish even though it was readily available. These brief depictions of what the British people did and did not consume are insightful with regard to the attitudes held by the authors towards the civilized and barbarous consumption of food and drink and, as Garnsey (1999:62) has pointed out, are replete with interesting contradictions and fabrications (see comments in Gowers 1993:7; Funari *et al.* 1999:11-12. on the contextualization of ancient sources). However, their usefulness in the study of the diet and customs of particular settlements is negligible, although the classical texts have influenced the way Roman and non-Roman goods and customs have been portrayed in academia.

Many of the Roman-like goods considered symbolic of the adoption of a Romanized lifestyle (amphorae and their edible contents; food preparation wares such as mortaria; serving ware such as samian ware (*Terra sigillata*)) are associated with eating and drinking (Dannell 1979:177; Trow 1990:103; Williams and Peacock 1983). In late Iron Age Britain, the initial appearance of these types of goods is linked to the trading practices and political ambitions of the elite (Haselgrove 1989; Trow 1990; see also Dietler 1990; 1996). In the early Roman period, their presence has been used to determine the extent to which indigenous elites initially emulated and manipulated the customs of their Roman conquerors (Millett 1990a, 1990b). Roman-type ingredients and methods for procuring and preparing food have also been identified and used as indicators of a Romanized lifestyle (Jones 1991). The prevalence of cattle and pigs rather than sheep at more Romanized settlements, for example, is thought to reflect the culinary habits of the Roman army, if not ‘Romans’¹ (King 1991; 1999; although see Halstead 1985:224; Grant 1989:142). Particular types of dining customs have also been suggested for Romanized and non-Romanized peoples. The entertainment of reclining guests within the villa and use of many specialized vessels stands in contrast to outside feasting and the eating and especially drinking from large communal

vessels at native settlements (Blagg 1990:206; Dannell 1979; Millett 1979; Bradley 1998:49; Okun 1989; Reece 1988:44). These characteristics appear to suggest that there was some uniformity to the eating and drinking habits of ‘Romanized’ and native peoples, which was clearly not the case (Woolf 1995:341; Freeman 1993; Hingley 1999:143). The Vindolanda tablets – military documents that list food and drink items – recovered from the Vindolanda excavation in Northern Britain serve as an example of a blending of the so-called ‘barbarian’ and ‘Roman’ diet. The items include: barley (consumption of which was considered a punishment for a disgraced Roman Legion (Garnsey 1999:120)), Celtic beer, sour and vintage wine, pork-fat, fish sauce and a substantial amount of meat, (Bowman and Thomas 1983:86-94).

What is needed now is an *integrated* approach to the study of consumption in Roman Britain, one that focuses on the social contexts of eating and drinking. We need to contemplate whether there was any ambiguity in the use of so-called Roman and native material culture (after Webster 2001:9). A common explanation for the changes in consumption habits is ‘Romanization’ or conversely ‘native continuity’ if the settlement has not changed according to expectations. Current critiques of the concept of Romanization discussed in Chapter 2 (e.g. Freeman 1993; Webster 1996; Hingley 1996; Barrett 1997a; Mattingly 1997b), however, argue for a more introspective analysis of the presence or absence of Roman-like material culture at all levels of the social hierarchy.

3.2.7. Roman style goods and structures at ‘non-Roman’ settlements

In the early Roman period, some of the Roman-style goods ‘trickled down’ to the rest of the population. It is unsatisfactory to simply place these settlements on a sliding scale of (non) Romanization, particularly if the significance of changes in, or persistence of, particular culinary customs has not been considered from within the overall context of the settlement itself. Miller has established that “The point of a contextual analysis is that it relates apparently disparate sources of evidence to make each, in turn, the context for the others” (1985:201). The procurement, preparation and consumption of food and drink encompass

¹ The ‘classical’ diet of Rome emphasized the consumption of pork, particularly suckling pig, over the

most of the specializations of archaeology and reaches far beyond the dinner table. In Britain, in spite of the repeated requests over the years by bone, pot and plant specialists (Payne 1972:80-1; Maltby 1981:193; Lambrick 1984:176; Hansen 1991; Darling 1989:98; Hodder 1989:271; Tyers 1996:23), archaeological remains are rarely integrated and rarely considered from within their excavated and social context. The focus is instead on the perceived value of particular ingredients and vessels dissociated from the circumstances of their use (Mattingly 1997b:9). Underscoring many of the accounts of Romano-British eating and drinking habits is the notion that the 'native' diet and culinary practices was uncivilized when compared to the classical diet (Reynolds 1995b:303).

Hastorf has observed that some foods may have different meanings in different contexts whereas the meaning associated with certain other foods may have been constant (1991:135; see also Douglas and Isherwood 1978:65). Blanton, on the other hand, has suggested that the usage of particular goods might be misconstrued or consumed with intent to make 'fraudulent claims' (1994:14). As was discussed above, scholars have bestowed wealth and power on people who lived at Roman-like houses, and although this may have been the case with some groups, automatic assumptions deny the existence of alternative expressions of wealth, especially for people who inhabited non-Roman-like houses (Hingley 1989; Johnson 1993:10). For example, at Watkins Farm in the Upper Thames Valley, the early Roman site was decidedly 'native' in character; however, the percentage of specialty pottery, particularly serving-type ware, was considerably higher than for other native type settlements in the area (Booth in press; Raven 1990:47). This suggests that how food and drink was served was of particular importance to the inhabitants and quite possibly that the wealth or status of the inhabitants was expressed through the serving of food and drink to the local community. It is important in this regard to acknowledge that displays of wealth might also be perishable (Smith 1987:317; Dietler 1996:90). In many societies it is through the public sharing of food and drink rather than private consumption, that wealth, prestige and power is demonstrated (Johnson 1993:10; Dietler 1996:92) and that obligations are created and inequalities maintained (Dietler 1996:92; Grahame 1998:6). The consideration of the social contexts of the remains of eating and drinking could potentially challenge many

(if not most) of our current perceptions of ‘Roman’ and ‘native’ consumption habits in Roman Britain.

3.3. An Approach to the Study of the Social Contexts of Eating and Drinking

3.3.1. Areas open to investigation

The use of Roman things

In Chapter 2, it was established that the way we use the term ‘Roman’ is often indiscriminate. Whether the goods that were being imported, produced and consumed at particular settlements in Britain reflect changing technology and market forces, a desire to appear ‘Roman’, *avant-garde*, wealthy or none of these, we need to go beyond the simple observation of their presence or absence. The pig, typically a ‘Roman’ signifier, was also a prominent animal associated with hunting in Iron Age society (Reynolds 1995b:309) and Griffith has found that some ‘poor’ rural sites had higher concentrations of samian ware – another Roman signifier – than some ‘rich’ rural sites (1989:76; and Monaghan 1995:153; although see Evans 1987:202; Willis 1997:42). As has been suggested it is possible, for example, that certain goods may have been embraced for their use in particular feasting practices (Dietler 1990, 1996; Maltby 1985a:61) – a consideration which has yet to be examined more closely for Roman Britain. Revel (1982) has stressed that what is most striking about the cookbook accredited to *Apicius* is the importance of spices and herbs and the mixing of salty and sweet ingredients in Roman cooking (1982:47; see also Veyne 1987:188). The presence of mortaria, sweet wine and salty *garum* at a settlement might reflect a change in tastes of a particular group – at least in the public sphere (González Turmo 1997:125) – or conversely, the selection of ingredients that were approximate to, or enhanced, existing tastes. Anthropological studies of the cuisines of conquered peoples have shown, on the one hand, that during specialized events, traditional consumption practices are often maintained (Messer 1984:225), and on the other, that wealthy households, who conceivably can afford to eat whatever they wish, often eat traditional foods and that it is less wealthy households that consume so-called luxury foods (González Turmo 1997:119;

see also Barley 1994). The consideration of the artefacts and remains in terms of the social behaviour that surrounds eating and drinking will help to situate these practices within an imperial context, rather than establish an inventory of 'Roman' and 'native' things.

Integration of the artefacts and remains associated with eating and drinking

A study of the diet and culinary practices of households will offer alternative accounts of the material culture of imperialism. Through integrating the artefacts and remains of eating and drinking we can look at changes in daily life, as well as possible attitudes towards, and responses to, an imperial presence. King found that in the south of Britain 'non-Romanized' sites have a higher proportion of sheep remains whereas 'Romanized' sites have a higher proportion of ox and pig (1984; 1991; 1999). As mentioned above, the predominance of cattle and/or pig remains is commonly used as 'Romanized' signifiers in the evaluation of a settlement. The differential preservation and deposition of bones in different contexts notwithstanding (Gamble 1978; Maltby 1985a; Grant 1989:136), any ideas on changes in diet can only benefit from the integration of all types of remains. How, for instance, were animals and plants prepared for consumption at the sites in the above mentioned study of Roman pottery which found that so-called 'luxury' pottery, i.e. samian ware, amphorae, colour-coated wares etc. were not restricted to, or concentrated at Romanized sites (Griffiths 1989:69, 76). The correlation between types of ingredients and types of cooking and dining practices at settlements in Roman Britain could prove to be quite enlightening. Okun's study of diet and dining practices in the Upper Rhine area during the early Roman period found that despite suggestions of a Romanized diet – an increase in the use of pork, the consumption of new ingredients (e.g. olive oil and *garum*) and new ways of preparing food (e.g. mortaria) – generally speaking, food continued to be cooked using the same type of cooking pot and on the same type of hearth or fire as during the late La Tene period (1989:114-122). She also shows that while Roman-like serving ware was commonly used, the Roman practice of using individual bowls for each dish was not adopted and instead there was a tendency towards larger – possibly communal – serving vessels (1989:123; see Woodward and Blinkhorn 1997 re: significance of vessel size in the Iron Age). Bakels *et al.* (1997) studied the changes in diet from the Iron Age to the Roman period at Oss-Ussen, in

the Netherlands, and thus identified considerable diversity between the consumption practices of a number of native settlements. For example, they observed that at some settlements the diet appeared little changed in the Roman period with the exception of an increase in condiments. They in turn suggested “Although the food remained ‘native’ in essence, the new flavourings must have given it a different appearance and fragrance; the way the food looked and smelled, its public impact, was obviously important” (1997:209).

These examples suggest that the distinction between the use of ‘Roman’ and ‘non-Roman’ material culture is not absolute. ‘Non-Roman’ households could be flavouring and serving mutton in Roman-like ways using local ingredients and serving ware. ‘Roman’ households could be eating Roman ingredients on Roman dishes but cooking and serving them in non-Roman ways. Alternatively, Roman and native consumption practices could be interwoven and reinterpreted. The integration of the material remains of households within the social context of eating and drinking will help to disintegrate the Roman/native divide that pervades many studies of Roman Britain, and most studies of Romanization.

3.4. The Methodological Approach of this Thesis

As was discussed in Chapter 1, one of the aims of this thesis is the formulation of a methodological approach to the study of social change in Roman Britain. The approach that I am suggesting can be summarized as follows:

- Establish the dietary and culinary habits of the inhabitants of a settlement through re-integrating the artefacts and remains that are relevant to the preparation and consumption of food and drink.
- Consider these artefacts and food remains from within their excavation context and suggest how their deposition might reflect on the social contexts of eating and drinking.
- Analyse the material culture and contextual associations of the artefacts and food remains for a particular settlement from within the context of imperialism.
- Contrast the types of changes at a settlement with other settlements in the Upper Thames Valley to consider diversity in the responses to imperialism.

The consideration of all these aspects of consumption requires an appreciation of the many debates and methodological challenges that surround the study of the consumption of food and drink in archaeology. The remainder of this chapter will therefore focus on a number of the major issues that have helped to structure this approach to the study of social change.

3.4.1. A caveat to the study of the social contexts of eating and drinking

This section is essentially a caveat to the conditions of the archaeological record. I have attempted to immerse myself in the debates and methodologies of the various specializations that encompass the acts of eating and drinking as recoverable in the archaeological record. The old adage 'jack of all trades, master of none' has haunted my mind throughout the preparation of this thesis. The individual specialists might subsequently take issue with my particular stance on their subject; however, I do appreciate that what often concerns specialists is the leap of faith made by 'academics' between 'the data' and 'the big idea'. I have consequently attempted to incorporate the well-known vagaries of the archaeological record and the specific problems that plague each specialist's field of study into my interpretation. However, before we consider many of the issues inherent in the study of the containers of food and drink, the other implements associated with food and drink consumption, and the ingredients and their archaeological and social contexts, it is necessary to comment on the use of statistics in this thesis.

3.4.2. Consuming statistics

The excavated material described in this thesis is essentially a sample of what might otherwise have been recovered. Orton has queried whether archaeologists should use "...the mathematical theory of sampling just because we have, perhaps rather loosely, described our pottery as a sample" (1978:400). His query is relevant to all types of archaeological remains; particularly those found in this study whose sample sizes are, mathematically speaking, quite small. The main problem with the interpretation of archaeological samples seems to occur when identified patterns are taken as literal representations of a population. Orton

(1978) has observed that even when it is acknowledged that the ‘population’ or ‘sample’ of which we speak is more casual than for mathematics, “one is tempted to make the jump from one to the other” (1978:399).

A number of specialists now consider artefacts and remains in terms of depositional contexts and/or consumption practices (King 1991:15; Huelsbeck 1991:70; Rackham 1983:252; Needham and Sorensen 1988; Hawthorne 1998:164). Certain studies of animal bones, particularly those conducted by Bob Wilson in the Upper Thames Valley, have demonstrated how species representation is affected by excavation strategy (Wilson 1985; 1996:70-73; see also Maltby 1981; Price 1985:53). The implication is that even if you had a huge sample, if it is taken from one feature type or from one area of a site, whether you excavate by machine or hand, wet sieve or dry sieve, the sample is still not representative of the whole site (Price 1985:53; Fisher 1985:179). Needham and Sorensen argue that the behaviour that modifies our samples is “more important than either the quantity of refuse or the quality of material in use on the site” (1988:113). The emphasis of this thesis will ultimately be on contextual associations of the excavated material regardless of the sample size², although certain numerical trends (for example histograms of rim diameters, frequencies of pot forms, animal species and their body parts) have been calculated and offered as a basis for interpretation.

3.4.3. The artefacts and remains of food and drink preparation and consumption

The containers

...it is the besetting sin of archaeologists to write the history of containers rather than that of their contents (Sherratt 1995:17-18).

The majority of the containers considered in this study are ceramic (although see below). The relationship between vessel form, function and use is integral to studies of consumption. The current distinction between coarse ware (i.e. kitchenware) and fine ware

(i.e. tableware) provides only part of the picture and is far from straightforward. As Booth (in press) has stated, 'fine ware' often refers to the methods of manufacturing as opposed to the vessel's status or function. Lambrick (1984), for instance, has studied the residues of coarse and fine wares at Mount Farm in Oxfordshire and found that while there was a distinction between the use of the two types of wares, lime scale residues on some fine ware vessels revealed a role in cooking as well as in serving (1984:169). He goes on to suggest that "evidence for how far high-quality wares were used in cooking may have a bearing on assessments of the relative wealth or status of settlements or households" (1984:169). Cooking with 'fine wares' might also indicate the use of these vessels for communal feasting and/or special events. Allen (1990), on the other hand, found burnt residues on storage-type vessels at the middle Iron Age site at Watkins Farm, also in Oxfordshire (1990:39). Large vessels, for example, could be used in beer production as well as for storage (Vencl 1994:309), or they might indicate cooking for a larger group of people. These examples highlight the possibility of multiple uses for both coarse and fine wares, as well as our often-ethnocentric ideas about the value and use of containers (see Monaghan 1995:153; Hodder 1981).

How, and for what, vessels were used, is a neglected area of ceramic studies in Britain, especially during the Iron Age and Roman periods. An over-emphasis on fabric rather than form, where type of use is assumed – cooking pot, serving bowl, storage vessel etc. – inhibits consideration of the people who were using them (Darling 1989:99). Fulford and Huddleston's 1991 exposition on the state of Roman pottery studies, characterizes the social function of pottery as the "Cinderell[a] of ceramic studies" (1991:51). Ethnographic examples can be found to question the majority of our assumptions. In his study of African pottery, Barley (1994) has documented 'kitchen ware' that is better made than 'religious ware', 'imported ware' used in everyday contexts, and traditional 'native ware' used as high status tableware (Barley 1994:120, 73; for similar observations see González Turmo 1997:119). These observations suggest that the association between vessel form and function is often more complex than has been suggested in the past. This is not to suggest that we attempt to assign a function to every category of pot; even if this was possible,

² This research is prescribed by the criteria set by the various specialists so, for example, at Claydon Pike some contexts were not examined by the pottery specialist if they contained less than 50gms of pottery – see case study for further comments on this particular site.

vessels may have had multiple uses and their significance may have varied according to context and period (Rice 1987:232-3; Hodder 1981; Skibo 1992:33). It is more that we need to recognize, as Barley has done, that “pots are semantically promiscuous” (1994:76).

Tied to our ideas about the use of containers is the possibility that wooden vessels, which generally do not survive in the archaeological record, may have played a significant role in the culinary process and that pottery as a result may figure too prominently in our site reports. Evans (1989) in his study of late pre-historic wetland sites has suggested that wooden artefacts were not as prolific as is often imagined. He adds “...we must be wary of allowing the ‘invisible’ to entirely determine our understanding of the ‘surviving’” (1989:180). Earwood (1993), however, is critical of Evans’ assertion and makes a number of important points that are relevant to the study of excavated remains in general. She suggests instead that the disposal regimes of wetland sites were different from the regimes of other types of settlements and asks whether we can transpose the apparent low numbers of wooden artefacts found at wetland sites onto dry land sites (1993:23). Earwood admits that in the Roman period, the use of wooden containers was redefined with the proliferation of pottery, glass and metal, and that wood was used primarily for buckets, boxes and casks (1993:90), but argues that “it is easy to assume that wood has always had a lesser value than metal or pottery” (1993:229). The significance of wooden vessels at the settlements in this study is indeterminable, and this remains the case with other consumption-related artefacts and food items that are not generally preserved.

The pre-eminence of pottery in our site reports, particularly its position as a luxury ware, has also been questioned. Evans argues that “The durability of potsherds gives a distorted prominence to pottery as a trading commodity” (Evans 1981:519) and suggests that Roman pottery was in fact incidental: “The impression is that it was generally regarded as cheap and common: its use in polite society needed the excuse of indigence or deliberate austerity” (Evans 1981:520-21; see also Monaghan 1995:153). While this may have been the case for people at some settlements, our consideration of luxury and non-luxury wares is often quite rudimentary and needs to be considered within the context of consumption. Samian ware, for example, is generally used as an indicator of the status of a settlement (although see above Griffiths 1989), but Willis (1997) demonstrates how samian ware was much more

than a status marker. His research has revealed a fascinating distinction in the ratios of plain and decorated south Gaulish samian ware between military and large civilian settlements, which favour plain ware, and indigenous settlements, which favour decorated ware, in various northern regions in England and Wales. Willis adds:

...we should not assume that it was primarily the decoration of these vessels that was most significant for these consumers; it may well have been the fact that they were fairly large bowls which made them desirable. This raises topical questions of form and function (1997:41; see also Rush 1997 who considers the social context of mortaria).

Pottery is ultimately a *container* and can have a participatory or dominating role in the consumption process. If as Sherratt suggests, the prominence of particular types of pottery owes as much to their contents as to the pottery itself (Sherratt 1987:83; J. Evans 1987:200) then in considering pottery from within the social context of consumption we might also realize the significance of particular pottery types.

Other implements associated with food and drink

A variety of small finds recovered from the sites in this study are directly or indirectly associated with the acquisition, preparation, and consumption of food and drink. These include, for instance, objects associated with the processing of grains, such as quern stones; objects linked to the acquisition of foods such as weights for fishing nets and hunting pellets, and as well as metal chains and hooks that may have been used to suspend pots or food above fires. These types of implements help to define some of the variety of, and possible significance of, the types of foods consumed and the way they were prepared for consumption. The presence of hunting pellets and wild animals at a settlement suggests that these species were occasionally consumed. Chains and hooks can tell us about feasting practices (Manning 1983:147; Gomez de Soto 1993:193), and quern stones can be linked to labour and events associated with the harvest, for example. Archaeologists are now considering the social contexts of many of these items. Gwilt and Heslop (1995), for example, have focused on the intra-site and regional distribution of quern stones in

Yorkshire to determine the socio-economic significance of these items in the Iron Age and Roman periods.

The social contexts of small finds are increasingly being explored, from brooches and toiletry items (Jundi and Hill 1998; Hill 1997) to nails (Dungworth 1998), and while all types of small finds are not the focus of this thesis, I will comment on their association with the artefacts and remains of the consumption of food and drink where applicable.

The ingredients

Food and drink are perhaps the most fundamental, if short-lived, media of material culture (Sherratt 1995:11).

The remains of eating and drinking, namely plants and animals, are more typically used to determine the site economy than as ingredients in the more social aspects of consumption (Butler 1995:19; Hansen 1991:53; Sherratt 1987:83; Hastorf 1998:773; Gosden 1999:2 see also Douglas 1984:2). Food consumption is generally viewed as utilitarian and biological rather than cultural (Hamilakis 2000; Gregory and Altman 1989:38; Gosden 1999:1-2;). Although environmental archaeology considers behavioural practices such as butchery and crop production, the consideration of food preparation, serving and consumption is sporadic (Rackham 1995:23). The remnants of plants and animals are not generally linked with material culture, which is reflected in the typologically descriptive nature of much of the presented data (Rackham 1995:22-23; Butler 1995:19; Hansen 1991:53). This, despite the fact that changes in diet are often tied to changes in the way food and drink was prepared and served (Hamilakis 2000; Sherratt 1995:13).

In addition to the many taphonomic factors that may affect species population and abundance ratios, it is cultural practices such as feasting and special events, the production of medicines, butchery practices, animal taboos and etiquette that have a direct effect on the configuration of different species and their deposition (Gilbert and Singer 1982; Grant 1991:111; Hayden 1990; Tambiah 1969:424; Hansen 1991; Butler 1995; Ingold 1984). Schuster Keswani, for example, has suggested that herds dominated by young animals could

signify “an intensification or heightened frequency of ritual consumption” (1994:261) as opposed to dairying which is a more common explanation (see also McCormick 1992). Armour-Chelu in his interpretation of the partial skeletons of sheep and dog at late prehistoric Maiden Castle in Dorset argued that the nature of the skeletons’ deposition, their lack of processing as compared to the rest of the assemblage and the absence of gnawing by dogs pointed to the possibility of “‘special’ meals or some type of celebratory event” (1991:151). Both Butler (1995) and Hansen (1991) emphasize the roles that plants play in medicine, as decoration, in construction, not to mention totemism, myth and ritual (see also Hastorf 1998:777 on gender roles and plant use). Hansen suggests, for example, that an abundance of plant species that are uncommon or ‘poor producers’ could indicate that those plants had special significance (1991:56). These are important considerations, especially if as we have seen the abundance of a particular species, such as cattle, is thought to indicate wealth or a ‘Romanized’ diet.

The integration of artefacts and ingredients in the Roman period

...much of the variety which we study in pottery must relate to how the products of the fields were converted into the appropriate kinds of food and drink, and how these were prepared and served (Sherratt 1987:83).

In the late Iron Age and early Roman periods, general use vessels, namely jars, were gradually superseded by vessels with more specific uses, such as flagons, cups, platters and dishes (Millett 1979:39; Reece 1988:44 although see Evans 1993:98, 103 where in the north jar use increased). The social link between an increase in specialized forms and the consumption of food and drink needs, however, to be established. Modes of consumption need to be related to what is consumed. Deitler (1990) for example, has tied the storability of wine, and hence the accumulation of alcohol, to the sponsorship of drinking events (1990:369; 1996). The Roman period butchery tradition of chopping the carcass into joints by cutting through bones, as opposed to the Iron Age tradition of separating bones through the cutting of ligaments (Grant 1989:141; Maltby 1985b:20; see Maltby 1989 who identified a rural/urban distinction between the use of knives and choppers in the Roman period), suggests a different attitude towards animals and how they were prepared for consumption.

In the case of so-called 'special deposits' involving animals, many of the Iron Age deposits were not butchered, whereas in the Roman period, animals were invariably butchered, and presumably eaten (Grant 1989:146; for the association between feasting and sacrifice in the Roman Empire see Veyne 1987:194-8).

3.4.4. The social context of eating and drinking

The main priority must be to gain information about the inhabitants of the site, not to study the pottery, finds or structures in isolation (Darling 1989:98).

A study of the social context of the eating and drinking practices of households requires analysis of the remains and artefacts from associated features. I am now beginning to understand the attractiveness of looking at archaeological remains out of context, as it is much more straightforward. Several archaeologists and specialists have commented over the years on the lack of dialogue between specialists studying individual elements of sites and excavators, and how this skews interpretations of sites as a whole (Hodder 1989:271; Maltby 1981:193; Mytum 1989:65; Gamble and Bailey 1994:81). If this is to be the task of someone outside the realm of a particular excavation, varying emphases on context in the interpretation and especially the presentation of a site can be problematic. The site report for Barton Court Farm, one of the sites in this study, is a good example: the report comes with an extensive micro-fiche in which the pottery reports record finds in relation to individual contexts, but whose interpretation is for the most part not offered with reference to context. The bone report, on the other hand, records species and butchery practices in relation to groups of similar features, but does not emphasize butchery marks on individual animals or individual contexts (Miles 1986b). This is by no means a criticism of the report, which is comprehensive and together with the archival record provides a full account of individual contexts (rim diameters and butchery marks are recorded in the archive), but rather a qualification that my emphasis on the social context of consumption, which requires the integration of various types of 'data', does not necessarily fit with the original intentions of the excavation, the specialist analyses, and the resulting publication. The format of this and most other site reports (Allison 1997; Barrett 1987; Gero 1996:257) further illustrates why it

was deemed essential to refer to the archival record for this study. Fulford and Huddleston's (1991) review of 85 excavation pottery reports published since the 1970s, for example, found that 64% of the reports did not identify the totals of the amount of pottery recovered and studied and that 74% of the pottery reports in their study did not use all of the types of pottery in their quantification of types of fabrics (1991:9-10). The archival record is of course only a record of what was recorded and is conditioned by the cultural politics of archaeological data collection (Gero 1996:254), including in this instance the practice in Romano-British studies of analysing all of the Roman-type pots but not all of the indigenous coarse ware vessels. Some of the problems that I have encountered in the course of this research will be discussed on a site-by-site basis in later chapters.

Reinstating the remains and artefacts back into their excavated context, while laborious, is in many ways the easy part. The excavated context itself also has to be culturally defined. The majority of finds for the late Iron Age and early Roman period in the south, are recovered from enclosure ditches, house gullies and pits (Hingley and Miles 1984). These comprise both open features, subject to both the accumulations of a variety of practices over time, and single event deposits (Hingley and Miles 1984:62; Fisher 1985:179). Though problematic, these are the types of features that provide a medium for the study of the social practices and cultural attitudes that led to the deposition of archaeological remains (Moore 1981). As Moore states: "the placing of certain artefacts in specific positions in a house may well say something about their function, but it says very little about their meaning in any relevant social context" (1981:91). For instance, if a collection of what appears to be drinking equipment, is found in the area of a house thought to be the kitchen, what does this say about the social significance of drinking? If those same items were found in a pit containing articulated animal remains, or a cache of carbonized seeds, then this could be interpreted as characterizing some kind of special event.

Analysis of the deposition of finds and their social significance involves the examination of the diversity and frequency of species and types of artefacts across space. Various studies – primarily of bones and plants – have attempted to demonstrate the organization of a settlement through looking at the various stages of processing in relation to the location of refuse (see Halstead *et al.* 1978; Dennell 1974). Wilson, for example, has found on a

number of sites that the bones of large species and other coarse bones do not tend to be situated around the more domestic areas of the site, which attract the bones of smaller species and burnt bones. He puts forward butchery practices, rubbish disposal regimes, notions of acceptable hygiene or scavenging as possible explanations of the repeated inter-site patterns (Wilson 1989, 1996b). Most people recognize that the spatial isolation of different types of activities from their places of discard is not straightforward. As Wilson (1989, 1996b), Maltby (1985a), Hill (1995), Hodder (1989), Lambrick (1984), Moore (1981), Fisher (1985:179) and others have stressed, associations of specific remains may not bear any relation to areas of processing or use. Rather, they may reflect the differential states of preservation and types of deposition of remains in specific contexts (for example, pits versus ditches) or the periodic or symbolic movement of remains from one area of the site to another.

3.4.5. The social context of deposition

Increasingly, archaeologists are considering the relatively small amounts of artefacts and remains actually recovered from archaeological sites in terms of their social context. Sharples (1990), for example, has suggested that the distribution of imported American ceramics at Hengistbury Head in Dorset “was controlled in a manner that reflected, on a small scale, the pattern of the region: imports were restricted to areas apart from domestic activities” (1990:300). Hill (1994, 1995) has questioned the notion that Iron Age pits were receptacles for ordinary rubbish by revealing the sequential associations of certain types of animal remains and artefacts with depositional sequences which may have taken place over a number of years, even decades. Grant (1991, 1984) has linked distinctive animal deposits and the association of particular species to acts of sacrifice and/or feasting and ritualized behaviour. Similarly, Hingley (1990b) has suggested that the placing of certain deposits within, and at the entrances of, enclosure ditches served to mark social relations within and outside the settlement. An acknowledgement of these entwined sequences of social practice is fundamental to the significance we place on the catalogues of remains and artefacts.

3.4.6. The comparison of eating and drinking practices of households

Rather than regarding the data as somehow defective and inadequate for the questions we might prefer to ask, we should instead ask whether these questions are inappropriate (Fletcher 1992:40).

The uncertainty over appropriate archaeological samples has led some to place conditions on the comparison of excavated material. Grayson argues (in reference to animal populations) that only when similar patterns occur at sites in the *same* region is it “...reasonable to conclude that changing taxonomic abundances are, in fact, being accurately measured” (1984:111-12). Uerpmann (1973) suggests that only similar sized samples should be compared. Maltby (1981), on the other hand, has argued that an accurate representation of species requires that we “use only those bone elements that were butchered, distributed, disposed of and preserved in similar ways” (1981:170). However, while these are reasonable conditions, we must not place an unrealistic pre-requisite on what is an archaeological reality. It has been shown, for example, that particular butchery practices, such as the use of knives versus choppers, and particular cooking techniques, such as roasting and one-pot meals that require less butchering, are not always reflected on bones (Lyman 1987:318-19; Crader 1990:708). Crabtree (1989) in her study of Anglo-Saxon animal bones has found that a skilled butcher may not leave any butchery marks on the bone (1989:97) and Maltby in a later study (1989) has revealed a contrast in butchering techniques between Roman urban and rural sites.

This study illustrates the impossibility of standardizing archaeological settlements, as archaeological samples are inherently incompatible. I should add that not all specialists are as circumspect about the comparison of excavated material. Evans, for instance, has found that the various methods for quantifying pottery (sherd counts and weights) are analogous, with the possible exception of minimum numbers of vessels (1991:72). He concludes, “There do not seem to be good reasons for the concern expressed about comparing quantified data presented by different methods” (Evans 1991:72).

Any comparison of the diet and culinary practices of households is hindered by considerations of the varied sampling and excavation strategies between sites, and the

differing methodologies of the specialists, not to mention the contemporaneity of the sites in question³. Such variability in practice, compounded by the variability of deposition and preservation, has led many to conclude that direct comparisons of sites are not presently possible (Grant 1989:136; Maltby 1981:170; Gamble 1978:346; Jones 1985:114). However, this assumes that some time in the future virginal assemblages might be available for analysis, even though it is clear that *human behaviour skews samples* (Price 1985:53). We will never be able to disentangle the layers of bias that exist at the various levels of archaeological recovery, analysis and interpretation. With extremely rare exceptions, we will not be able to reconstruct the moments of deposition. In reference to site taphonomy, Rackham (1995) adds:

Obviously it is essential to be aware and understand the post-depositional destructive agencies but it is essentially a fanciful notion to imagine that taphonomic studies would permit the ‘scientific’ rebuilding of the last function of the assemblage (Rackham 1995:24).

He suggests instead that the most we can attain is the “character of the agencies at work” (1995:24); I would add that it will most likely be *our* character that is revealed in the processes of excavation and interpretation. As one of the objectives of this study is the recognition of different types of responses to a Roman presence, the significance of one type of response (or pattern) can only be realized when it is contrasted with another (Hingley 1984:86). It is ultimately through comparison that conventional, formulaic responses can be questioned (Evans 1982:175; Webster 1996:8) and while I do not ignore the shortcomings of the various archaeological samples, I nonetheless emphasize the points at which they diverge.

³ I did not examine the artefacts and remains by layer (e.g. Hill 1995) as not all of the material was recorded by layer. For example at Barton Court Farm for each context, animal bones were recorded by layer, but pottery for the most part was not.

3.5. Conclusion

Some of the most commonly cited types of evidence for the ‘Romanization’ of Britain are the artefacts and remains associated with eating and drinking. A number of studies have focused on separate aspects of diet and culinary practices, such as the introduction of wine and olive oil, new types of table wares and changes in the consumption of certain foods, within the context of the Romanization of Britain. However, an integrated study of dietary and culinary habits, particularly of non-Roman-like settlements, from within the context of imperialism has not been conducted. ‘Romanization’ and ‘native continuity’ are unsuitable explanations for the myriad responses to the Roman presence and do not fit into the stated aims and objectives of this thesis.

This study aims to look at the *localized* effects of imperialism through considering the social context of eating and drinking. The ideal setting for the consideration of these integrated daily acts of consumption is the place where people live. The potential for this course of research in considering the effects of imperialism on ‘ordinary’ people might best be developed by concentrating on an area of Britain which is considered to be ‘non-Romanized’ – the Upper Thames Valley, Oxfordshire; and during a period in which new ideas about eating and drinking appear to have been taking form – the late Iron Age to early Roman transition. As was demonstrated in chapter 2, the late Iron Age has primarily been approached in relation to the Roman period. In this study of the effects of imperialism, I will approach the early Roman period largely in relation to the late Iron Age.

Chapter 4

The Upper Thames Valley

4.1. Introduction

The majority of the settlements in the Upper Thames Valley during the early Roman period are considered 'native' rather than 'Roman', because of the way the settlements are structured and the nature of the consumption practices of the inhabitants. Structural remains of the houses are not villa-like, no obvious floor plans have survived, and, in fact, a range of archaeological methods are required to confirm that these sites were places of habitation. Because of their classification as 'native', settlements of the type described in this study are often used to exemplify 'native continuity' and/or low impact 'Romanization' (Raven 1990:49; Hey 1996:169; Miles 1986b).

The *inconvenience* of the poor preservation of houses in the Valley during this period has turned out to be fundamental to my study of the households. This chapter will therefore both introduce the study region of this thesis, and argue the need to rethink a concept of households in which the *house* is not the primary locus of study. It will be suggested, perhaps paradoxically, that settlements with little evidence of structures might provide a more integrated view of the household and challenge many preconceptions of what Roman imperialism looks like in the archaeological record. Before we proceed, it is necessary to first introduce the source of many of the excavations conducted in the Upper Thames Valley, the Oxford Archaeological Unit.

4.2. The Oxford Archaeological Unit: Similarities and Contrasts with the Present Study

Many of the sites discussed in this study, including three of the four case studies were excavated by the Oxford Archaeological Unit ("O.A.U."). Roughground Farm is the one exception in that it was initially excavated by Margaret Jones in the 1950s and 1960s using funds supplied by the then Ministry of Works. The excavation was subsequently extended by the O.A.U. in the 1980s and 1990s, and all of the post-excavation work was consolidated, re-examined and later published by the O.A.U. in 1993 (Allen *et al.* 1993). Claydon Pike, Old Shifford Farm and Barton Court Farm were each excavated by the O.A.U. exclusively. The post-excavation analysis for Old Shifford Farm and Barton Court Farm is complete, and much has been published (Hey 1996; Miles 1986b). The post-excavation work for Claydon Pike is largely complete and is in the process of being consolidated for publication.

The founding directives and excavation policies of the O.A.U. complement many of the objectives of this study. The O.A.U. was established in 1973 with an aim to clarify "...the hierarchy and function of settlements in the Iron Age and Roman period and the cultural and ecological factors influencing settlement" (Jones and Miles 1979:318). Excavation was deliberately large-scale and comprehensive (Hingley and Miles 1984:52), as is necessary for a contextual analysis of the inner workings of a settlement. Interestingly, considering the time, similar sentiments were expressed by Margaret Jones when she excavated Roughground Farm in the 1950s and 1960s. She commented specifically on her focus on the landscape of the settlement with a view to establishing the site plan and the rescue of "as many features and their finds as possible" (Allen *et al.* 1993:4). She added, "This was not quite in accord with current practice which advocated the selection of 'typical' features for more intensive excavation rather than extensive studies" (in Allen *et al.* 1993:4). The O.A.U. places particular emphasis on the environment and ecology of a settlement using varied strategies for the recovery and analysis of plant and animal remains; again this is of paramount importance to the integration of remains of eating, drinking with habitation. As the O.A.U. intended at the outset to compare and contrast settlement within the Upper Thames Valley, they established "probabilistic sampling strategies and standardised methods of data collection" (Hingley and Miles 1984:53-4; Booth in press). The approach of

the O.A.U. in this regard also facilitates my objective of exploring differences between particular settlements in the Valley.

The consistency in approach and method resulting from the fact that the O.A.U. excavated most of the sites has greatly benefited this study. However, it is important to acknowledge that many people have worked on these sites over the past three decades and that inconsistencies exist between the various methods and approaches of the directors of excavations and individual specialists. My own objectives similarly diverge from the O.A.U.'s in placing particular emphasis on the social contexts of eating and drinking and how this relates to imperialism. The four case studies themselves differ significantly. For example, the excavated material from the four sites in this study is not quantitatively similar, nor is it consistently represented at each site. This can be illustrated by the recovery and identification of specific pottery forms at Old Shifford Farm, which was poor, as contrasted with the plant and animal samples, which were well defined. At Roughground Farm the recovery and identification of pottery and querns appears quite high, whereas butchery marks were not recorded and no plant remains were recovered at the early Roman settlement. At Barton Court Farm, sizeable amounts of pottery and bones were recovered and identified; however, plant remains (though identified for the late Iron Age phase of the settlement) were not recovered at the early Roman settlement. Claydon Pike, on the other hand, has considerable quantities of identified pottery, bones and plant remains, but is chronologically insecure.

This is the reality of archaeology and it surely cannot mean that no comparative work should be undertaken. Therefore, in building on the O.A.U.'s work I have attempted to incorporate the processes of excavation and differences in interpretation into this study.

4.3. An Introduction to the Upper Thames Valley

In this section, I will discuss aspects of the political setting of the Upper Thames Valley during the transition from the late Iron Age to the early Roman period. I will then comment on the nature of settlement in the Upper Thames Valley, as it is currently understood. Following on from this, I shall consider a number of the interpretations of settlement in Valley

and how they feature in studies of non-Roman settlement and in the theories of Romanization and native continuity – two issues that have greatly influenced the course of this research.

4.3.1. The political setting in the late Iron Age and early Roman periods

The Upper Thames Valley cuts across southern-central England from the source of the River Thames in the west, one hundred kilometres eastwards (see Figure 4.1). The River Thames has been described as a “channel of communication, a barrier and defence” and as both “a gateway into south-eastern England and an artery into the centre of the country” (Allen *et al.* 1997:114). The region was within the first wave of conquest after the Roman invasion of 43 AD (see Jones and Mattingly 1990:66-7), although evidence of Roman and/or continental influence has been identified at some late Iron Age sites, such as Claydon Pike and Abingdon Vineyard (Miles 1986a:50). Military sites were established at points around the valley, at Dorchester, Gloucester (*Glevum*) and at Cirencester (*Corinium*) (Jones and Mattingly 1990:88-9; McWhirr 1984; Burnham and Wachter 1990). A series of well established track ways and roads linking settlements with local centres, such as Abingdon Vineyard, and the River Thames provided communication routes throughout the Valley and beyond (Miles 1986b:43).

The distribution patterns of pottery and coins appear to suggest that the Upper Thames Valley may have provided a natural boundary for a number of late Iron Age tribal groups (Selwood 1984): the *Catuvellauni* to the east, the *Dobunni* to the west and the *Atrebates* to the south (Miles 1986a:56). There are also indications that the area was assimilated by one of the tribal groups – the *Catuvellauni*, by the beginning of the first century AD (Branigan 1985; Robinson 1981:255). However, in reference to the emphasis of this study, I would draw attention to the argument made by Siân Jones, who has been critical of approaches which establish ethnic boundaries based purely on the distribution of material culture:

...ethnicity, amongst other factors, may disrupt regular spatio-temporal stylistic patterning, resulting in an untidy and overlapping web of stylistic boundaries (in different classes of material culture and in different contexts) which may be discontinuous in space and time (Jones 1997:129).

Coins associated with all three tribal groups, for example, have been recovered in some areas (Allen 2000:27-30). Allen has indicated that the definition of tribal boundaries in the Upper Thames valley is far from straightforward and has pointed to the possibility that smaller independent tribal groups with varying allegiances to the three large tribes may have controlled various parts of the valley (2000:29-30). What is perhaps indisputable is that the Upper Thames Valley was not a self-contained, homogeneous landscape (Lambrick 1992:80), either physically or sociopolitically.

4.3.2. The nature of settlement in the late Iron Age and early Roman periods

Excavation and crop marks (revealed through extensive air photography of the region) have shown that settlement density throughout the Valley was high during this period of political transition (Benson and Miles 1974; Robinson 1981; Miles 1982; Allen *et al.* 1984; Lambrick 1992:80), and that during the Iron Age and Roman periods, different types of sites occupied the various regional zones (Miles 1986a:52; Lambrick 1992). The Valley itself encompasses a floodplain that is flanked by a series of gravel terraces; beyond the terraces is a hinterland of clay slopes and limestone hills and chalk downs on the southern side of the valley (Robinson 1981). In the Iron Age, there are indications of different site economies in the various regional zones: settlement on the floodplain and lower terraces was largely pastoral, whereas on the higher terraces farming was arable and more mixed (Robinson 1992:56). As the water table rose during the Iron Age, settlement drifted to the terraces in the late Iron Age and into the Roman periods, although the distinction between the site economies of settlements continued. Evidence for domestic occupation of the floodplain is sporadic from the late Iron Age until late into the Roman period¹ (Lambrick and Robinson 1988:60; Lambrick 1992:82, figure 27; Allen *et al.* 1997:119), though it is quite possible that the floodplain continued to be exploited for its grasslands by pastoral settlements on the first gravel terraces (Robinson 1992:57; Allen *et al.* 1997). A number of commentators have suggested that there was cooperation between some settlements in the various zones,

¹ It is possible our knowledge of the occupation of the floodplain is incomplete as sites are quite difficult to detect (Robinson 1981:254; Allen *et al.* 1997:118). Recent emphasis on the floodplain could, therefore, change current interpretations (Allen *et al.* 1997:117-8).

starting in the middle Iron Age and continuing into the Roman period (Lambrick and Robinson 1988:60; Robinson 1992:56; Allen *et al.* 1993:149-151; Allen 2000:11).

4.3.3. Regional discontinuity in the Upper Thames Valley

Two periods of regional 'discontinuity' in the Upper Thames Valley have been identified (Lambrick 1992). The first period occurred during the late Iron Age, when new settlements were established and existing settlements were abandoned and re-established within the same site. A number of fortified settlements were erected during this time (Abingdon Vineyard, the Big Enclosure and Dyke Hills); they were situated alongside rivers, overlooking the floodplain. Lambrick and Robinson (1988) have suggested that construction of these settlements could indicate "periods of stress...not registered in the undefended farmsteads" (1988:73). The defensive settlements may have served to control the increasing river trade (Allen 2000:24-5) and/or the floodplain itself. It is also in the late Iron Age that the grasslands of the floodplain appear to have been managed for the first time (Lambrick and Robinson 1988:58). Lambrick has pointed to the possibility of political upheaval in the late Iron Age, as reflected in changes in settlement at this time, when communal land rights were possibly being challenged by an emerging elite (1992:105).

The second period of regional discontinuity occurred in the late first century/early second century AD when settlements either shifted, or were reorganized, or abandoned (Lambrick 1992:83-4). A variety of explanations has been offered to explain the changes in settlement. These include the movement of people, particularly poor people, from individual settlements to the large agricultural estates (Fulford 1992:32); the dislocation of people in response to the disintegration of tribal groups (Lambrick 1992:105), and a change in the nature of settlement with the formation of imperial estates (Miles 1984:208-9). Allen *et al.* (1993) have similarly suggested that by the end of the first century AD the floodplain grazing lands might have been under imperial control (1993:196).

The case studies in this thesis each feature settlements that were subject to both episodes of regional discontinuity. In fact, a possible third episode of change in settlement has been identified in this study, one that occurred in and around the Roman conquest of the region.

The possible significance of these changes in settlement over time will be discussed in more detail in the case studies and in Chapter 9.

4.3.4. Natives and Romans? in the Upper Thames Valley

Native type settlements dominated the Upper Thames Valley landscape until quite late in the Roman period and much has been made of the absence of large villa estates. Robinson (1992) has suggested that the combination of high population density together with an entrenched land division and tenure system inhibited the later development of large villas: “there was probably little opportunity to carve out new fully Romanized estates such as seem to have developed in the less heavily populated Cotswolds” (1992:60). In contrast, Hingley has theorized that the Upper Thames Valley was occupied by more co-operative social groups whose ties to the community at large may have inhibited the development of Roman-type settlements after the conquest (1984; 1988:95). His conclusions have been queried because they were based primarily on evidence provided by crop marks, rather than by excavation, which lack chronological distinction (Haselgrove 1984a; Lambrick 1992:79-80). Recent excavations have not invalidated the premise behind Hingley’s hypothesis but the excavations do indicate that there was more of a distinction between settlements in the Valley than his original model implies (Allen 2000:13-4; Henig and Booth 2000:105). Hingley’s theory nonetheless extends the idea described earlier that settlements from different regional zones cooperated with each other. At the very least, the possibility of a cooperative society must feature in interpretations of the potential significance of ‘Romanized’ material culture and structures.

Fulford (1992), on the other hand, has linked the chronology of settlement change identified above, to the subsequent nature of ‘Romanization’ in the Valley. He has observed that settlements initially established early in the Iron Age, for example Ashville Trading Centre, did not generally continue throughout the Roman period (see also Allen *et al.* 1993:196), whereas settlements established in the late Iron Age, for example Barton Court Farm, tended to be occupied throughout the Roman period. He goes on to suggest that the settlements established in the late Iron Age are also the sites with more Romanized structural evidence, while sites established earlier often have Romanized material but no structural evidence

(Fulford 1992:27-9). Fulford acknowledges that his model of social change is a general observation that is complicated by the nature of settlement shift, abandonment and resettlement that characterizes many sites in the region. As we shall see Barton Court Farm, Roughground Farm and Old Shifford Farm – three of the four case studies in this thesis – do not quite fit his model.

It has further been suggested that interpretations of the Valley have been influenced by how we classify ‘Roman’ and ‘native’, and by our emphasis on stone built ‘villas’ when the most plausible construction materials in the Valley – cob and timber – are not generally preserved (Fulford 1992:37; Miles 1988:65; Allen *et al.* 1984). The implication is that we are looking in the wrong place – structures rather than material culture – for evidence of ‘Romanization’ (Fulford 1992:29). This is a valid argument, particularly when considering the possibility of less wealthy groups making an active attempt to appear ‘Roman’; and the possibility of alternative expressions of wealth or status associated with Roman-like or prestigious goods rather than with Roman-like structures. However, it remains to be shown whether the consideration of alternate forms of Romanization remove the bias that plagues the concept or just increases the pool of ‘Romans’. I would suggest instead that we might focus on the social contexts of material culture and settlement rather than further entrench the dichotomy of Roman versus native society.

To summarize, the varying theories described in this section illustrate the dynamism of settlement in the Upper Thames Valley during this period of political transition. While each idea may differ by degree and emphasis, each considers settlement from within the context of the whole region *and* the history of settlement at each site. Notions of native continuity and Romanization are present in a number of the theories. However, what distinguishes these various approaches from many of the accounts of Roman Britain is that basic assumptions that are made generally about rural settlements (i.e. the presence and absence of Romanized structures and material culture) are at least being challenged.

This study will continue that challenge by focusing on the nature of the impact of imperialism on diet and culinary practices. It will become clear that the four case studies – Barton Court Farm, Roughground Farm, Old Shifford Farm and Claydon Pike – do not present a unified native voice. Although it is likely that the settlements were occupied at

slightly different times, they housed people of different status with different agendas, different appetites and consequently different experiences of imperialism. Unfortunately, terms such as ‘Romanization’ and ‘native continuity’ constrain the consideration of the variety of ways in which people might have reacted to the conquest. Any significance attributed to the presence or absence of Roman-like structures and material culture must be contextualized.

4.4. The Study of Native Settlement in the Upper Thames Valley

The heavy bias in favour of Romano-British villas and urban areas has had consequences for our understanding of other types of settlements (Hingley 1989:4-5; Miles 1989:115; Branigan 1991:92; Clarke 1998:28). The label ‘native’ has obscured the diversity of settlement in the Roman period – it is as if by their classification as ‘native’ we somehow know what these types of settlements will divulge without excavation. Indeed, until recently much of the academic interest in the archaeology of the Upper Thames Valley focused on the paucity of villas until late into the Roman period (see above and Young 1986:58). However, gravel extraction in the region has resulted in the excavation of a variety of non-Roman-like settlements. Although there is now a bias towards excavated native settlements on the Valley’s gravel terraces (Miles 1986a:49; Lambrick 1992:78; though see Allen *et al.* 1997 re: archaeology on the floodplain), the terraces were the most densely occupied areas in the valley during the periods in question. As native settlements throughout Roman Britain are increasingly being excavated (Drury 1982:1; Hingley 1989:5) *and published*, it is necessary to start incorporating them into accounts of Roman imperialism’s impact.

There are challenges and unlikely rewards to a renewed analysis of households in the Upper Thames Valley in the late Iron Age and early Roman periods. One of the main challenges is a preservation bias in which the remains of houses are not generally recovered. This has a direct effect on the way ‘households’ in the Upper Thames Valley can be defined in the archaeological record.

4.4.1. Households without houses

Any study of household archaeology in the Upper Thames Valley during the late Iron Age and early Roman periods is complicated by the poor preservation of structural features (Allen 1990:81). What we find instead are pits, gullies, enclosure ditches and occasionally post-holes and house-slots. Beyond suggestions about shape and, if conditions permit, the types of materials used in their construction, the internal structure of houses in the Upper Thames Valley (and in many other regions of Britain) is ambiguous (Allen *et al.* 1984). This is in contrast with stone-built, villa-type structures found further afield where it is possible to reconstruct floor plans and, at times, infer specialized areas of the house. The types of innovative spatial and architectural analysis that typify the study of Romano-British villas (see Scott 1990; Scott 1994; Smith 1978) are not always appropriate or possible for many of the native type settlements in Roman Britain (see also discussion in Boast and Evans 1986:194).

4.4.2. A definition of Upper Thames Valley ‘households’

With the settlements in the Upper Thames Valley, we need to look beyond ‘the house’ in our investigation of the household. Essentially, this requires that any working definition of the term ‘household’ has to fit the archaeology of the region. It would, for example, be difficult to exclude non-family or extended family members from the definition, as it might not be possible to specify the living arrangements of particular residents. Equally, in the case of settlements that contain multiple buildings and/or households, it might not be possible to disentangle the daily interactions within the settlement. This does not exclude the *possibility* of identifying areas of different or special status, of suggesting specific gender or family associations or of establishing particular practices associated with particular house sites in the Valley. They simply do not feature in the *definition*. For the purposes of this study, when I refer to the ‘household’ I am following Hingley’s example and referring to the “group who *used* and resided within a single house or group of closely related buildings” (Hingley 1990a:128 [my emphasis]).

The structures that we recreate out of gullies, post-holes and foundation slots are as susceptible to bias in interpretation as any archaeological reconstruction (see articles in Drury 1982). As low-lying sites tend to have fluctuating water tables which affect the survival of structural features (Pryor 1983:191), it has been argued that our ideas about the organization of lowland settlements are prejudiced by examples of the less physically challenged upland settlements (Pryor 1983:190). Reynolds, in studying the archaeological movement of reconstructed Iron Age houses, has observed one instance when “a post-built structure was altered to a ring gully structure by rats tunnelling under the wall and living in the space afforded by the wattle work” (1982:176). He has many other such examples, as well as instances where a few seasons of ploughing have removed all traces of post-holes (1982:190). Determining the arrangement of domestic areas at settlements in the Upper Thames Valley requires high levels of inference and extensive excavation. The latter, I would argue, has actually benefited the study of households in the region. At sites where structures are poorly preserved, all aspects of habitation become significant and need to be considered (Pryor 1983:197).

The establishment of households without floor plans is less ambiguous if the remains commonly associated with households, and the environmental data that reflect human settlement, are integrated. House sites at late Iron Age and early Roman Old Shifford Farm (one of the sites in this study) have been proposed through the concentration of burnt pottery and animal bones, clay impregnated with wattle, oven walls and charcoal at the terminals of particular enclosures within the settlement (Hey 1996:105, 111). Environmental data were used to confirm habitation of a site at Farmoor that lacked structural evidence but exhibited a substantial increase in the number of beetles associated with timber in the Roman period. Species of dung beetle that congregate around vegetal refuse and animal dung were also seen as evidence for habitation at the site (Lambrick and Robinson 1979:122, 117). No structures were recovered at early Roman Watkins Farm, but, the recovery of woodworm and bread beetles and high quantities of pottery was seen to “suggest more than mucking out from a settlement elsewhere” (Allen 1990:81). Artefacts and features that indicate a variety of activities done on a household scale, such as small scale textile production, metal working, food preparation and storage, and even the presence of human burials (Allen *et al.* 1993:191), contribute to the establishment of domestic occupation (Hey 1996:138). The hand-operated querns found at Roughground Farm, Old Shifford Farm and Claydon Pike,

and the hearths and ovens recovered at Barton Court Farm, Old Shifford Farm, Claydon Pike and Roughground Farm (Miles 1986b; Hey 1996; Allen *et al.* 1993:191) were all used to substantiate the case for habitation at each of the sites featured in this study.

It is of course conjectured that domestic material in circular gullies and rectangular slots indicates house sites. If these features do not represent the location of houses, it is interesting that domestic material accumulated at the entrances of gullies and enclosures at many of the sites in the Upper Thames Valley. It is, nevertheless, these apparently distinctive concentrations of artefacts and remains that help to situate acts of eating and drinking within the context of tradition, mores and outside forces that govern the whole dietary cycle of consumption, including procurement and discard (Barrett 1989b; see Hill 1995 and Grant 1991 for the rituals of 'ordinary' rubbish).

The absence of floor plans also forces us to place more importance on the deposition of material culture in features throughout the settlement. How surrounding features 'behave' (Pryor 1983:196) can reveal completely different aspects of life at a settlement than can a house examined in isolation. According to Rapoport, "One cannot merely consider a particular building because people do not live in, or act exclusively in, single buildings: they use various buildings, a variety of outdoor spaces, settlements, and whole regions" (1990:12). This has been a criticism of excavations in general, and particularly of the excavation of Romano-British villas, where the primary locus of study has been the house rather than the whole estate (Gaffney and Tingle 1989:3; Miles 1988:60; see also Hayden and Cannon 1983:160). *A notable consequence of the poor preservation of houses is that more parts of the site have to be plotted and excavated to determine the nature of settlement.* Analysis of the distribution of material culture around the site may help to substantiate the location of possible house sites, but it also provides the means to contemplate the working of the household. The distribution of pots, bones and plants, for example, can be linked to cuisine and rites surrounding consumption and discard. *In an integrated study of the household, all archaeological features, each artefact and biological residue, in fact every trace of habitation, takes on importance.*

4.4.3. Early Roman period households in the Upper Thames Valley

Despite their now fragmentary appearance, pieced together from the remnants of habitation and the processes of decay, there were houses in the Upper Thames Valley. And, although it may not be possible or even appropriate to pinpoint exact moments of change, a number of native type settlements in the Valley were reorganized in the early Roman period. As it is likely that people who lived in these settlements also constructed them, or at least had a hand in their construction, it might be assumed that their reconfiguration was significant (Rippengal 1993:93; Lawrence and Low 1990:492). Native-type settlements in the Upper Thames Valley during the early Roman period are often identified by the presence of rectangular enclosures, with fewer, and less uniform, pits than in the late Iron Age, and in some cases, house sites that are represented by rectangular foundation slots rather than circular gullies. This is, however, a tenuous distinction. The fine line that divides prehistory and history, although firm in the minds of some Romanists, is more difficult to isolate archaeologically (T. Allen pers. comm.). The Roman conquest is consequently not a fixed point in the archaeological recording of this region; Lambrick has even stated, “The Roman conquest is archaeologically invisible on the gravels” (1992:105). This does not mean that we cannot consider the effects of imperialism by looking at settlements before and after the Roman invasion, but it does require that we focus on the cumulative impact of the conquest, rather than trying to fit the archaeological record around specific historical events (Scott and Gaffney 1987:86; Jones 1997:29-30).

4.5. **The Upper Thames Valley - the Sites** (see Figure 4.1. – site number corresponds to number on the map)

Before we commence with the case study element of this thesis, it is necessary to introduce a number of the sites that feature throughout this study. The remainder of this chapter, therefore, will seek to establish some semblance of the types of settlements identified in the Upper Thames Valley thus far. The four sites to be examined in detail in the following chapters are included here (signified with an asterisk) to provide a context for their association with other settlements in the Valley. I should perhaps stress that this is not an inventory of settlement in the Upper Thames Valley during the late Iron Age and early

Roman periods (see Lambrick 1992:82, figure 27 for a timeline and catalogue of settlement in the region), and that some non-contemporaneous sites have also been included in the synopsis because they helped to give form to ideas developed in this thesis.

4.5.1. Sites on the floodplain

1. *Farmoor*

Farmoor is not a contemporaneous site, but it is referred to throughout this study in terms of its environmental analysis and its characterization as a pastoral settlement, and is thus included here. Farmoor is situated on the floodplain and the first gravel terrace. The site was originally occupied in the early Iron Age on the first gravel terrace and was re-occupied in the middle Iron Age with a more substantial settlement encompassing both the floodplain and the edge of the first gravel terrace. It appears that the habitation area of the site was on the floodplain and the first gravel terrace was used for the storage of animals. It is thought that this settlement was entirely pastoral and quite possibly seasonally occupied as there is environmental evidence for seasonal flooding. The settlement was soon abandoned and re-occupied on the first gravel terrace in the late Roman period. As with a number of settlements in this synopsis, Farmoor is most relevant to this study because of its environmental assessment, which was especially prescient as excavation was undertaken in the 1970s.

References: Lambrick and Robinson 1979

2. *Mingies Ditch*

Mingies Ditch was situated on the floodplain. The site was occupied primarily during the middle Iron Age c 380-110bc. The settlement consisted of paddocks, ditched enclosures and a variety of gullies, which are thought to have contained structures. The economy was primarily pastoral and evidence suggests that horse rearing was an established part of the economy. The site is especially notable for its state of preservation, particularly

of some of the houses: “Mingies Ditch was the best-preserved Iron Age settlement and one of the most suitable sites for environmental archaeology so far excavated in the Upper Thames Valley” (Allen and Robinson 1993:2). The site was abandoned around 50-100 years later, possibly due to a rise in the water table, but the area was re-occupied in the early Roman period when enclosure boundaries from an adjacent settlement cut through part of the long abandoned Iron Age settlement.

References: Allen and Robinson 1993

4.5.2. Sites on the first gravel terrace

3. *Appleford Field*

Appleford Field was occupied in the Bronze Age, the early and middle Iron Ages and the Roman period as of the second century. The early Roman settlement is characterized by enclosures and an elaborate series of trackways. It is thought that there were a number of households living at the settlement and that the settlement represents “a nucleated or ‘village’ settlement, as opposed to a single farmstead” (Hinchliffe and Thomas 1980:110).

References: Hinchliffe and Thomas 1980

4. **Old Shifford Farm*

Old Shifford Farm lies on the first gravel terrace on the edge of the floodplain. The site was occupied from the late Iron Age into the early Roman period. Three phases have been identified for the late Iron Age/early Roman site, although occupation is thought to have been continuous. Settlement began as an open group of circular gullies and a D-shape ditch and, over time, evolved into an enclosed settlement with two ditched house sites. The structure of the entrance to the early Roman period settlement suggests the corralling of livestock. The economy for each phase is thought to have been largely pastoral, although there is evidence that plants may have been cultivated at the settlement. The site was

abandoned in the late first or early second century; a new settlement was established just north of the earlier settlement towards the end of the third century AD.

References: site report: Hey 1996.

5. **Claydon Pike*

Claydon Pike is situated on the edge of the first terrace on a series of gravel islands. The site covers about 100 hectares and was occupied throughout the Iron Age and Roman periods. The late Iron Age settlement comprised a number of discrete zones: a trackway that went into the domestic area of the settlement, a series of paddocks and an outer area of rectangular enclosures. The settlement was completely reorganized in the first century AD, when a number of what appear to be substantial structures were erected, and an extensive field system was established. The site is characterized by a series of platforms that enabled continuous settlement (as opposed to seasonal) despite its low-lying landscape. Settlement during the late Iron Age and early Roman period was largely confined to a single platform. The settlement was primarily pastoral and evidence suggests that it was a part of a series of 'ranches' that specialized in the rearing of animals, in particular horses. The settlement was completely reorganized at the end of the first century AD, and expanded onto other platforms. The economic emphasis switched from animal rearing to haymaking and it has been suggested that there was some form of military presence at the settlement.

References: site report not published, for published commentary on the site see Miles and Palmer 1983a; 1983b; Jones and Miles 1979; Wilson 1996b:52-55; Miles 1983; Miles 1984:197-203; Lambrick 1990:22-3.

6. *Thornhill Farm*

Thornhill Farm is located 1km west of Claydon Pike. The site was occupied during the first century AD and was abandoned towards the end of the century, around the time that its neighbour Claydon Pike expanded. The site had two settlement areas that were structured

differently. The first settlement area appears to have been used seasonally and comprises a large number of animal pens and a small-scale occupation area. The second settlement area is more substantial, and at least four possible structures have been identified. The structures are surrounded by the animal pens and then enclosures. “The planning [of the second settlement] seems more cohesive and dictated by physical constraints as would be expected on a permanently occupied site” (Palmer and Hey 1989:33). Evidence points to a specialized pastoral settlement or ‘ranch’ with an emphasis on horse rearing. The settlement is thought to have had a small resident population and is considered ‘native’, ‘unRomanized’ and of low status. The settlement was abandoned towards the end the first century AD and by the early second century a Roman road cut through the former settlement

References: post-excavation analysis is in progress; see Palmer and Hey 1989; Lambrick 1990:22-3 for discussion of site

7. Watkins Farm

Watkins Farm lies on the first gravel terrace on an island of gravel that was higher than the surrounding land. The site was first occupied in the middle Iron Age and again in the Roman period beginning in the late first/early second centuries. The economy for both the middle Iron Age and early Roman settlements is thought to have been pastoral, and there are suggestions that occupation of the site may have been “seasonal or sporadic” (Allen 1990:81). The main circular enclosure of the middle Iron Age settlement was re-used in the early Roman period and a number of more rectangular enclosure ditches were constructed outside the main enclosure. At the early Roman period settlement, a second habitation area (site B) has been identified, consisting of a single ‘house-sized’ oval enclosure with large concentrations of pottery. In comparing the pottery from the two areas of settlement, higher numbers of fine wares were recovered from site A, which according to Allen (1990), could indicate that the “enclosures on Site A were being run from Site B”.

References: site report: Allen 1990

4.5.3. Sites on the second gravel terrace

8. *Abingdon Vineyards*

The site is situated at the confluence of the Thames and the river Ock, under what is now the town of Abingdon. Main occupation started in the early Iron Age and by the middle Iron Age a 'village' was established, with a minimum of nine circular house sites and possibly other structures. There are suggestions that in the late Iron Age the settlement had become an *oppidum* as evidenced by the extent of traded goods and the construction of a 10m wide 3m deep 'defensive' ditch around the settlement. The circular houses were replaced by rectangular and square enclosures in the early Roman period. The concentration of rural sites around Abingdon, together with the presence of trade goods, early Roman coins and high percentage of fine ware suggests that the settlement continued to function as a local trading centre. The settlement was abandoned in the mid-second century.

References: site report is not published, see Miles 1986b:3.

9. *Gravelly Guy*

Gravelly Guy is situated on the edge of the second gravel terrace and as there is no floodplain terrace at this point in the valley, it converges with the floodplain. The site was first settled in the early Iron Age. The Iron Age 'village', consisting of as many as 30 houses, was densely packed into a 170m by 30m strip of land between a boundary of common grazing land on one side and arable land at the edge of the gravel terrace on the other. The boundary between the settlement and the common land was strictly observed and is thought to have had a ritual association as it conforms to bounded space around Bronze Age Devil's Quoits. The 'village' utilized the arable land, but the settlement was primarily pastoral, and is viewed as part of the co-operative farming regime described earlier. In the late Iron Age, the settlement was abandoned and a new settlement was established over the former boundary of 'common land'. This settlement, which was occupied into the Roman

period, had domestic structures, paddocks, wells and “strange arena-like features” (Lambrick 1990:18).

References: site report is not published, for summary of site see Lambrick 1990; Limbrey and Robinson 1988:138; Allen 2000:12-3, 21.

10. **Barton Court Farm*

Barton Court Farm lies on the edge of the second gravel terrace. The site was initially occupied in the late Neolithic. The area was re-occupied in the late Iron Age with a fairly substantial settlement of possibly two households and various animal pens. The economy of the settlement is believed to have been mixed. In the early Roman period, a new settlement was established over the late Iron Age settlement. It consisted of a single rectangular house and large animal pen, and the economy is also thought to have been mixed. This settlement was abandoned in the second century and a small villa was established on the site in the late third century.

References: site report: Miles 1986b; see also Jones 1985

11. *Ashville Trading Estate*

The site is situated on the second gravel terrace, 2.7 km west southwest of Barton Court Farm. The site was originally occupied in the Bronze Age. Three phases of occupation were identified for the Iron Age, which roughly correspond to the early, middle and late Iron Age periods. Occupation was most intense during the middle Iron Age phase of the site where there is evidence of a variety of post-hole structures, pits and ditches. The late Iron Age phase of the site consists of a series of ditches thought to delineate a field system and pits, which suggest that although habitation has not been identified on site, it was most likely nearby. The late Iron Age pottery at Ashville was recently re-assessed and it is now believed that the late Iron Age settlement extended into the early Roman period (Henig and Booth 2000:107). The site was occupied into the second century and was

followed by a hiatus in occupation until the late Roman period. The economy for the site appears mixed with evidence of small-scale domestic industries such as metal working, leather working and weaving. In reference to this study's emphasis and the trajectory of Roman archaeology, the excavation is notable for its attention to specialist reports; it is interesting that the Preface anticipates that some will view the length of these reports as "excessive".

References: site report: Parrington 1978; Henig and Booth 2000:107.

12. **Roughground Farm*

Roughground Farm is situated on the second gravel terrace and is geographically similar to Barton Court Farm. The site is situated 2.5 km northwest of Claydon Pike. The site was occupied sporadically in the late Neolithic, late Bronze Age and early Iron Age. The first major phase of occupation was an early Roman settlement. Although a large part of the early Roman settlement was excavated in the 1950s, the excavator's philosophy was similar to the O.A.U., in that the aim was in widespread excavation of the settlement. Early Roman period features were identified in a number of areas of the site, although the main occupation area appears to have been bounded by a rectangular ditched enclosure. Inside the enclosure were pits, ovens and possible animal pens and a series of concentric circular gullies which probably contained structures. A mixed farming economy has been suggested for the settlement through the presence of querns and storage pits along with stock enclosures. The settlement was re-organized in the early second century when the main occupation area shifts and a 'villa' was constructed in its place.

References: site report: Allen 1993; see also Miles 1984:203-205.

4.6. Conclusion

The Upper Thames Valley is a region characterized by political movement and transformation (Miles 1982:56) and it is, for the purposes of this study, ideal for the consideration of the dynamics of imperialism and its effects on native households. The objectives of the Oxford Archaeological Unit, which emphasize the large-scale excavation of settlements and extensive environmental assessment, together with a condition of preservation that forces analysis beyond the 'house' are similarly ideal for the study of the social contexts of the artefacts and remains associated with eating and drinking.

What follows is an analysis of four sites in the Upper Thames Valley – Barton Court Farm, Roughground Farm, Old Shifford Farm and Claydon Pike. Diversity in native type settlements or evidence of '*native discontinuity*' (see Meadows 1997:33; 1999) is often subsumed by settlements that are better preserved and ultimately more Roman-like. Through the consideration of the social contexts of diet and culinary practices at each site during the late Iron Age and early Roman periods, I will argue that the relationship between discontinuity of settlement and Romanized elements is integral to questions regarding the effects of imperialism; the association is complex, and is one that will be different for each settlement in this study. It will become clear that the study of social change in early Roman Britain will not be resolved using a template of Romanization.

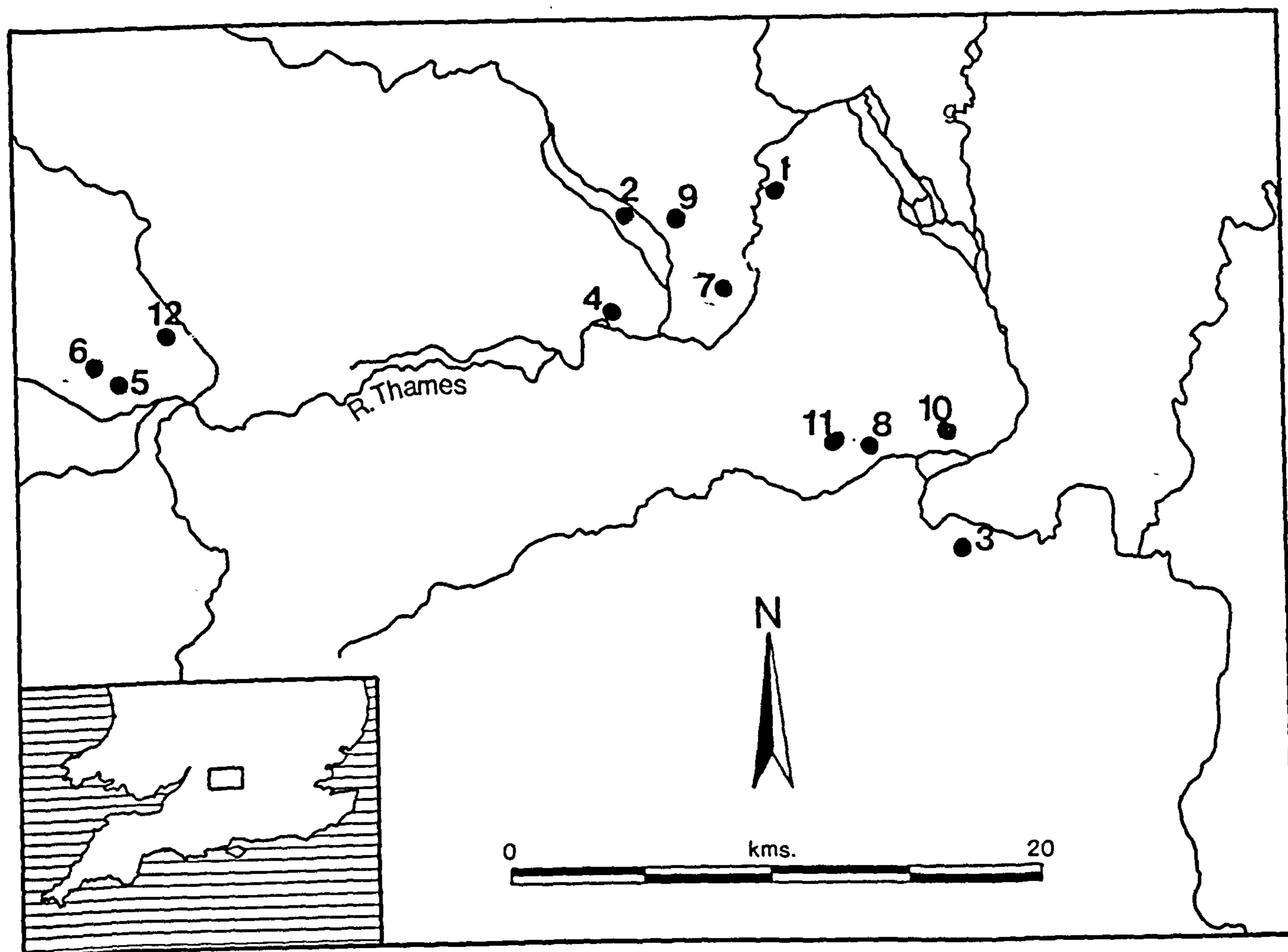


Figure 4.1 The Upper Thames Valley and sites mentioned in this study (by C. Merrony)
 (1. Farmoor 2. Mingies Ditch 3. Appleford Field 4. Old Shifford Farm 5. Claydon Pike
 6. Thornhill Farm 7. Watkins Farm 8. Abingdon Vineyards 9. Gravelly Guy 10. Barton
 Court Farm 11. Ashville Trading Estate 12. Roughground Farm)

Chapter 5

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Chapter 5

Barton Court Farm

5.1. Introduction

The site of Barton Court Farm is located on the edge of the second gravel terrace, 59.5m above sea level, near the confluence of the rivers Thames and Ock. It was a multi-period site, inhabited during the Neolithic, late Iron Age, early Roman, late Roman and Anglo-Saxon periods. Barton Court Farm was my introduction to 'native' eating and drinking practices in the Upper Thames Valley. My approach to it structured my analysis of the other sites in this thesis, although it does not constitute an 'archetype' against which others were compared.

This chapter will commence with a summary of the excavation of, and configuration of, the late Iron Age and early Roman settlements at Barton Court Farm. Following this, the social practices which revolve around eating and drinking will be explored: first, through an examination of the implements and ingredients used in both the preparation and consumption of food and drink; and second, through the consideration of the various processes involved in the distribution of these remains on the site. The chapter will conclude with a discussion of my interpretation of the excavated material, within the context of imperialism.

5.2. The Excavation

The Oxford Archaeological Unit, under the direction of David Miles, excavated Barton Court Farm in the 1970s. The site report was completed by 1980 and published in 1986. The excavation was originally designed as a three-month rescue project conducted in

anticipation of development. The initial aim of the excavation, in view of funding and time constraints, was to “reveal the sequence of occupation and elements of settlement organization” (Miles 1986b:xiii). The site turned out to be more complex than was originally projected because in addition to late Roman settlement, evidence of late Iron Age, early Roman and Saxon settlement was identified. As the result of a slump in the housing market and the reorganization of local government leading to the establishment of an Oxford Archaeological Committee, the excavation was extended and “modified to take account of the new circumstances and of the developing archaeological interests” (Miles 1986b:xiii). Miles provides additional insight into the excavations’ rationale: “The approach to the excavation was essentially a pragmatic one, conducted on a year-to-year basis, stimulated by a certain amount of wishful thinking but governed by very little medium-to-long-term planning” (Miles 1986b:microfiche:3:A3). One of the ‘developing archaeological interests’ at the time was the excavation and sampling of biological material. Bob Wilson (zoologist), Mark Robinson (entomologist/botanist) and Martin Jones (botanist) were commissioned to conduct an environmental assessment as well as be a part of the excavation process, although Miles cautions that “everyone concerned would admit that these were very much the primitive pioneering days of environmental archaeology in Oxfordshire” (1986b:xii; see also comments by Robinson 1994:105).

The site at Barton Court Farm was identified through a series of crop marks, which suggested coverage of about 2 hectares and the possibility of three phases of occupation. Until the 1970s, the site was contained under three agricultural fields. The site was partly stripped by hand, but the depth of the soil (0.2-0.3 m) mitigated the possibility of stratigraphic evidence and the majority of the site was stripped by JCB. It was noted in the report that “Two workers armed with shovels were able to observe the topsoil stripping and cope with any loose material” and that “This process left a clean undisturbed gravel surface in which features mostly showed very clearly” (Miles 1986b:microfiche 3:A1). Apparently, ‘blank areas’ were re-evaluated when post-holes appeared only “after persistent and careful searching” (Miles 1986b:microfiche 3:A3).

Approximately two-thirds of the late Iron Age enclosure was excavated as well as a small trench in the northeast corner. As there was not much re-cutting of features and the pottery was not stratified into groups of sequential pottery types, it is believed that the settlement

was occupied for one hundred years or fewer. Occupation began in the late first century BC/early first century AD. It seems likely that the enclosure ditches were open throughout the occupation of the settlement, based on their shape, the gradual accumulation of silt, the positioning of animal remains and pottery, and the deposition of human burials within the ditches. The ditches at the Iron Age settlement had silted up before the construction of the early Roman settlement, so it is possible that a number of the features were not obvious when the new settlement was constructed. The early Roman settlement was divided into two areas and the majority of the southern area of the settlement (which contained all of the features) was excavated; thirty percent of the northern area of the site, thought to be an animal pen, was also excavated. The early Roman settlement is also believed to have been short-lived because of the lack of re-cutting of features. This phase of occupation began towards the latter half of the first century AD. (Miles 1986b:micro fiche 3)

5.2.1. The site (see Figure 5.1.)

The late Iron Age settlement

The late Iron Age settlement appears to have had two occupational foci, one situated inside the main enclosure, the other just outside it. Both occupation areas were defined by the association of two closely connected structures: a circular gully and a series of irregular post-holes. David Miles, the author of the site report, has suggested that these roughly contemporary occupation areas may indicate the expansion of a single household over time, separated functional areas or possibly two households of differing status (1986b:28). There are a number of enclosures within the settlement, which separate the two occupation areas and possibly define a common area that contained animal pens and a large group of pits. The artefacts and animal remains found in the gullies and in the associated pits, as well as the presence of hearths, daub and the proximity of human burials, helped to distinguish the settlement as a habitation site.

The early Roman period settlement

In the early Roman period, the settlement was reorganized on a completely different alignment and none of the earlier features were reused. The early Roman settlement had only one occupation focus, but the size of the principal rectangular structure – “five times that of an average Iron Age house” (Miles 1986b:30) – suggests that it may have accommodated a larger or more consolidated household (Miles 1986b:30). As there is no obvious chronological break in the sequence of artefacts, and the early Roman period settlement was constructed in the same location as the late Iron Age settlement, it has been suggested that occupation (and possibly ownership) was continuous (Miles 1986b:49; see also Ferrell 1995:136). It is possible, therefore, that some of the material found in early Roman period contexts is residual. The types of artefacts and remains found in the house-slots and surrounding site enclosure, particularly wall plaster, are again consistent with habitation, although the nature of deposition for the two settlements was quite different.

There is only minimal evidence of manufacturing at each settlement. Storage facilities suggest domestic use, as evidence is lacking for the storage (and hence redistribution) of a large surplus of agricultural produce in either period (Miles 1986b:45). The biological data from the two settlements indicates an integrated mixed economy, with production and consumption of foods such as cereals, meat, cheese and milk. The early Roman period settlement is viewed as a non-Romanized settlement conveying a strong sense of native continuity (Miles 1986b:50).

5.2.2. Site reports, microfiche and archives

My interpretation of the site is based on the site report and accompanying microfiche, and the site archive held at the Oxfordshire Museums Store in Standlake, Oxfordshire. The published site report is a summary of the excavation; all of the details of the excavation and ‘supporting evidence’ are presented on microfiche. Miles adds, “It is hoped that by publishing in this way we can provide detailed information as cheaply and flexibly as possible” (1986b:xii). Together, the published report and microfiche provide details that are often filtered out of site reports (see similar comments by Fulford and Huddleston 1991;

Hodder 1989). The organization of the microfiche is also atypical. Rather than organizing the finds according to material, they were organized into functional categories (contra Wachter and McWhirr 1982; Stead and Rigby 1986; Partridge 1981). The report acknowledges that such a format is not unproblematic:

There are obvious dangers in this method in that the function of objects is not always obvious or one object may have been used for several purposes. Nevertheless, it is hoped that this method is valid and aids the interpretation of the site (Miles 1986b:microfiche 5:A1).

The finds were organized in relation to “primary production activities, secondary production and consumption” (Miles 1986b:microfiche 5:A1). The site archive contains information not included in publication and in order to clarify the contextual associations and get closer to the process of analysis and organization, I determined that the site archives for each case study would be essential to my research. In order to expand upon the work previously conducted by the various specialists, it was necessary to enter into a computerized database the original pottery and bone records for both the late Iron Age and early Roman sites, as they existed in written form only.

Hodder (1989) has been critical of the missing dialogue between specialist and excavator/editor in both published site reports and site archives. While much of the dialogue is missing from the reports and archives featured in this thesis, as mentioned above, for Barton Court Farm we have the microfiche element of the site report. In addition, a number of the specialists involved in the interpretation of excavated material in the Upper Thames Valley are prolific publishers and their opinions and thoughts can be found in other published sources. In specific reference to Barton Court Farm, Martin Jones, who analysed the plant remains, has commented elsewhere (Jones 1985) on how the botanical sampling strategy employed at the site – focusing on particular features, such as ovens, hearths etc. (after Dennell 1974) – was unproductive: “Unfortunately, the resulting analysis shows no clear relationship between these inferred functions and the composition of their associated plant assemblages” (Jones 1985:111). Comments by environmental specialist Mark Robinson and animal bone specialist Bob Wilson, whose works are featured throughout this thesis, provide a humanized backdrop to the creation of species lists and their interpretation.

Robinson (1994), from his perspective as an environmental archaeologist who was the director of the excavation of Mingies Ditch, wryly concludes:

Perhaps one of the greatest benefits to environmental archaeology of having an environmental archaeologist directing an excavation is that it forces on an environmental archaeologist a much broader understanding of archaeology and the process of excavation (1994:111).

Wilson (1994) argues that the “Documentation of publication is mainly a record of probable influences upon the work of a researcher and differs from the record and intensity of investigation undertaken in the Upper Thames Valley” (1994:58). His frustration with the ‘7 to 12 year’ hiatus between the completion of excavation and publication, and the effect that this has had on particular research interests, in his case the spatial patterning of animal bones, is clearly apparent and is probably shared by many specialists:

All this seems symptomatic of the frustrations of zooarchaeological work from which a significant proportion of my colleagues have resigned from their contract employment during the last year or so. The longer the reports on the spatial analysis of bones wait for publication the more one must conclude that wider archaeological interests gain little from the investment of thousands of pounds spent by the Ancient Monuments Lab on animal bone work (1994:65; see also his remarks in Wilson 1995; 1996b:77-79).

The underlying passion, evident in the words of many of the specialists who publish outside the site report, has had a particular bearing on the tone of this thesis which I hope, as is intended, is both appreciative and respectful in its re-examination.

5.3. The Archaeology of Food and Drink Consumption at Barton Court Farm

This section will commence with a discussion on the nature of the remains of eating and drinking, to include the methodologies and conclusions of the various specialists, as well as my own analysis of the data. The distinction between the work of the various specialists and my own analysis will be outlined at the beginning of the relevant subsections. The artefacts and remains are grouped as follows: ‘*containers*’ – which include pottery and glass, ‘*other*

implements' which includes metal, stone and clay artefacts and finally *'ingredients'* which include animal remains and plants.

5.3.1. The containers

The specialists' reports – the pottery

The pottery was analysed by David Miles with Diane Hofdahl and John Moore. A type series was established using complete vessels and rim sherds. Four fabric types were identified for the Iron Age pottery using criteria set out by De Roche (1978) at the late Iron Age settlement at Ashville Trading Centre. The early Roman period assemblage includes the late Iron Age fabrics and additional fabrics such as grey, white and oxidized wares that typify pottery of the early Roman period. In the microfiche report the pottery found in particular features for both period settlements was listed; in the cases of a discrepancy between what was listed on microfiche and what was listed in the primary report, the primary record was used. All of my analysis of the pottery is based on the primary records. Miles *et al.* also conducted some statistical tests on the pottery in order to establish whether there was a difference in pottery forms between the two periods. They established that there was 'some similarity' between the two assemblages (Miles *et al.* 1986: microfiche 7:C4). My findings are different because Miles *et al.* based their numbers on early Roman period pottery rather than the pottery recovered at the early Roman period settlement where both native and Roman period ware was present.

The majority of the pottery came from 'open' enclosure ditches and gullies, with a small amount of 'closed' groups of pottery found primarily in pits. Miles *et al.* used vessel size, form, decoration and fabric to differentiate kitchenware from tableware for both the late Iron Age and early Roman periods. This type of distinction for the Iron Age pottery, was not, however, incorporated into the published report.

At Barton Court Farm, the only containers found in stratified contexts, and that relates to the preparation and consumption of food and drink, were ceramic. The present discussion will accordingly concentrate on pottery with the proviso that glass, metal and wooden containers may have been present (see discussion in Chapter 3 section 3.4.3.).

5.3.2. The containers at the late Iron Age settlement

The pottery at the late Iron Age settlement

Form and function

71.6 kg of pottery was recovered and identified for the late Iron Age phase of Barton Court Farm. As with other late Iron Age sites in the area, wheel-thrown jars and bowls were more common than the hand-made variety. The majority of the vessels were locally produced, although some pottery (butt beakers) was imported from the southeast. The bulk of the late Iron Age assemblage consists of a variety of jars and bowls and vessels that fall in between the 'jar' and 'bowl' categorizations (see Figure 5.2.). The designation of 'bowl' or 'jar' is difficult when not much of the body profile is present, and is even more problematic with the late Iron Age pottery as much of the pottery straddles the cut-off point between the two forms (D. Miles pers. comm.). What is particularly noticeable in the late Iron Age pottery assemblage is the high proportion of bowls in comparison to jars recovered at the settlement. A number of these bowls, especially the necked bowls, were probably used in the preparation and cooking of food (see De Roche 1978:71) – two necked bowls had perforations through the neck which suggests that the vessels may have been suspended, possibly over an open fire – nevertheless, tableware type bowls are prominent (see below). Many of the bowls are, for example, burnished, which could have been partly for aesthetic purposes rather than as a sealant (Oetgen 1984:41).

Large storage-type vessels are distinguishable, although in light of Allen's findings at Watkins Farm (see Chapter 3 section 3.4.3.), their exclusive association with storage is at least questionable. Sizeable proportions of the jars had perforated bases and are thought to have been used for either cheese making, distilling, steaming (D. Miles pers. comm.), or possibly as flowerpots and colanders. It was not possible to confirm which of the jars served as cooking pots since evidence of residues or sooting – often the only means of specifying a cooking pot (Woods 1986:158) – was not recorded in the primary pottery record. Woods has observed, however, that Iron Age and Roman cooking pots generally had flat bases (which suggests that they were placed on hard surfaces or tables (Barley 1994:33)), were made out of a coarse fabric, and had pronounced, often everted, rims (1986:159-163). Woods has also

determined that open bowls would not have been suitable for cooking (1984:28). The two main fabrics found at the late Iron Age settlement – calcareous and sandy coarse wares – were both used for vessels that fit these characteristics (see also Woods 1986:163); in fact, most forms, including the high proportion of bowls, and the beakers and decorated vessels were made out of both fabrics. As was discussed above, the pottery specialists initially designated some of the late Iron Age pottery types – beakers, cordoned and necked bowls, and dishes – as tableware. These vessel types comprise 35% of the identified pottery assemblage, which is a sizeable percentage if the designation at all approximates their suggested usage. The functional distinction between tableware and kitchenware is not categorical. What is apparent is the sheer variety of forms and sizes of vessels, which are not easily characterized as either kitchenware or tableware. Nor does the pottery appear to conform to one particular type of consumption practice, such as large bowls and dishes indicating communal eating. The use of beakers – whose diameters range from 14cm to 40cm – however, may indicate communal drinking. Clearly, any further attempt to refine the distinctions between the pottery types requires consideration in terms of the ingredients and in terms of their contextual associations.

Rim diameters

Although I initially sought to establish a range of small, medium, and large sized vessels (so as to incorporate identified vessel types without rim diameters into the analysis of function and its relationship to size), what I instead found was a wide variability in size of the same form. For example, the rim diameters of a series of ‘large’ storage type vessels ranged from 14cm to 30cm, a group of burnished globular bowls had rim diameters which ranged from 11cm to 30cm, and the rim diameters of a series of cordoned bowls (thought tentatively to be tableware by the pottery specialist) ranged from 11cm to 26cm. This obviously made any attempt to identify a specific pattern of consumption for particular types of vessels (such as large or small cooking-type pots or small or large serving-type bowls) extremely difficult. Histograms of the rim diameters of jars and bowls revealed a range of small to large bowls, skewed towards the small to medium end of the scale (see Figure 5.3.), and small to large sized jars, which had a peak of medium sized jars (see Figure 5.4.). Histograms of tableware (see Figure 5.5.) indicate a similar range and peak in size as was found for the bowls.

Fabrics

Four fabrics were identified for the late Iron Age pottery. Fabric 1, is defined by its calcareous inclusions; fabric 2, is a sandy ware due to quartz inclusions; fabric 3, has flint inclusions; and the fourth fabric was used to make butt and girth beakers and is considered a 'fine ware' fabric. The calcareous and sandy fabrics were the most common fabrics identified and, as was stated above, most vessel forms occur in both fabrics. The only distinction between the two main fabrics was that bowls and dishes were more commonly made of the calcareous fabric (see Figure 5.6.).

It is necessary to make one final note on the pottery recovered from the late Iron Age settlement. Two sherds of samian ware and two amphora sherds were found in the top layers of four pits. These pieces are probably residual although one of the pieces of a Drag 18 dish is pre-Flavian and one of the Dressel 2-4 amphora sherds is dated to the first half of first century AD. It is conceivable that these types of vessels were used towards the end of the occupation of the settlement.

5.3.3. Other implements at the late Iron Age settlement

Only a few artefacts were recovered that have an association with the preparation or consumption of food and drink. Fired clay slabs were found at the base of a number of pits and Miles suggests that they may represent hearths or parching ovens (1986b:6). An iron knife was recovered at the late Iron Age settlement, which may or may not have had a culinary use.

5.3.4. The Ingredients

The specialists' reports – the bones

The animal bones recovered from the various phases at Barton Court Farm were well preserved but quite fragmented. Over 23,000 bones and shells were recovered for the whole

site, of which 37% of the handpicked bones and 3% of the sieved bones were identified to species. The bones in the majority of the features are believed to represent butchery and food refuse (Miles 1986b:29). The objective of the bone specialist, Bob Wilson, upon identification of the species, was to look at the distribution of particular body parts (head, feet, body) in particular feature types (pits and ditches) for each period (Wilson 1986:microfiche 8:B4). Wilson has conducted similar types of analysis for a variety of sites in the Upper Thames Valley, and has observed a number of trends in the distribution of bones around settlements (1989; see also discussion in Chapter 3 section 3.4.4.). He did not identify any major distribution and butchery patterns at the site for the periods in question.

The specialists' reports – the plant remains

Martin Jones analysed the plant remains at Barton Court Farm. As was mentioned above Jones was not completely satisfied with the sampling strategy employed, which rather than being randomized, focused on specific features. Just short of 50% of the cereal grains recovered at Barton Court Farm were identified by species. Plant remains were not recovered for the early Roman settlement and were only found in two contexts at the late Iron Age settlement. The processing stages immediately before consumption are difficult to identify archaeologically (Jones 1991:25) and direct evidence for preparation and consumption, whether milling, rolling, or cracking, is absent. Additionally, the artefacts commonly associated with the preparation of grains for consumption were not found in either late Iron Age or early Roman contexts. In this section, I will primarily comment on Jones' findings, placing particular emphasis on the wild plants that are associated with consumption.

5.3.5. The ingredients at the late Iron Age settlement

The animal bones at the late Iron Age settlement

Species representation

Before we proceed, it is necessary to comment briefly on the use of M.N.I. (minimum

number of individuals) or N.I.S.P. (number of identified specimens) as measurements of species frequencies. There are problems with using both types of measurements: N.I.S.P. favours larger species of animals whose bones are generally more fragmented and M.N.I. tends to exaggerate the significance of infrequent species (Payne 1972; Maltby 1979:5-7). As I do not consider species representation as necessarily a reflection of the whole animal population, in this thesis, I focus on the N.I.S.P. for each species.

The N.I.S.P of the four main domestics at the late Iron Age settlement as established by Wilson, are summarized in Figure 5.7.. My calculation of N.I.S.P. (see Figure 5.8.) is slightly different from that of Wilson because there is some divergence between the inclusion/exclusion of a small number of contexts (my calculations do not include teeth and animal burials, and articulated bones are counted as one.) I wish to reiterate, however, that in addition to the many taphonomic factors that may affect species population and abundance ratios, cultural practices such as feasting, animal sacrifice and butchery techniques have a direct effect on the configuration of different species.

Wilson has determined that cattle, and particularly sheep, both tended to be killed at an early age, and implies that steers, bulls and rams were killed off early in life, and that cows and ewes made up a large proportion of herds and flocks. This led him to suggest that the age and sex ratios of the cattle and sheep could indicate a propensity towards dairying (Wilson 1986). This might explain the prevalence of possible cheese-making vessels found at the late Iron Age settlement. Bogucki (1984) has looked at ceramics, particularly sieves, as well as kill rates, to highlight the possible importance of dairying in the Neolithic. In looking at examples from other periods, he found that sieves were also common at later pre-historic sites where pastoralism was an important part of the economy (1984:20). Alternatively, as was discussed in Chapter 3 (section 3.4.3.), the prevalence of young animals could indicate that there was an intensity of ritualized consumption (Schuster Keswani 1994:261) or feasting at the settlement. If this was indeed the case, it is possible that the presence of burnt stones and charcoal in a number pits (Gomez de Solo 1993; Vencl 1994:310) and the proliferation of vessels with perforated bases (sieves?) might indicate that alcohol was produced and consumed at the settlement (Gomez de Solo 1993:191).

Butchery practices

Wilson did not emphasize the butchery patterns of the various species except for animal burials. The following discussion on the butchery practices is largely my own assessment of the butchery notations found in the primary bones records and as such is quite detailed so as to illustrate the basis for my interpretation of the consumption practices.

Most body parts of the main domesticates were represented, which suggests that whole carcasses were present and butchered on site. The presence of fragmented and butchered skulls and jaw bones of the main domesticates in domestic deposits is seen to indicate that they were used for food (Maltby 1979:38). Butchery marks were characterized by knife cuts and chop marks. Marks on the three main domesticates – cattle, sheep and pigs – indicate the cutting and chopping of particular joints of meat and the stripping of meat from the bone.

For cattle, cut marks to the mandible and hyoid suggest that the tongue and cheek meat were removed and possibly consumed. Distal chops to the humerus and proximal chops to the radius point to dismemberment at the elbow joint¹ (for similar points of disarticulation see Crabtree 1989:101-2; Wilson 1978:120). The pelvis is extensively butchered with chops through the ilium and occasionally the acetabulum. Of the hind limbs, the tibia is primarily chopped mid-shaft, possibly to separate the meatier section of the tibia from the less meaty lower portion (Crabtree 1989:104 and for similar points of dismemberment see page 102). The metacarpals and metatarsals appear to have been disarticulated at the ankle and wrist joints; a number of these bones were also chopped mid-shaft. Many of the long bones of both cattle and sheep were chopped mid-shaft, which could result from the chopping of bones into sizes appropriate for cooking pots. This is also suggested by the high number of bowls found on the site indicating the serving of stews (D.C. Wilson 1994:59). Cuts to the astragalus and the calcaneus of both cattle and sheep point to skinning. Some of the long bones and metacarpal and metatarsus of cattle and sheep were split which might mark the extraction of bone marrow. There is significantly less butchery of the skulls of sheep than cows with cut marks and chopping primarily associated with horn and head removal. Sheep

appear similarly disarticulated at the elbow joints, and the tibia is also the most extensively butchered part of the hind limb with chops occurring at both ends rather than mid-shaft.

The butchery of pigs is difficult to interpret as in most cases no distinct pattern emerges. The most commonly butchered bones are the scapula and humerus with some butchery marks present on the pelvis and the ulna. Possible points of disarticulation are at the proximal end of the ulna, the pelvis, and at the neck of the scapula. There are also suggestions that pigs might have been reared for both consumption and sacrifice, and that pigs that were sacrifice were not consumed (see 'special deposits' below). It is unclear whether the minimal butchery of horses – a couple of nicks and/or cuts to two mandibles and upper vertebrae, broken long bones, and cuts to the pelvis – represents actual butchery for consumption or for processing. Two dog bones were butchered – cuts to one mandible and a broken ulna – although the significance of this is not clear (see also Wilson 1978:122). It is particularly interesting that of the four deer bones recovered (excluding four antlers) three of them have chop marks. The butchery of deer in the Iron Age is quite rare in the south of England in contrast with other parts of Britain, such as Scotland (Hingley 1995:186; Grant 1981:205).

Meat yields

In addition to the identification of possible butchery patterns I also divided butchered and non-butchered bones into groups which approximate the amount of meat procured, with group 'A' representing the highest meat yield and group 'C' the lowest (see Figure 5.9) (after Uerpmann 1973; see also Lange 1996; Maltby 1979:7). These meat groups are of course culturally laden and perhaps are more representative of current westernized meat preferences (see discussions in Huelsbeck 1991; Lyman 1987:269). The allocation of the bones into the various groups may not reflect actual consumption, but rather, as has been noted above, the ritualized deposition of particular animal parts, such as head and feet bones (Schuster Keswani 1994). Nonetheless, the grouping of the bones in this manner does facilitate the detection of body part patterning.

¹ It should be noted, however, that as the proximal head of the humerus rarely survives it is perhaps not surprising that evidence of butchery is primarily in the distal part (Maltby 1989:76). Chops to the proximal end

For the two main domesticates, cattle and sheep, we can see a similar distribution of body parts, with the highest percentage of bones from the moderate meat-yielding group (B); cattle do have a slightly higher percentage of bones from group 'A'. Pig bones fall primarily in the meat yielding groups, particularly group B and a high proportion of horse bones fall into the non-meat-yielding group of bones. These findings complement a number of the observations on the various species made above. The distribution of sheep and cattle bones indicate that sheep and cattle were used for other purposes as well as for consumption, for their wool or hides or as draft animals for example. The apportionment of pig and horse bones also suggests that pigs were likely reared for consumption and possibly for sacrifice (see below) and that horses, whose consumption is less certain, quite possibly had other purposes.

Small quantities of fresh water fish (eel and pike), domestic fowl and wild birds were identified. Some of these species probably made a limited, though not necessarily incidental, contribution to the diet.

The plant remains at the late Iron Age settlement

The plant remains for the Iron Age farm were carbonized and found in just two contexts – a possible open hearth and at the base of a large pit. The two late Iron Age assemblages are characterized by cereals and a variety of weed species, many of which are thought to be edible, with very small amounts of chaff. The breakdown of the cereals, weed and chaff for the two contexts is:

- **Pit 311** - 49% cereals, 1% chaff, 50% weeds (total number of carbonized items = 5,580; volume of soil processed = 50 litres thus 111.6 items per litre).
- **Hearth 749** - 58% cereals, 0% chaff, 42% weeds (total number of carbonized items = 137; volume of soil processed = 50 litres thus 2.74 items per litre..)

The determination of the site economy based on just two plant samples is highly problematic. The characteristics of the plant samples suggest that grains might have been

of the radius, however, suggest that the point of dismemberment might still be the elbow joint.

produced at the settlement (Jones 1985:118) although the lack of evidence for large-scale storage, suggests that the crops were possibly consumed by the inhabitants (Miles 1986b:45; see also van der Veen 1991:357).

The consideration of edible weeds as part of the diet is generally overlooked (Hansen 1991:53). However, the analysis of Iron Age bread recovered from the site of Glastonbury contained fragments of wheat, hulled barley, wild oat, chess and common orache (Helbaek 1952:212). Helbaek argues that “The inclusion of wild oat and chess makes it doubtful whether one should classify these species as weeds in the ordinary sense” (1952:212). Indeed, of the weeds identified to species at the late Iron Age settlement, up to 48% of them are edible. The types of edible weed species recovered at the settlement and which therefore may have been collected include: celtic bean, fat hen, sorrel and knotgrass (both of which can be used as dyes), common orache, and black bindweed (Jones 1986a; Reynolds 1995:308; Godwin 1975:479). That these species were carbonized and found in settlement contexts further suggests that the various weed species were consumed (Reynolds 1995b).

Spelt wheat, which has good milling qualities, was the most common cereal, followed by six-row barley; bread wheat was also prominent, and emmer was present in small quantities. It should be noted, however, that similar types of arguments made against considering bone samples as representative of an animal population have also been made against assuming that the flora samples represent the actual order of importance of these crops (G. Jones 1991:63; Helbaek 1952:214). A similar composition of cereals was found at the late Iron Age site at the Ashville Trading Estate, Oxfordshire, although bread wheat was barely present in the late Iron Age at this site (Jones 1978:103). Sites such as Barton Court Farm are thought to “mark the beginnings of [bread wheat’s] rise from a minor crop in prehistory to prominence in the historical period” (Jones 1986b:120). Bread wheat is considered particularly labour intensive whereas rye and oats are both much less labour intensive. The distribution of these crops is relatively even in the Iron Age as compared to the Roman period where distribution is more irregular. Jones (1989) suggests that the apportionment of these three crops could be used as an indication of economic disparity, as opposed to an increase in economic potential during the Roman period as is more commonly thought (1989:133).

5.4. Food and Drink Consumption at the Early Roman Period Settlement

5.4.1. The containers at the early Roman period settlement

The pottery at the early Roman period settlement

Form, function and fabric

As with the late Iron Age phase, the containers recovered for the preparation and consumption of food and drink in the early Roman period were strictly ceramic (although see 'Glass' below). The early Roman pottery assemblage was smaller than the late Iron Age assemblage (41.6kg as compared to 71.6kg), possibly because there were fewer features at the settlement in which sherds could accumulate, but more likely due to manuring and cultural practices governing their deposition (see below). The assemblage (see Figure 5.10.) consisted of some Roman-like pottery and a few imports: small numbers of amphorae, mortaria, and decorated and plain samian cups, bowls and plates. All of these would likely have been acquired through local regional markets such as Abingdon or Dorchester (Miles *et al.* 1986b:microfiche 7:B6). The majority of the assemblage was made up of locally made bowls and jars over half of which (56%) were of the form and fabric found at the late Iron Age settlement (see Figure 5.11.). The distinction between jars and bowls is less blurred than in the earlier period, which suggests a more clearly defined specialization of vessel form and possibly function. Interestingly, there was an increase in the percentage of jars as compared to what was recovered at the late Iron Age settlement, which is counter to Millett's (1979) observations at other southern Roman period sites (a similar increase in the proportion of jars was found at some Roman period sites in northern England (Evans 1993:98, 103; 1995:61). Quite large cooking type jars were identified and there was an increase in the number of narrow-necked jars. A number of small to medium sized jars had lid seating, suggesting that they may have been used to store liquids or dry goods. Although some of the earlier pottery forms present at the early Roman settlement are probably residual, the quantities and contexts suggested that these wares continued to be used (Miles *et al.* 1986:microfiche 7:B4). Again, my calculations are slightly different from those of Miles and his colleagues who separated the native pottery from Roman pottery in the

analysis of pottery function (Miles *et al.* 1986:microfiche 7:C3-C4) although as stated above, native pottery continued to be used at the early Roman settlement.

There were, however, a number of significant differences between the two assemblages. There was a substantial reduction over time in the number of vessels with perforated bases, which could mark a decline in cheese making, distilling, or steaming (see discussion of animal bones below). There was certainly a contrast between the types of vessels used for the consumption of liquids. The presence of samian cups and wine amphorae, together with beakers and narrow-necked vessels, suggests a more varied drinking practice, possibly involving communal passing of beer-filled beakers as well as individualized drinking of wine. The presence of tall drinking vessels might indicate that people either stood or sat upright while drinking and cups might indicate that the consumers were in a reclining position (Evans 1981:529; Bédoyère 1989:88). An increase in locally produced shallow bowls and dishes and samian bowls and plates could imply a different emphasis on the serving or presentation of food at the early Roman period settlement. Plain and decorated samian ware was recovered at a ratio of 2:1 (see Willis 1997 for opposite pattern on rural sites in northern Britain). Two types of decorated samian (Drag 37 and Drag 29) were recovered, both are large bowls with diameters well over 20cm. Using the criteria set out by Miles *et al.* the percentage of tableware is 27%, which is still high (see below) but is lower than the 35% suggested for the late Iron Age settlement. The ambiguity in specifying serving-type ware at the late Iron Age settlement, however, remains. Booth (in press), using different criteria – fabric and specialist wares rather than form – has compared the quantities of ‘fine ware’ for a number of early Roman period settlements in the Upper Thames Valley including Barton Court Farm. The early Roman period pottery assemblage at Barton Court Farm was made up of 17.1% fine and specialist wares, which is quite high compared to other settlements in the Valley (Booth in press).

Rim diameters

Although the sample is small, the range in size of the different types of vessels differs slightly to that found at the earlier settlement. Histograms of the rim diameters of the jars (see Figure 5.12.) show peaks of small, medium and large jars, reflecting the presence of narrow-necked jars and large cooking-type pots. The rim diameters of the bowls are no

longer skewed and the range is narrower; there are two peaks of small and medium sized bowls (see Figure 5.13.). The sizes of the possible tableware (see Figure 5.14.) vessels, however, are varied. The significance of the early Roman period histograms, given the sample size, is debatable, but they do not appear to indicate a dramatic shift in the sizes of the vessels other than the notable differences in jars mentioned above.

At the early Roman period settlement there are indications that the way food and drink was consumed involved both individualized serving practices (cups, small bowls and dishes) and more communal consumption events (beakers and large cooking pots). The presence of mortaria does signify the adoption of a distinctive type of Roman food preparation vessel – although it is possible that a non-ceramic vessel may have performed a similar function (Evans 1993:103-4).

The early Roman period glass

No glass vessels were identified in early Roman period contexts. However, a few fragments of early blue/green glass were identified in non-early Roman period contexts: their use at the settlement is conceivable but uncertain.

5.4.2. Other implements at the early Roman period settlement

As with the late Iron Age settlement only a few implements were recovered that have an association with the consumption of food and drink. A bronze netting-needle was recovered, used possibly in the preparation of fishing nets. A bronze bucket handle and an iron bucket handle mount were identified; the buckets may have been used for preparing and/or transporting liquids (Gomez de Solo 1993:191).

5.4.3. Ingredients at the early Roman period settlement

The animal bones at the early Roman period settlement

Species representation

The animal bone sample for the early Roman period was small. Figure 5.15 represents my calculation of the N.I.S.P., which again does not differ significantly from that of Wilson (see Figure 5.16). The change in the proportions of the represented main species in the early Roman period, especially the increase in cattle, is notable, but of questionable significance because of the small size of the sample. The bones from cows were less abundant than the bones from bulls and steers, which together with the reduction of vessels possibly used in cheese making, may signify a shift in emphasis from dairy products to meat consumption, at the early Roman period settlement. However, the apparent changes in animal population may partially reflect their manner of deposition – most of the deposits were found in ditches – as well as differing socio-cultural practices concerning the preparation of the various species for consumption. It is possible, for example, that the change in the herds and reduction of perforated vessels indicates a change in the ritual consumption practices of the inhabitants which might be linked to the changes in vessels used for serving. These are important considerations, especially if the abundance of a particular species, such as cattle, is thought to indicate a ‘Romanized’ diet. Grant, for instance, has suggested that an increase in cattle might indicate an increase in the amount of meat consumed which could be an indicator of “wealth and power [more than] a desire to ape Roman habits” (1989:142).

Butchery practices

The existence of specific butchery patterns at the early Roman settlement is also questionable in light of the small sample. There are, however, some similarities between the two periods in terms of the types of butchery techniques used (i.e. knife cuts and chop marks) and in the joints of meats. The skulls and mandibles of cattle are similarly butchered suggesting that the tongue and cheek meat were consumed. The major points of disarticulation are not as obvious, probably owing to the small sample size. There is some distal cutting of the humerus, which may indicate a separation point, although there is less

evidence of butchery on the radius. The butchery of hind limbs provide single examples of cuts and chops to the knee joint which are inconclusive as a general pattern. The astragalus and calcaneum were consistently trimmed and butchered which indicates both skinning and points of disarticulation. One major difference in the butchery marks on the early Roman period cattle bones compared to the late Iron Age cattle bones is that the shafts of long bones were frequently trimmed and there appears to have been less chopping up of the bones, which could signify a taste for steak and/or dry roast cooking, or possibly the stewing of larger joints in large cooking pots.

Interestingly, sheep appear to have been more intensively processed than at the late Iron Age settlement. There are indications of tongue and cheek removal (not identified at the earlier settlement) and a higher incidence of bone splitting, especially the radius – possibly for the extraction of marrow. The points of disarticulation of sheep are difficult to identify (as in cattle) with often single examples of particular separation points, e.g. broken ends of the humerus and radius, proximal cuts on one radius and broken ends of the femur and tibia. The butchery of pigs is also inconclusive. The most commonly butchered bones were the scapula and the long bones, and many of the indications of butchery are in the breakage of the bones rather than specific marks, except in the cases where long bones were chopped mid-shaft. Crader has suggested that marks on the shaft of bones often indicate a secondary stage of butchery, the removal of meat rather than dismemberment (1990:709). This implies that pork was roasted in large joints and was then broken up for consumption, or possibly that the bones were cooked in pots resulting in the meat falling off the bone rather than having to be removed (see Crader 1990:708).

The evidence is more conclusive that horses were at times consumed at the early Roman settlement, as illustrated by butchery marks on a greater variety of the more meaty bones – the pelvis, humerus, radius, and tibia. The butchery and possible consumption of horse in the region appears to have been site-specific during the Roman period. For example, horses were butchered at the Roman period settlement at Farmoor, Oxfordshire (Wilson 1979:131) but not at Roman Cirencester (Thawley 1982:211; see also Maltby 1979:62 who notes that horse hide may have been used in the Roman period). No butchery marks were found on dogs at the early Roman period settlement – perhaps, as Thawley (1982) and Harcourt (1974) suggest, because dogs were being used as pets (although see Garnsey 1999:84-5 who

cites classical sources that do not show an aversion to consuming species that were also used as pets). Small numbers of deer bones were recovered, but none displayed any butchery marks. It is conceivable that the absence of butchery marks on both dogs and deer are related if dogs were no longer used for hunting wild species.

Meat yields

The groupings of bones according to their meat yield (Figure 5.17.) complement a number of the observations made above, most noticeably the increase in the proportions of horse bones from group 'A' and the butchery of these types of bones. Pig bones are once again represented by the more meaty bones and sheep and cattle bones have a very similar distribution between meat yielding and non-meat yielding bones.

The differing butchery practices and the consumption of particular species and body parts at the early Roman period settlement may signify distinctive cooking preferences (roasting rather than one pot cooking), and possibly different types of food avoidance and delicacies. The changes in cooking practices might have contributed to a reduction in the percentage of bowls found at the settlement. Small numbers of domestic fowl, a wild goose and a crow were recovered in a few contexts. No fish bones were recovered from early Roman contexts, although this does not mean that fish was not consumed at the settlement; a bronze netting-needle was found in the main enclosure, which suggests that the inhabitants may have fished.

The plant remains at the early Roman period settlement

Unfortunately, no plant remains or processing implements were recovered from early Roman contexts, although the presence of two possible granaries suggests that some form of limited cereal processing continued. Additionally, a number of millstones found in a late Roman well may actually be from the early Roman period (Spain 1986:microfiche 5:B6) and some of the rotary querns identified in late Roman contexts may also have been early Roman, as querns are typically difficult to date because they are often reused (Gwilt and Heslop 1995: 40).

5.5. Summary of the Artefacts and Remains of Consumption for each Settlement

Before we consider the distribution of the artefacts and the remains at the two settlements, it is necessary to summarize some of salient points made on the containers, the other implements and the ingredients for each phase.

5.5.1. Late Iron Age settlement

Containers

Pottery

- Majority of pottery was locally produced; some butt beakers were imported from the southeast.
- Assemblage dominated by jars, followed by bowls, beakers and dishes.
- Suggestions of high proportion of 'tableware' type vessels (35% of assemblage).
- Significant number of vessels with perforated bases possibly used for cheese making, distilling, and steaming or as flowerpots or colanders.
- Histograms of the jars indicate a wide range of sizes with a peak of 14 cm to 20 cm.
- Histograms of bowls also indicate a wide range of sizes with a peak of 12 cm to 18cm.
- Two sherds each of samian ware and amphora were recovered. They are believed to have been residual although it is conceivable that Roman-style goods were entering the settlement towards the end of its occupation.

Other implements

- Fired clay slabs were found at the base of a number of pits and Miles suggests that they may represent hearths or parching ovens.
- An iron knife was recovered at the settlement.

Ingredients

Animal bones

- Sheep and cattle bones are both prominent, sheep very slightly more so, followed by pig then horse bones.
- The age and sex ratios of cattle and particularly sheep could indicate a propensity towards dairying, or an intensity of meat consumption associated with feasting.
- Butchery practices appear to indicate the butchery of particular joints of meat and the stripping of meat from the bone for cattle, sheep and pigs.
- Three of the four deer bones identified (excluding antlers) have chop marks – considered quite rare in the south of England.

- Small numbers of horse bones were butchered, including the meaty bones, which could indicate that they were at times consumed although this is speculative; one dog mandible had cut marks.
- A, B, C, meat yield grouping of animal bones appears to suggest multiple uses for sheep and cattle (dairying and meat consumption), that pigs were primarily a species that was consumed and that horses were probably used for something other than consumption, except possibly on particular occasions.
- Small numbers of fresh water fish, domestic and wild birds were identified.

Plants

- Plant remains were recovered from only two contexts: a hearth and at the base of a large pit.
- Assemblages dominated by cereals and weeds with very small amounts of chaff – possibly indicating small-scale production.
- A significant number of edible weeds were identified.
- Spelt wheat, was the most commonly identified cereal followed by barley, bread wheat, and emmer wheat.
- Jones considers presence of bread wheat in sizeable amounts unusual.

5.5.2. The early Roman period settlement

Containers

Pottery

- Small number of imported wares including mortaria, amphorae and samian were identified.
- Fabrics that typify the early Roman period such as grey wares and Black-burnished ware are evident but fabrics identified in the late Iron Age assemblage also dominate the early Roman period assemblage.
- Assemblage dominated by jars and bowls – the distinction between the two vessel types is less blurred than in late Iron Age.
- Increase in the proportion of jars and decrease in the proportion of bowls.
- Reduction in proportion of vessels with perforated bases – possibly indicating a decline in cheese making or alcohol production.
- Large cooking type vessels are evident and there is an increase in the numbers of narrow-necked jars.
- Histograms of the jars reveal peaks of small, medium and large vessels reflecting the presence of narrow-necked and large cooking type jars.
- Histograms of the bowls indicate a narrower range in sizes although two peaks in size at 14cm and 20 cm – slightly larger than the bowls identified at the late Iron Age settlement.

Glass

- A few fragments of early blue/green glass were identified in non-early Roman period contexts – significance of which is uncertain.

Other Implements

- A bronze netting-needle was recovered.
- A bronze bucket handle and an iron bucket handle mount were identified.

Ingredients

Animal bones

- The bone sample was quite small in comparison to the late Iron Age settlement.
- Cattle bones were the most commonly identified bone, followed by sheep bones, horse and pig bones.
- Cows less abundant than bulls and steers, which together with reduction in vessels possibly used for cheese making, may indicate a shift from dairying to meat consumption.
- Similar butchery patterns of cattle as late Iron Age settlement, except that shafts of long bones are frequently trimmed and less evidence of chopping which could signify a taste for steak, dry roast cooking or the stewing of larger joints.
- Sheep are more intensively butchered, suggestions that tongue, cheeks and bone marrow were consumed.
- Minimal evidence for butchery of pigs which could indicate that pigs were roasted.
- Horse butchered at settlement, butchery marks on a variety of bones including the meaty bones such as the pelvis and the humerus.
- No butchery marks on dogs – possibly used as pets, and no butchered deer bones were recovered from the settlement.
- The grouping of horse bones according to their meat yield indicates a higher proportion of high meat-yielding bones.

Plants

- No plant samples were recovered for the early Roman period settlement.
- The presence of possible granaries, contemporary querns and millstones in non-early Roman contexts could indicate that agriculture was a part of the settlement's economy.

5.6. The Distribution of the Remains of Eating and Drinking at Barton Court Farm

The remainder of this chapter will consider all of the artefacts and remains from the two settlements presented in the preceding section from within their archaeological contexts. General observations on the re-contextualized material will be presented and discussed. Following this, a number of deposits thought to represent special meals and/or libations will be highlighted. A brief summary of my findings will be made for both the late Iron Age and early Roman period settlements.

5.6.1. Distribution of the artefacts and remains at the late Iron Age settlement

The animal bones and pottery at the late Iron Age settlement were found in all types of contexts – pits, ditches and gullies – with the highest concentrations occurring in the enclosure ditches (see Figure 5.18. and Figure 5.19.). Bowls and ‘tableware’ in general were the most dominant vessel type recovered in the ditches although interestingly both beakers and dishes are barely represented (see Figure 5.20.). Pits and house gullies, on the other hand, each have a similar distribution of pottery types, with jars and the jar/bowl variants being the most abundant wares followed closely by bowls and beakers and dishes. Gullies have a slightly higher proportion of ‘tableware’ than pits.

A variance in vessel size was also found in the different contexts (see Figure 5.21.). Small bowls and particularly small jars were only recovered from the pits and house gullies and not from the enclosure ditches. Two possible scenarios suggest themselves. One is that the patterns reflect different types of food preparation and consumption practices in and around different types of features at the settlement. For instance, smaller cooking pots and bowls around the house site may indicate individualized eating and cooking or possibly the cooking of smaller dishes rather than a one pot stew (see similar conclusions in Allen 1990:42); larger bowls and jars at the boundaries and periphery of the settlement, could indicate more communal consumption practices. This is also suggested by the butchery of the various species, as there was a dearth of chopped bones in the gullies. A second scenario is that the patterns reflect the disposal regime of pottery, which is proportional to and appropriate for the size of the feature (although see distribution of animal remains below).

The distribution of animal bones around the settlement reveals a number of interesting patterns (Figure 5.19.). Cattle and sheep bones are almost equally represented in the ditches, which contrasts with both pits and gullies where sheep dominate in pits and cattle dominates in the house gullies. Distinct patterns were also observed with some of the other species of animals recovered at the settlement. Dog and horse bones were found in a number of pits and in the northern gully, but not together. (This differs from Grant’s observation at Danebury where there was a statistical association of horse bones with dog bones (1991).) Horse and dog bones were only found together in the ditches, and it was in the main enclosure that the evidence of butchered horse and dog occurred. Dog mandibles (and the

mandibles of sheep and cattle in general) were especially prevalent in particular contexts within the settlement, which could suggest that the deposition of the head was particularly significant (Hill 1995:103).

In considering the distribution of the animal bones according to their meat yield (see Figure 5.22.), it appears that group 'B' bones are the most frequent in the majority of contexts except for horse bones in ditches where group 'C' is the highest and in gullies where sheep bones from group 'A' is overwhelmingly higher; butchery marks also appear exclusively on these bones. It is particularly noteworthy that mandibles, which are a group 'B' bone and tend to survive particularly well (see Grant 1975:385), make up 50% of group 'B' cattle bones in gullies; (see below for possible significance of mandibles around the settlement) no sheep mandibles were recovered from the gullies. These findings add credence to the suggestion above that the distribution of the remains in the gullies is linked to preparing and consuming food in a particular way.

Miles suggested that there might have been households of differing status residing at the late Iron Age settlement. The contextual associations of the pottery and animal bones indicate that this may well have been the case. The quantity of remains in the pits, for example, varied throughout the site, although the pits that may have contained 'special deposits' (see below) and all animal burials were situated within the internal enclosure. The northern house gully contained a wide variety of vessel forms including possible tableware. Of particular interest was a cache of 45 bases (21 were perforated) that was deposited at its terminal. This could represent the deliberate deposition of these remains in an area of the settlement, which, as will be shown below, was of particular significance. The gully also contained a higher concentration of group 'A' bones than the southern gully and the deposit of 15 cattle mandibles could have been a ritualized deposit (see Hill 1995:103; Wait 1985:132, 137-8). The southern gully, on the other hand, contained a smaller and substantially less varied quantity of pottery, and fewer numbers of butchered animal remains. The types of pottery recovered in various the enclosure ditches were comparable, although it was possible to identify a particular pattern in the distribution of beakers. It was found that:

- Beakers were not generally situated in the main enclosure ditch (only one was recovered).
- There was a higher concentration of beakers in the northern gully (six) compared to the southern gully (one).
- The pits that contained beakers were situated within the internal ditch.

If the beakers were indeed used for drinking, their distribution in a particular area of the settlement is suggestive (see discussion below).

It is difficult to comment on the significance of the distribution of the plant remains as there are only two samples. The largest assemblage was found at the base of pit 311 (see below) within the internal enclosure. The second assemblage, recovered from a possible open hearth within the southern gully, was very small and contained fewer wild species and no chaff. The significance of the distribution of the plant remains is unclear, although it does suggest that grains were possibly prepared for consumption (if not consumed) in the southern occupation area.

'Special deposits' at the late Iron Age settlement

While it is not possible to provide a detailed description of each deposit, a comment on a select few 'special deposits' will help to further illustrate the significance of the contextual association of certain deposits. It is of course tempting to take each context literally, but we are 'observing' deposits that had been constructed and reconstructed by many people. The dividing of deposits into 'special' and 'ordinary' is also tempting, but not wholly appropriate. This has been illustrated by both Hill (1995; 1994) and Grant (1991); each found that so-called ordinary refuse was structured, and as such incorporated into the rituals of everyday life (for similar conclusions see Barrett 1991:1). As was seen above, certain types of pottery and animal species and body parts were concentrated in specific areas and features. There are occasionally, however, some deposits that appear to have distinctive associations not found in other contexts. The denotation of 'special' meals and/or events involving food and drink is controversial (see Wilson 1992, 1996a, 1996b:77-79, 85-88; and Hill 1995:13-5 for excellent discussions of this issue) and what is considered 'special' to one observer may be quite 'ordinary' or taphonomic to another. I considered it significant when there were specific groupings of particular types of artefacts and/or particular species

and/or body parts, or a specific type of butchery practice (or no butchery practice), in particular contexts. I believe a number of these types of ‘special deposits’ are present at the late Iron Age settlement (see Figure 5.1 for locations of specific contexts).

Pit 379 – a possible hearth – was situated between *Structure 1* and the internal enclosure. The pit was lined with clay slabs and it contained a single butt beaker, five butchered cattle mandibles and one dog mandible.

Pit 338 located on the northern side of *Structure 1*, contained the non-butchered (non-consumed?) articulated remains of an ewe. This pit was attached to **pit 311**, which was lined with carbonized plant remains and contained large storage/cooking/beer preparation type vessels.

Pit 318 located just south of the northern house gully, contained a variety of jars, and two butt beaker fragments. The pit was lined with burnt stones and charcoal, which have been linked to feasting activities (Gomez de Solo 1993:191).

Pit 415, was located northeast of the northern house gully. The pit was lined with clay slabs, burnt limestone and charcoal, contained a couple of large jars, a variety of cordoned bowls and a beaker, together with the articulated fore-limbs of two butchered sheep, butchered cattle crania and some burnt pig bones.

Each of these pits was located within the occupation area – a practice common at most Iron Age sites (Wait 1985:138). It is especially noteworthy that these deposits, as well as a human burial, the burial of a non-butchered piglet and a non-butchered dog, were all situated in the domestic area within the internal enclosure.

Summary of the re-contextualized material at the late Iron Age settlement

The distribution of the pottery and animal remains at the late Iron Age settlement reveal a number of interesting patterns. Distinctions were observed between the types of artefacts and remains found in the three types of features: ditches, gullies and pits. Bowls that have

been identified as possible tableware were abundant in ditches, but dishes and beakers were not; these two types of wares were most prevalent in the house gullies and pits. There is also a distinction between the sizes of the pots found in the three types of features – small jars and bowls in gullies, particularly pits, and larger jars and bowls in the ditches. Two different types of consumption practices are suggested by the distribution of the vessels, one communal and the other more individualized. The distribution of the animal remains was also distinguished in the three types of features. Cattle and sheep bones were almost equally represented in the ditches, but cattle bones were more abundant in gullies whereas sheep bones were more prevalent in pits.

Distinctions between the artefacts and remains were also established in different areas of the settlement. The northern area of the settlement, within the internal boundary, appears to have been an area of specialized eating and drinking rituals. Pits containing special deposits, animal burials and beakers accumulate in this area of the settlement. The northern and southern house gullies and associated structures are similarly distinguished from each other, not only in size, but also in the types of artefacts and remains. Ritualized deposits of cattle mandibles and perforated bases and beakers distinguish the northern gully from the southern gully. It has been suggested that these distinctions are quite possibly related to households of different status or to specific areas of the settlement designated as spaces for specific eating and drinking rituals.

5.6.2. Distribution of the artefacts and remains at the early Roman period settlement

The pottery and animal bones recovered from the early Roman settlement revealed quite different distributions to those of the late Iron Age settlement. Most of the pottery was situated in the main enclosure at the periphery of the site (see Figure 5.23.) with a particularly dense accumulation of vessels in the northeast area of the enclosure. The small numbers of pits found within the settlement seem to contain distinct pottery groups: shallow bowls and dishes in one pit, narrow necked jars and cooking-type pots in another, a beaker, a samian cup and bowls in another. As can be seen, a number of the pits contained pottery that is thought to represent tableware (see Figure 5.23. and Figure 5.24.). It also appears that pits contained distinct groups of animal species and butchered animals (see below). The

pottery recovered in the foundation slots of the structure, on the other hand, is varied.

Histograms of the rim diameters of bowls and jars (Figure 5.25.) indicate that the bowls found in pits were larger, and of the few jars recovered from pits, there are peaks of small and large jars. Only three pits were situated close to the living area, and the one located within the structure contained only serving type bowls. In contrast to the Iron Age settlement, vessels associated with drinking – beakers, samian cups and amphorae – were located *away* from the living area of the site, in the internal ditches, main enclosure and in pits positioned on the periphery of the site (except for one beaker in a foundation slot). Narrow-necked jars, mortaria and large jars were also concentrated away from the living area in the pits and enclosures at the periphery of the site. There was an especially dense accumulation of these pottery types in the northeast section of site.

Unlike the late Iron Age settlement, animal remains were not generally deposited within the domestic area of the site. The few pits (3) situated around the structure contained small amounts of bones with slight evidence of butchery as compared to the other pits situated at the periphery of the site. The majority of the animal bones recovered at the settlement were deposited away from the living area, in the enclosure ditches (see Figure 5.26.). As with the deposition of pottery, there is a concentration of butchered remains in the northeast section of the main enclosure. The distribution of the butchered remains is therefore similar to Wilson's (1986; 1989; 1996b) observations at other sites, in terms of there being a distinction between the deposition of bones in domestic and non-domestic areas of the settlement, although both large and small species, and bones from each of the meat yielding groups, (see Figure 5.27) were found in contexts within the domestic area of the site.

It also appears that specific animal species and specific body parts were distributed in specific areas of the settlement. For example, two pits, both situated in the northeast area of the settlement, contained primarily butchered cattle and horse bones (these two contexts will be discussed further below). This is interesting because the pits associated with the structure had high percentages of pig and more particularly sheep bones; only one non-butchered horse radius and a horse tooth were recovered (in the late Iron Age house gullies, cattle bones were the most commonly identified bone). Sheep bones with the highest meat yield

were also found in these pits. The foundation slots of the structure contained predominantly the head and foot debris of sheep, cow, and pigs, and one dog skull, but no horses.

There were no plant remains recovered at the early Roman Settlement.

'Special deposits' at the early Roman period settlement

The distinctive deposits recovered at the early Roman settlement were found at the periphery of the site away from the living area and the main entrance to the settlement.

Pit 397 was situated just outside the northeast section of the main enclosure. The pit contained a small-necked bowl and the articulated lower right leg of a mature bovine and the lower right and left leg of a mature horse. The lower legs of cattle have been found in apparently ritual contexts at the religious complex in Uley, Gloucestershire (Ellison 1980:306). The bones in this pit were complete and displayed similar cut marks, indicating meat and/or skin removal.

Pit 366 – a possible cesspit – was situated at the northeast section of main enclosure. The grouping of cattle and horse together was also encountered in this pit, where a single butchered sheep's skull and a variety of largely complete butchered horse and cattle bones including ten cattle mandibles, were recovered. The pottery in this pit was quite distinctive, including a samian dish, cup and bowl, four large jars, mortaria, and a beaker, as well as a bronze coin dating to AD 10-40 and a mid-first century brooch.

It is notable that in both pits the animal bones were butchered, which contrasts with the animal burials at the late Iron Age settlement, which were not butchered. Grant (1989) has stated that "An important aspect of the ritual of animal sacrifice in the classical world was the butchery and division of the carcass, which was specified in sacred laws" (1989:146). The association of horse and ox has also been found in votive deposits at early Romano-British villa sites (Perring 1989:286-7; see also Moore-Colyer 1994:11).

It is also possible that the concentration of head and foot remains associated with the structure indicates the deliberate deposition of these body parts together. The association of head and feet in ritual contexts is quite common at other Roman period sites (Scott 1991:117; see Barley 1995:77-8 who gives an ethnographic example of offerings of the head, feet and tail that were intended to fool the gods into thinking the whole pig had been sacrificed).

Summary of the re-contextualized material at the early Roman period settlement

The distribution of the artefacts and remains at the early Roman period settlement has revealed quite different patterns to those identified at the late Iron Age settlement. This is in part due to the changing configuration of the early Roman period settlement, but there are also indications that there was a change in consumption practices. The majority of the artefacts and remains were deposited in the enclosure ditches with a particularly dense accumulation of material in the northeast section of ditches. There were, however, a number of distinctions between the types of deposits found in the main features: ditches, pits and the foundation slots of the structure. A high proportion of the vessels identified as tableware were recovered from pits. The size of the vessels in the pits and ditches was also quite different; small bowls and narrow-necked and large jars were more abundant in ditches and large bowls were more common in the pits. At the late Iron Age settlement, the ditches contained large bowls suggestive of communal eating. The animal bones in the various early Roman period features were also distinctive; although ritualized animal deposits were primarily found in pits, but they were butchered while at the late Iron Age settlement such deposits did not display obvious signs of butchery. The ritualized deposition of specific artefacts and remains in pits identified at the late Iron Age settlement also appears to have been present at the early Roman period settlement. Different traditions were, however, defined in the pit deposits for the two settlements – large bowls and butchered animal remains in the early Roman period and small bowls and non-butchered animal remains in the late Iron Age.

There was also a distinction between the distribution of artefacts and remains in different areas of the settlement. The few pits situated within the domestic area appear to contain

discrete groups of pottery associated with serving on the one hand and food preparation on the other; only small amounts of animal bones were recovered from these contexts. Deposits with a possible ritual significance were situated either within the structure itself or completely away from the living area; this is different from the distribution of these types of remains at the late Iron Age settlement. Also different from the late Iron Age settlement was the distribution of drinking vessels – at the early Roman period settlement they were largely situated away from the domestic part of the settlement rather than in direct association with the structures. Ritualized events at the early Roman period settlement appear to have been focused either within the house or on the boundary of the settlement.

5.7. Discussion of the distribution of artefacts and remains at Barton Court Farm

What is most interesting about the deposits and distributions of animal remains and pottery described above is the realization that the different configurations of the settlements reflect directly on the social contexts of eating and drinking in the late Iron Age and early Roman periods.

5.7.1. The Iron Age settlement

The compartmentalization of the late Iron Age site is of particular interest. Miles hinted at the possibility of two different status areas within the site. As has been shown, there was indeed a contrast between the types of assemblages recovered in the northern and southern occupation areas. The northern occupation area was further distinguished by the presence of a human burial at the eastern entrance to *Structure 1*, an isolated piglet burial, and the concentration of possible hearths. Beakers were also concentrated in this area, as were the more distinctive animal deposits and the single deposit of perforated bases in the house gully. This north-south divide, which accentuates the northern area, has been identified at a number of Iron Age and Bronze Age settlements in Britain (Parker Pearson 1996). The main collection of pits was located outside the internal enclosure. A number of these pits formed a line separating this area from a rectangular enclosure – thought by the excavators to have been an animal pen – which had a human cremation at its western entrance and an infant

burial on the northeast corner. *Structure 2* is situated outside the main enclosure and while it has an associated hearth, there are no pits within its immediate vicinity.

It could be argued that there were two late Iron Age groups, possibly related or of differing status, living side by side but within circumscribed boundaries of inclusion or exclusion (after Hingley 1990b). The central area of the site, which separates the two domestic areas, may represent a common area linking the two groups. It is particularly interesting that two types of burial, two types of consumption practices and a single animal enclosure were found in this area. It is also possible that the apparent compartmentalization of the site marks the sequential movement of a single group over time from one area of the site to another; or the use of different areas of the settlement for different types of activities, such as feasting. In either case, the northern section of the settlement was, at various points in its history, a focus for specific acts of commemoration.

5.7.2. The early Roman period settlement

The early Roman period settlement, on the other hand, had one central occupation area – situated *in between* the northern and southern domestic areas of the late Iron Age settlement. This is particularly interesting as there may have been a deliberate attempt to situate the new settlement on a completely different alignment, in an area of the Iron Age settlement designated as common land (see Figure 5.1.). Of the few pits discovered, some appear to be situated at select points in the settlement: at the entrance to the main enclosure, at the point where the internal ditch meets the main enclosure, and at the passageway between the internal ditches. The contents of the pits imply a specific association with location, for example, a pit which cuts into the entrance of the main enclosure, close to the granaries, contain only jars, whereas a pit situated inside the structure, contains only fine ware bowls. This, together with the generally lower numbers of artefacts and remains relative to the Iron Age assemblages, suggests quite a different manner of deposition to that of the late Iron Age settlement. However, ‘special deposits’ were still contained within pits, and while situated at the periphery of the settlement, as at the late Iron Age settlement, they were situated in the northern area of the settlement.

The two six-poster structures interpreted by the excavators as possible above-ground granaries provide a passageway leading into the site from the south. There is also a possibility that there was some form of gate at the entrance, although the dating of the postholes is not secure. Nonetheless, entrances into the domestic area of the site from the south and the north are conspicuous. The recovery of two iron door keys in the pit situated within the structure indicates that doors could be locked. The eastern double ditch is thought by the excavators to have either bounded a track way or marked the construction of a substantial bank. The perimeters around the site are, either way, well defined. The majority of the animal remains and pottery were deposited at the periphery of the site. 'Special deposits' were situated away from the main entrance and the domestic area of the settlement. The few distinctive pottery and animal deposits, including an infant burial, within the domestic area were recovered from within the structure or in its foundation slots. Enclosures and entrances to the settlement appear to have dictated the movements of people approaching the site. It is quite possible that there was a distinction between private (behind closed doors) domestic practices and open public ceremonies. The remains of the *public* consumption events; however, were situated at a distance from the entrance to the settlement.

5.8. The Social Contexts of Imperialism at Barton Court Farm

The early Roman period 'native' settlement at Barton Court Farm does not fit into traditional models of native continuity. On the other hand, the concept of Romanization, as it is currently understood (see Chapter 2), does not account for the dramatic changes found at the early Roman period settlement. This case study illustrates how *native discontinuity* may be fundamental to considerations of social change in Roman Britain. The butchery practices at the two settlements revealed clear distinctions between the mores which governed the butchering and presumably consumption of particular species and body parts at particular times – distinctions which do not always conform to 'Roman' and 'non-Roman' categorization. The vessels associated with cooking and containment quite possibly reflect the changes in approach to the consumption of animals. There was also a marked contrast over time between vessels identified with drinking and possibly serving. One of the points at

which the two pottery assemblages diverge is in the domain of public consumption of food and drink. Most importantly, the contrast in consumption practices is mirrored both in the distributions of the vessels and animal remains throughout the two settlements and in the way, the two settlements were organized.

I was particularly struck by the contrasting arrangement of the domestic areas at the two settlements. It has been suggested that the configuration of Romano-British villas served to control the approach of strangers or outsiders (Samson 1990:175; S. Scott 1994). The domestic structure at the early Roman period settlement was not a villa. However, there is a definite sense that the restructuring and consolidation of the early Roman settlement emphasized the approach and movement of outsiders rather than its inhabitants. Indications of public consumption events, in contrast with the late Iron Age settlement, were identified away from the domestic area of the settlement, although there remains an association with the northern area of the settlement. Indeed, the size of the early Roman period structure and the absence of external hearths suggests that at times cooking and eating, may have been taking place behind closed doors.

Changes in the configuration of settlements and in social practice are often associated with periods of societal change. The changes that occurred at the early Roman settlement can be viewed in a number of ways. The establishment of a new settlement, the adoption of a rectangular structure, the embracing of Romanized dining practices, an emphasis on the consumption of beef; and changes in the public rituals of eating and drinking, could mark a separation from the past and the recognition of a new life under the Romans – a Romanized settlement, that in the past was viewed as ‘native’ primarily because it looked more native than Roman. An alternative explanation, one which I feel emphasizes the configuration of the new settlement and some of the incongruities of the excavated remains and their distribution, might view many of the changes as evidence that the inhabitants felt the need to protect the home (Ardener 1993:11). The apparent consolidation of ‘the house’ within a single building suggests that interaction between household members was also consolidated. The definition of public and private spaces, the possibility of locked doors, ritualized deposits of head and foot bones in the foundation slots of the house, the continued use of beakers and other specialized Iron Age wares, and the emphasis on settlement entrances and boundaries suggests that the relationship between the household and those outside the household was being re-negotiated.

The apparent adoption of public Roman-like symbols may, therefore, have been integral to the protection of the settlement (see Lyons 1996 and comments in Mattingly 1997b; Hingley 1997).

5.9. Conclusion

Barton Court Farm helped to define how I view the Romano-British world. In Chapter 2, I suggested that evidence for resistance must first be envisioned before it can be seen in the archaeological record. Notions of Romanization and native continuity can both be observed at the early Roman settlement; however, it is equally possible to identify native discontinuity and an alternate experience of imperialism that affected the daily habits of the inhabitants, but is not based on emulation. This particular perspective required the integration of the artefacts and remains that encompass eating and drinking and the examination of their archaeological contexts. At late Iron Age Barton Court Farm it was established that the remains of particular meals – hearthstones, decorated bowls, beakers and articulated animal remains – were deposited in pits in and around one particular house site in the northern section of the settlement. At the reconfigured early Roman settlement, pits were less common and those that contained the possible remains of meals and / or libations were situated either at the periphery of the settlement away from the single house site, or within the structure itself. This represents a fundamental change in the way the inhabitants interacted with each other and suggests that boundaries around the settlement had become more important than the boundaries within the settlement. At Roughground Farm, the second case study in this thesis, it will be possible to observe what I see as a completely different reaction to the Roman presence.

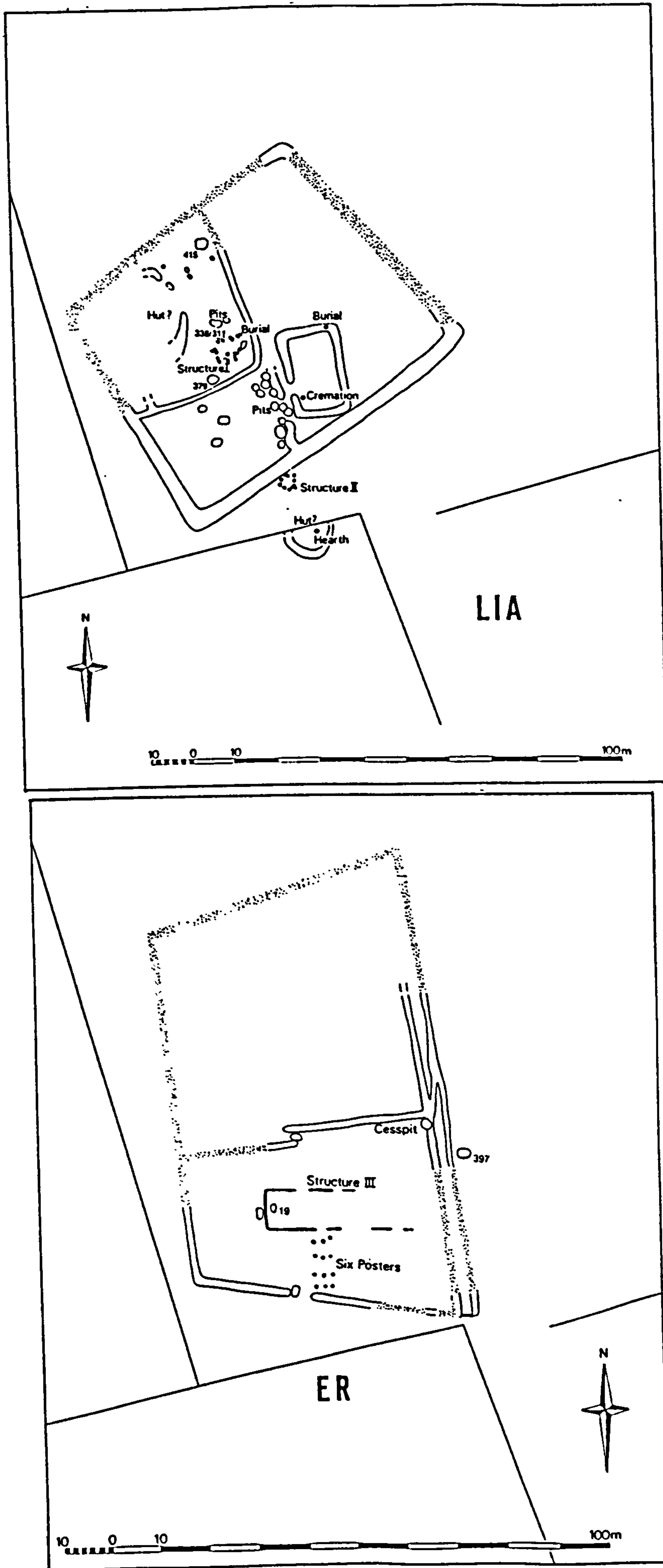


Figure 5.1 Late Iron Age and early Roman settlements at Barton Court Farm (after Miles 1986b, drawn by B. Meadows)

Barton Court Farm late Iron Age containers

Figure 5.2 Late Iron Age pottery forms

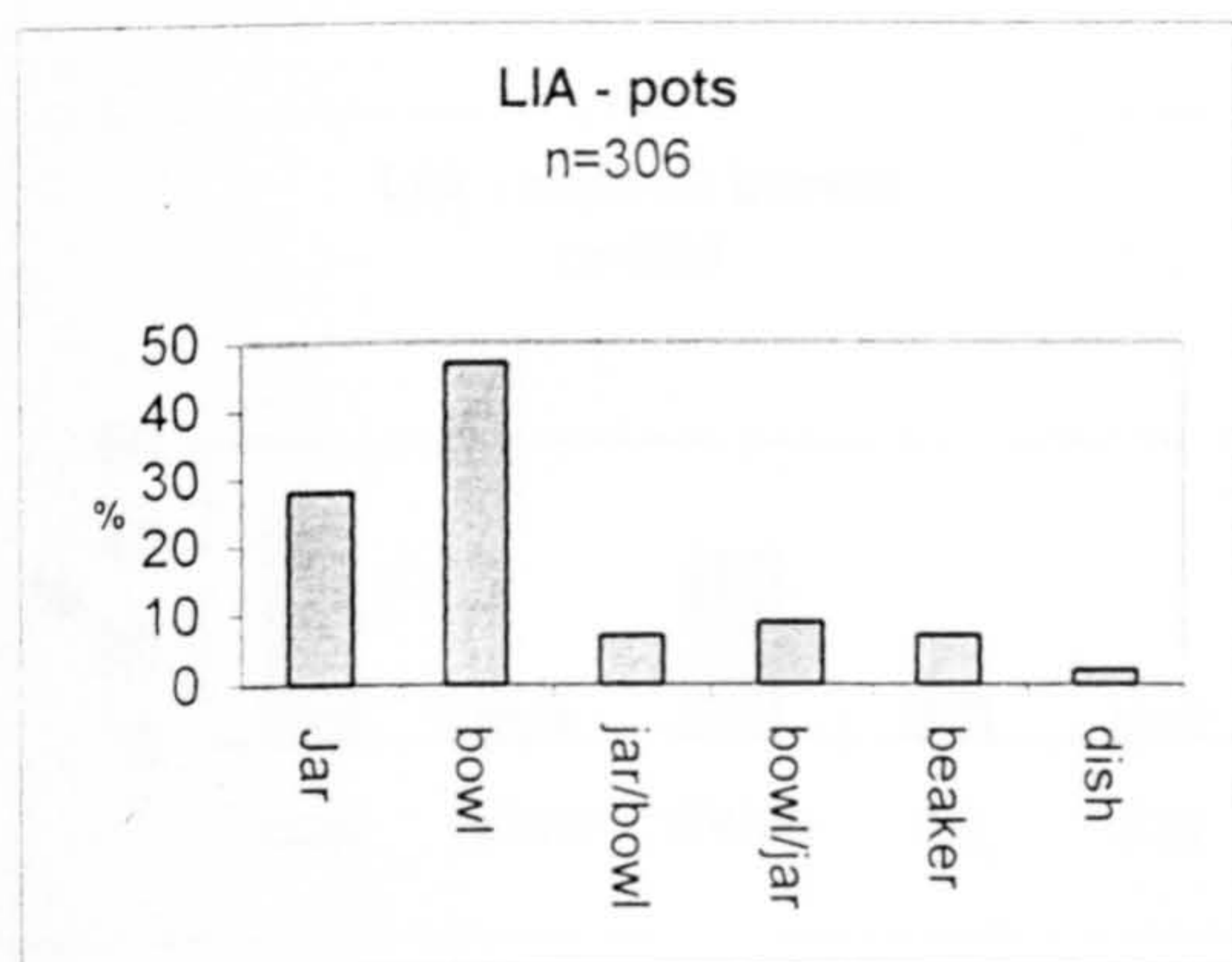
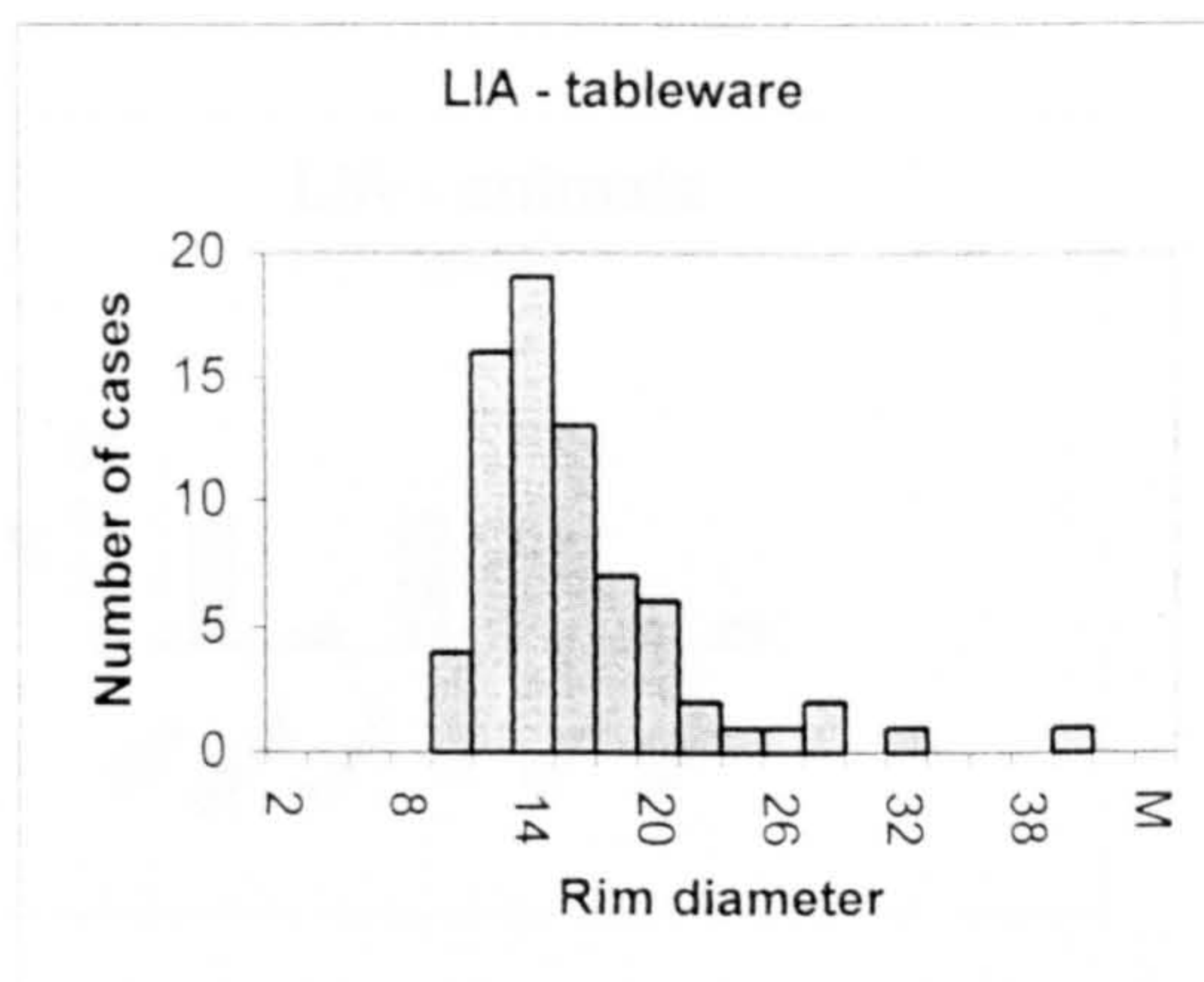


Figure 5.5 Histogram of late Iron Age tableware



Figures 5.3 and 5.4 Histograms of the rim diameters of late Iron Age bowls and jars

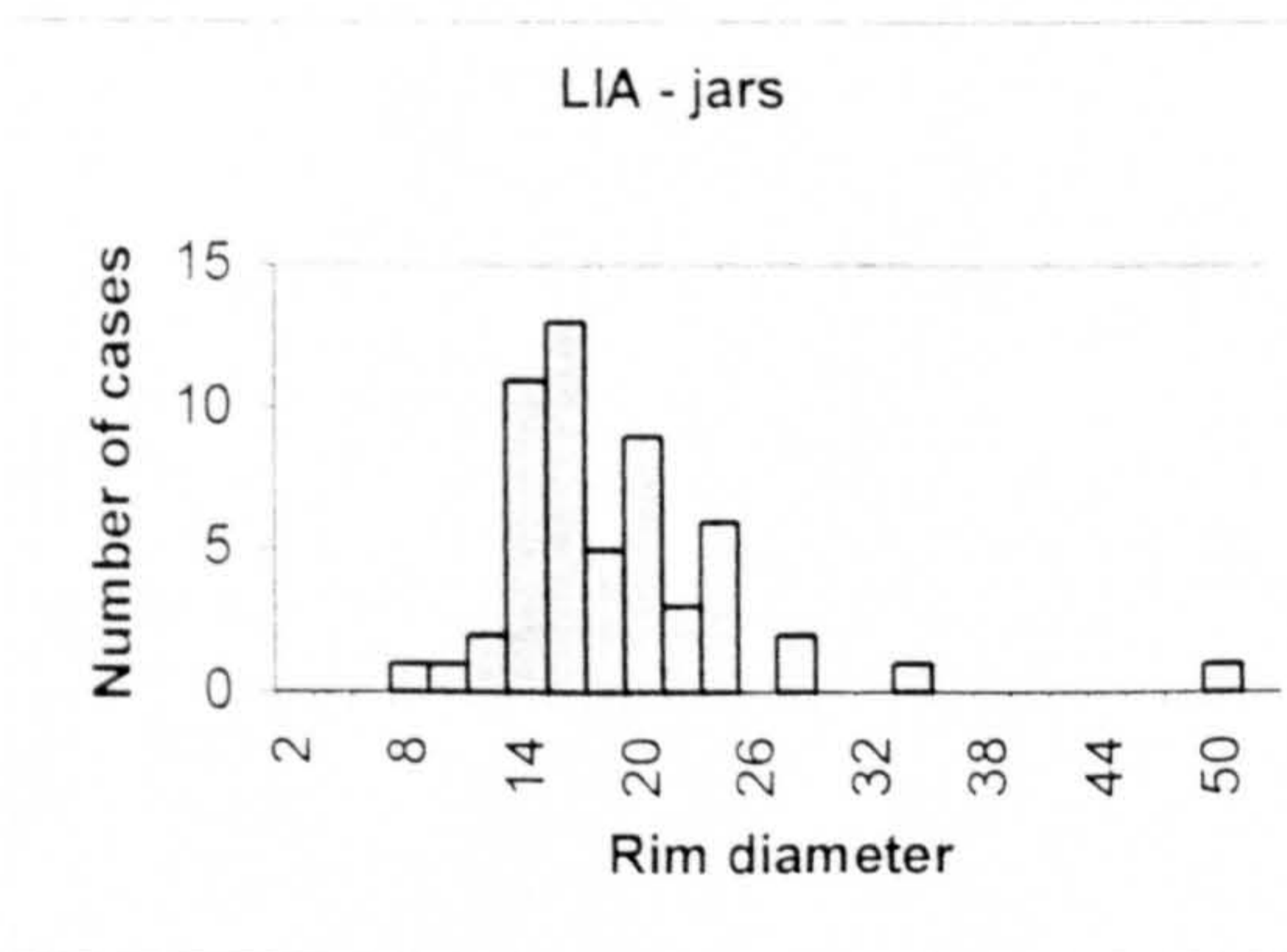
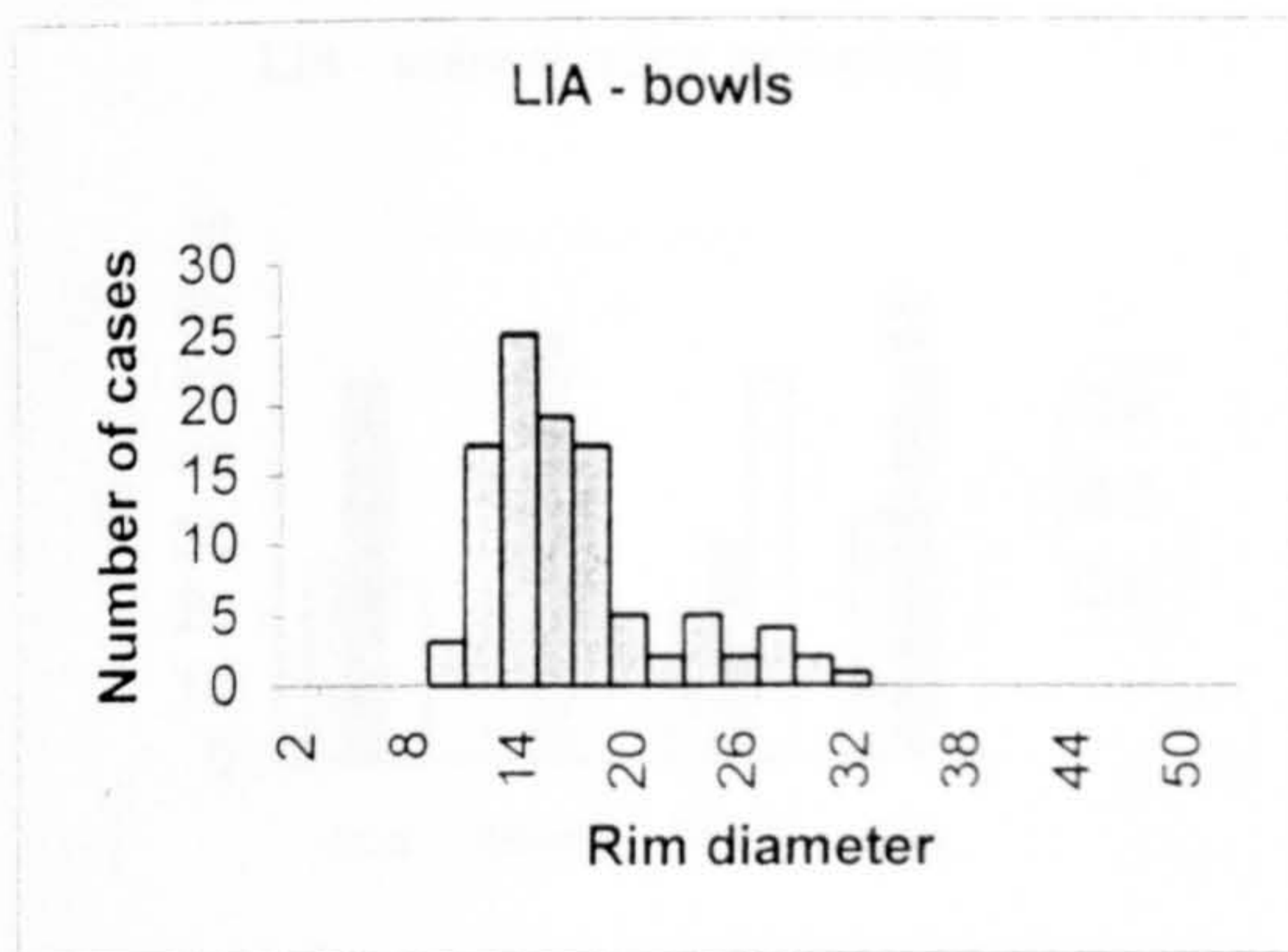
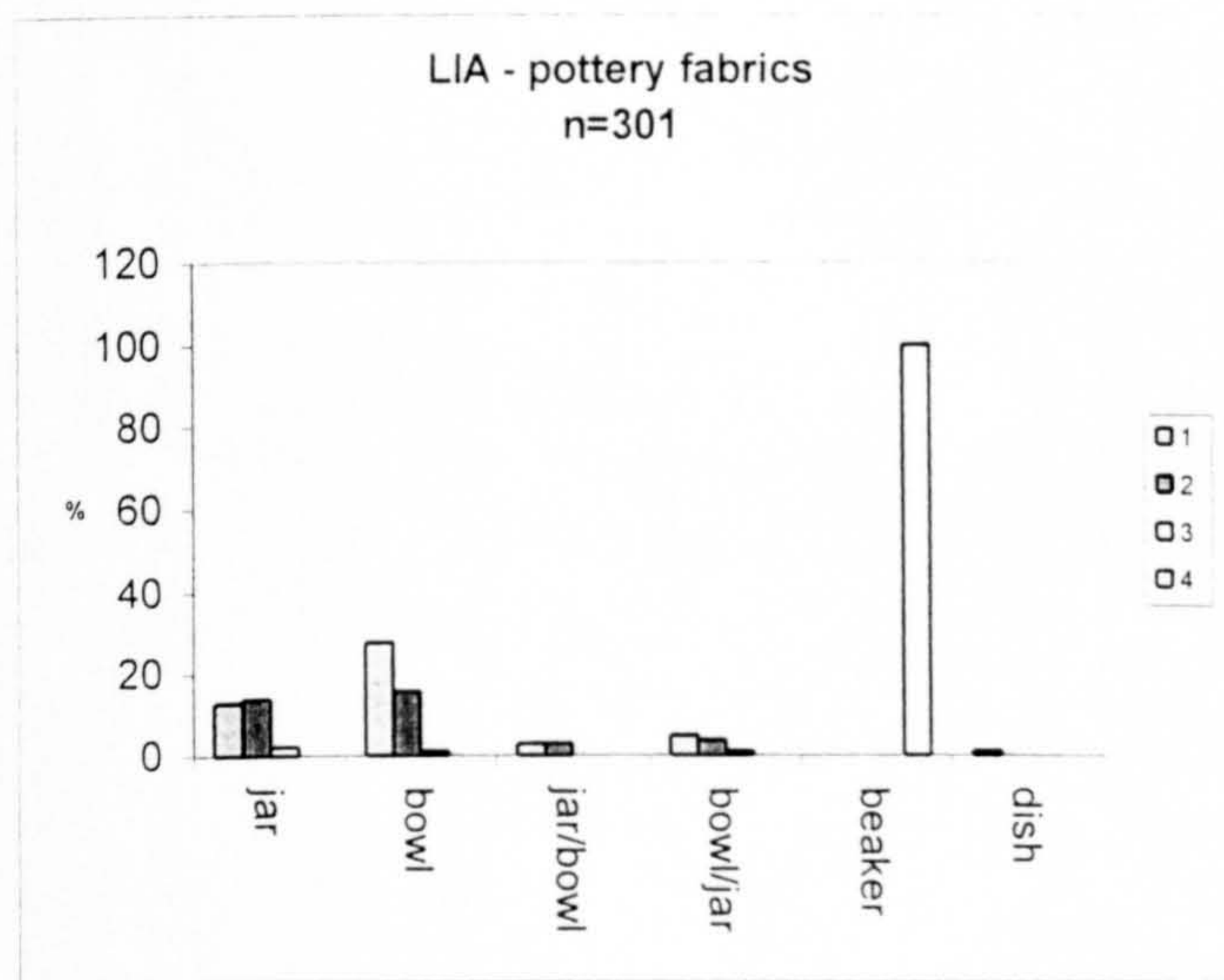


Figure 5.6 Late Iron Age pottery fabrics



Barton Court Farm late Iron Age ingredients

Figure 5.7 N.I.S.P. (Wilson)

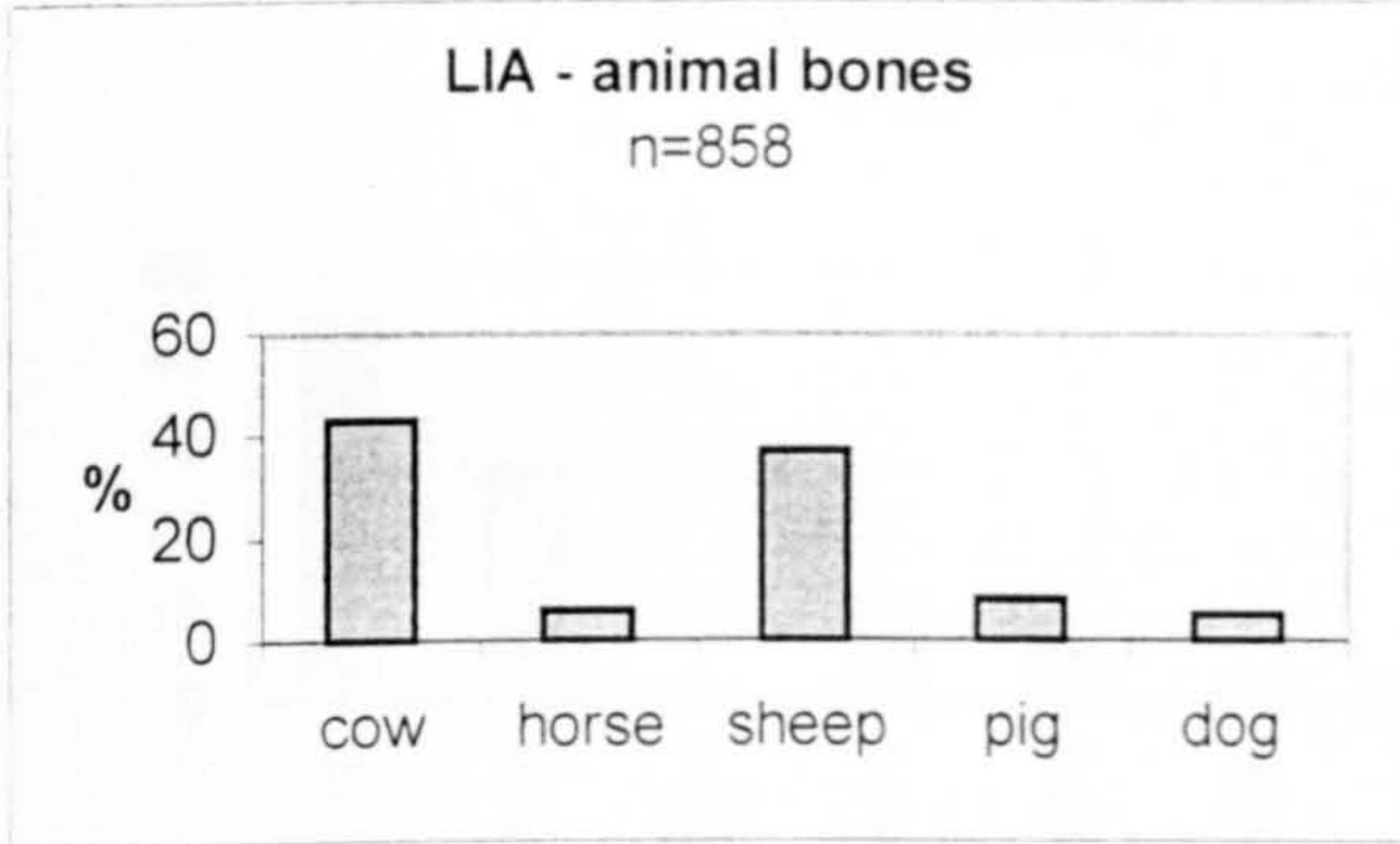


Figure 5.8 N.I.S.P. (Meadows)

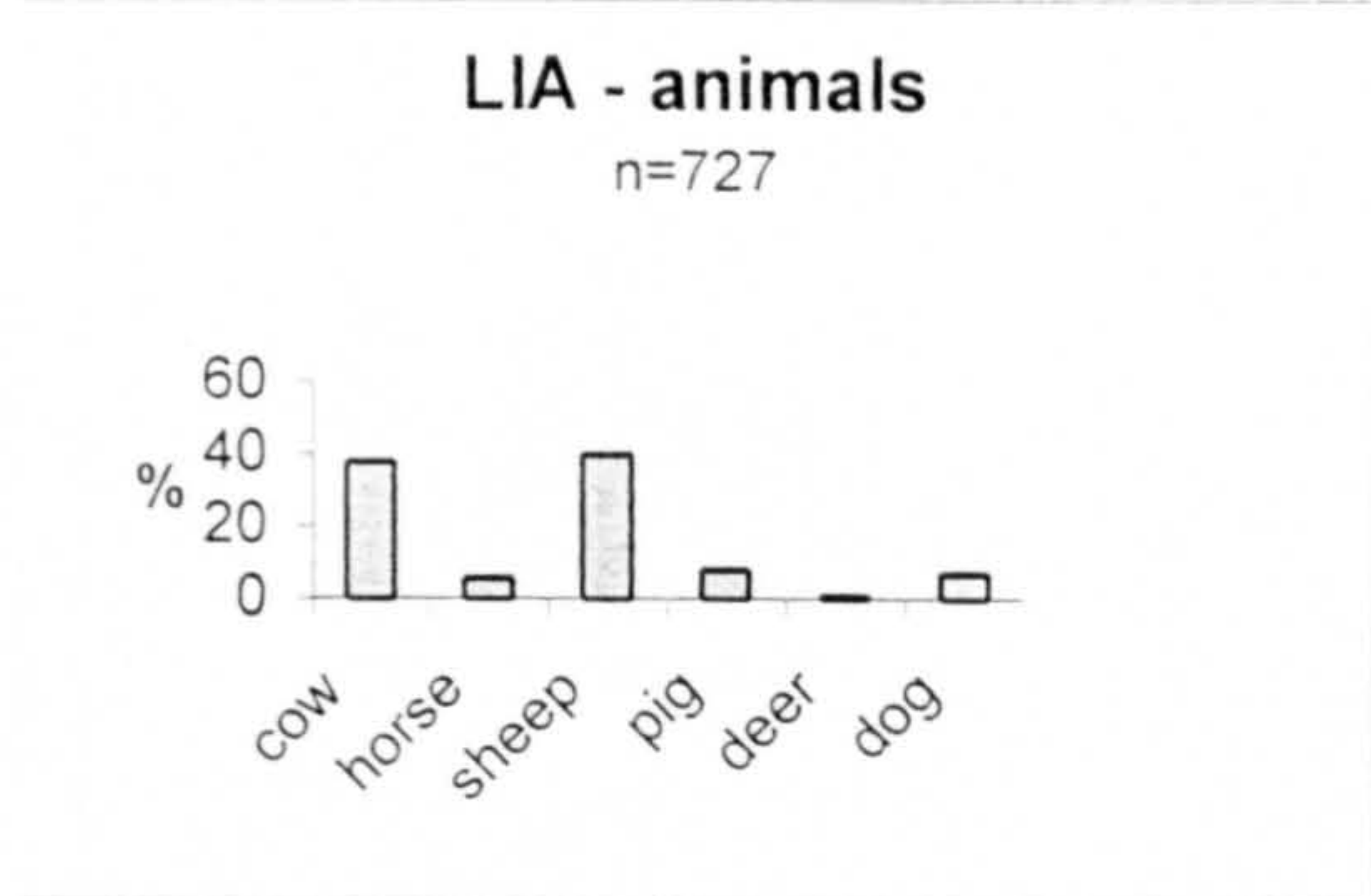
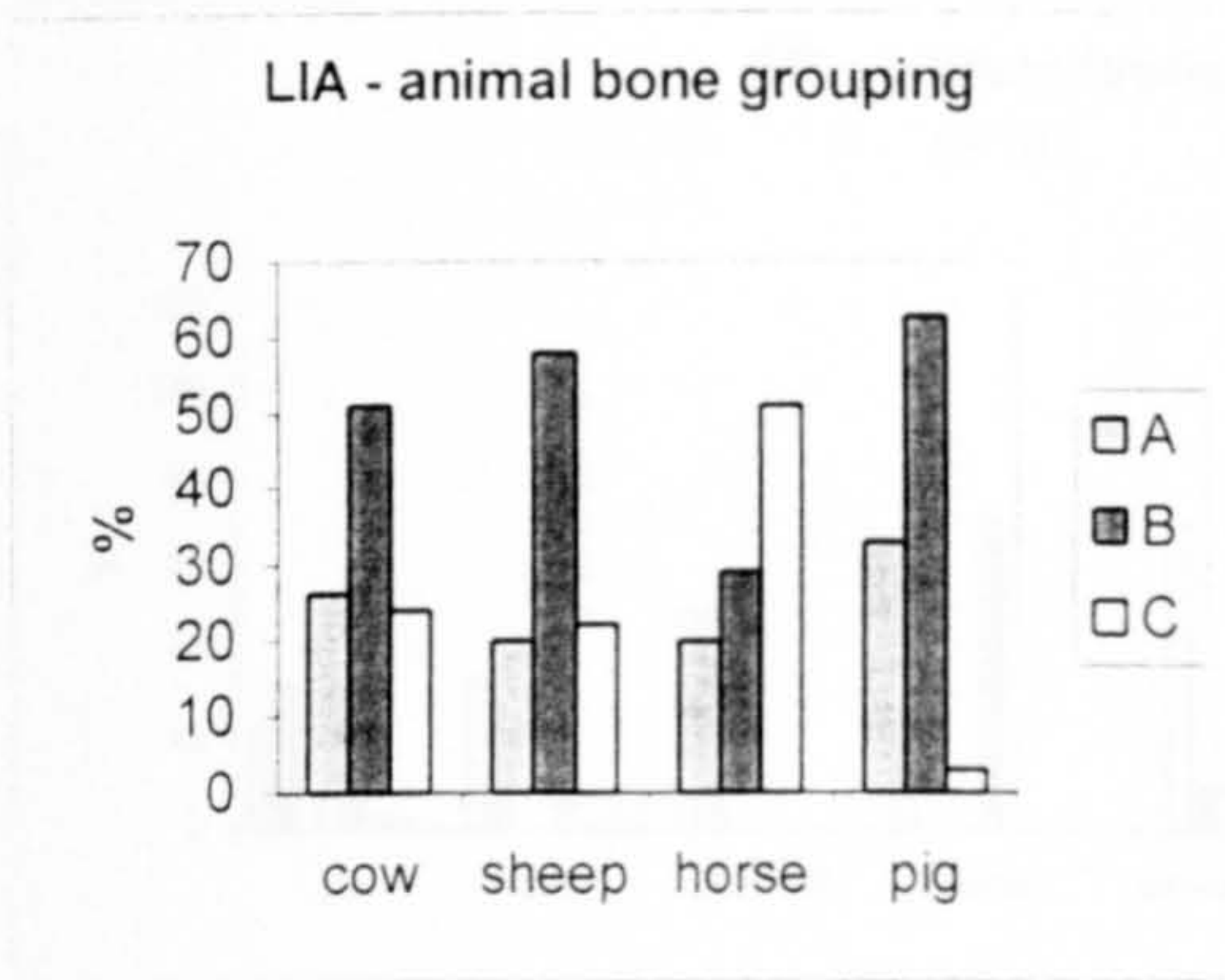


Figure 5.9 Late Iron Age animal bone grouping according to meat yield



Barton Court Farm early Roman period containers

Figure 5.10 Early Roman period pottery forms

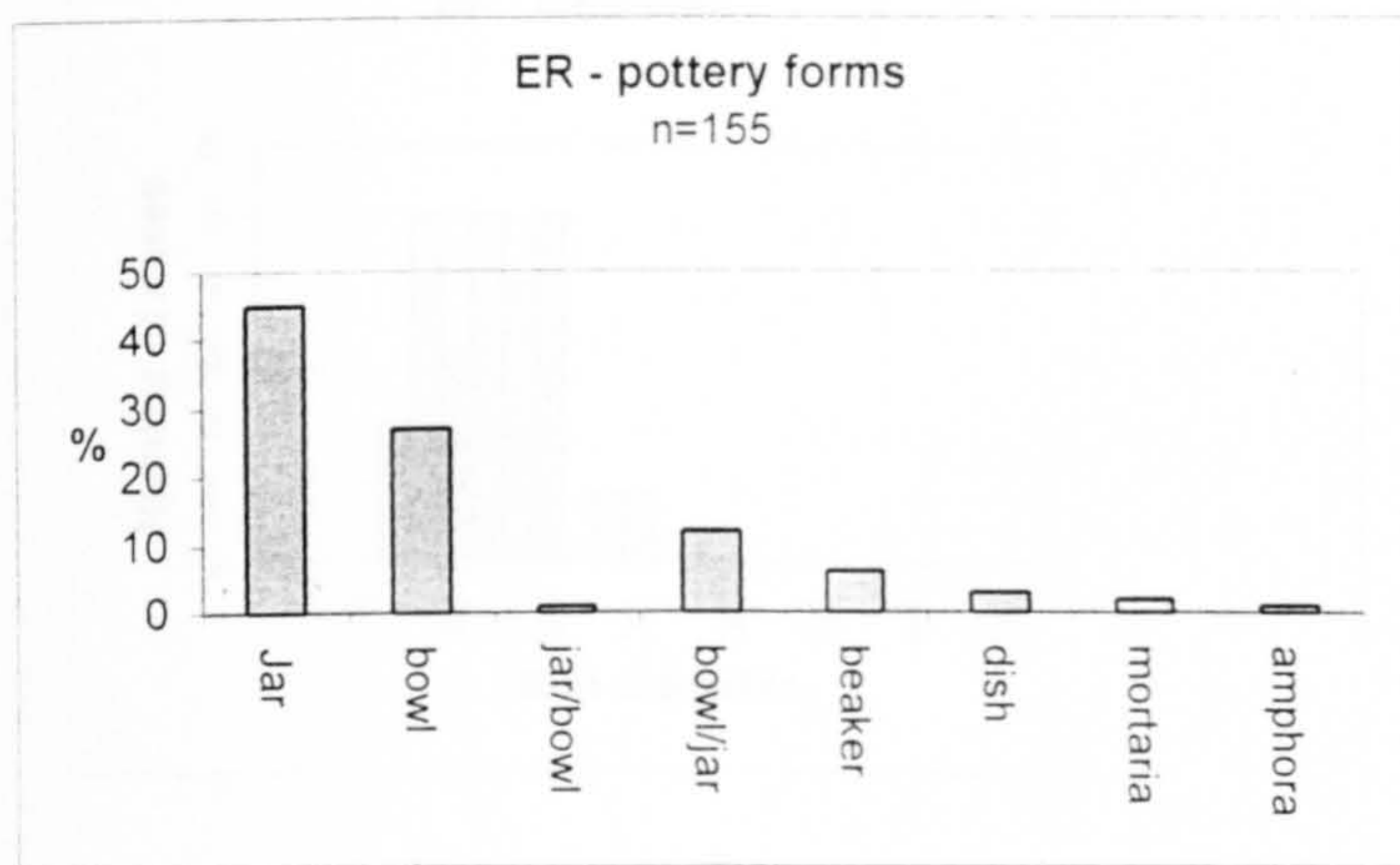


Figure 5.11 Early Roman period pottery fabrics

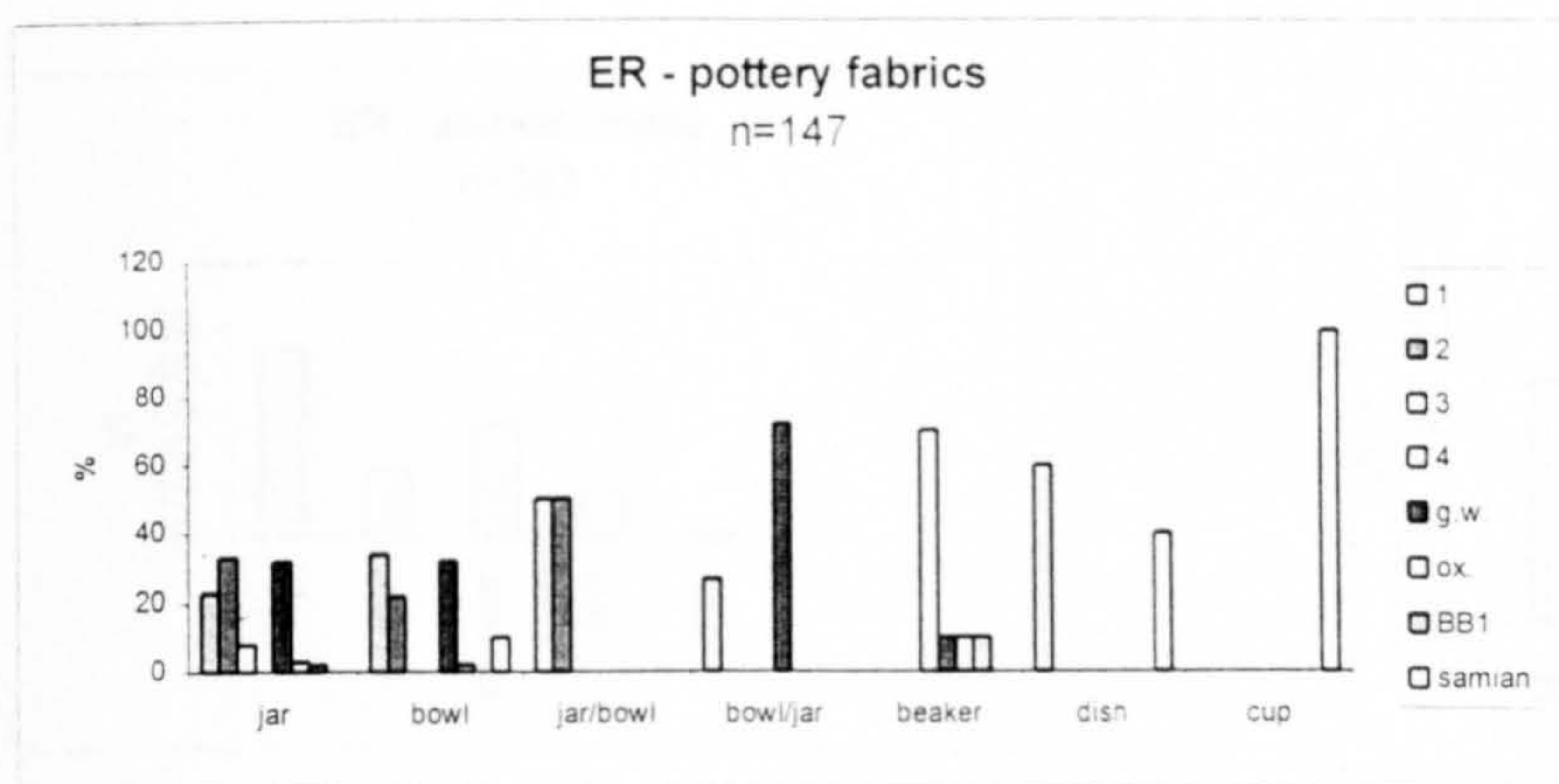
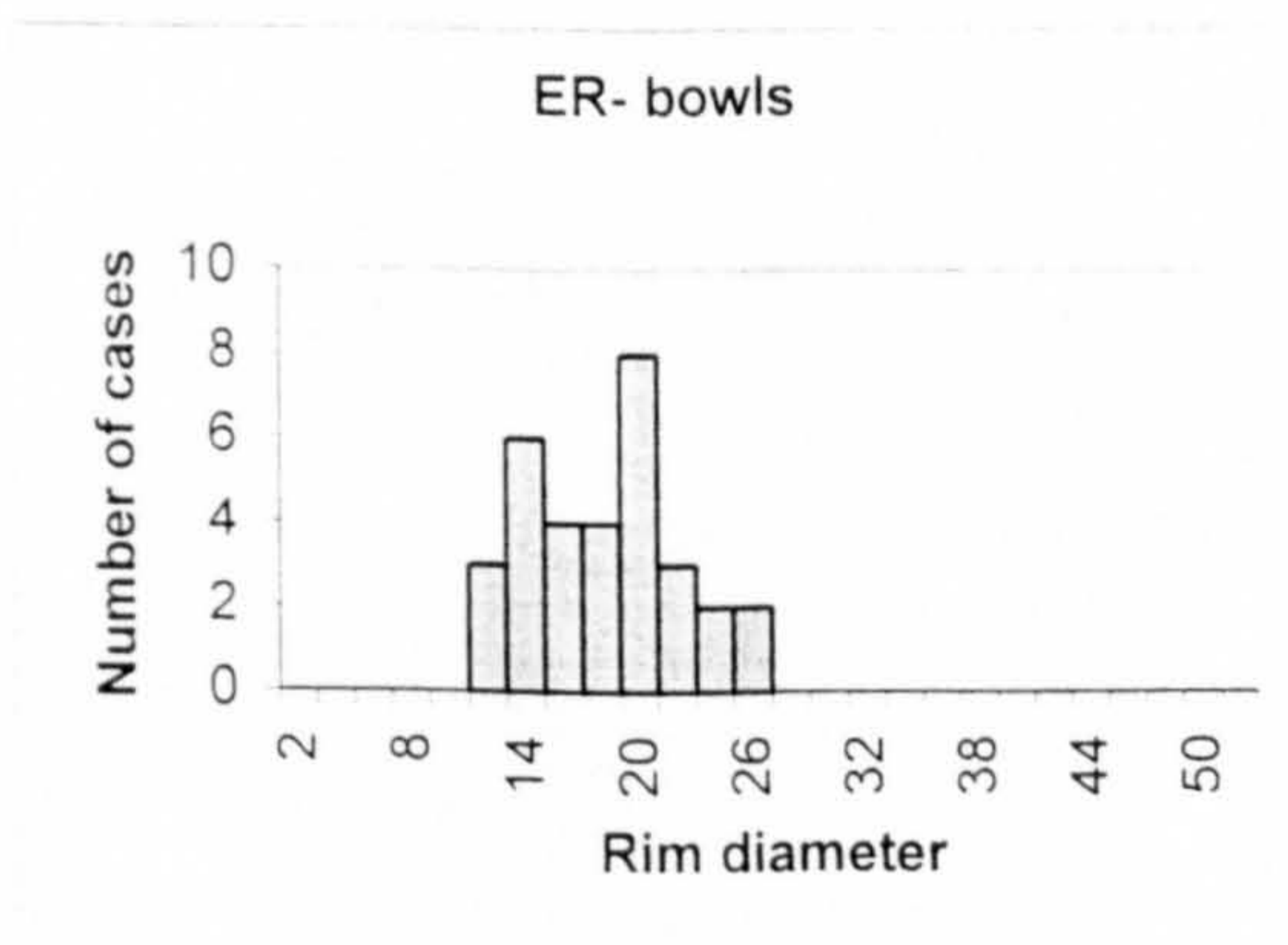
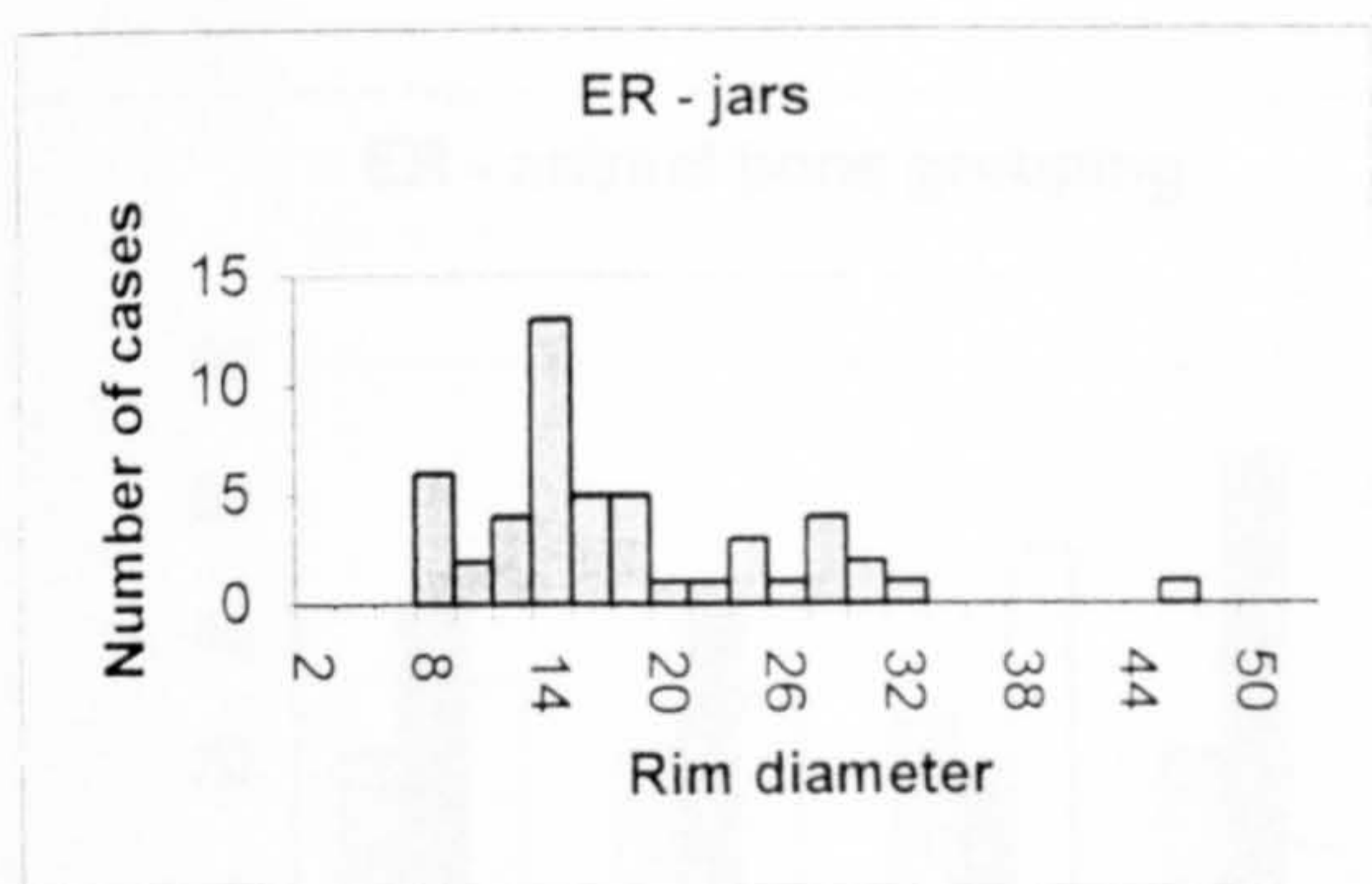


Figure 5.12 and Figure 5.13 Histogram of early Roman period jars and bowls



Barton Court Farm early Roman period containers and ingredients cont.

Figure 5.14 Histogram of early Roman period tableware

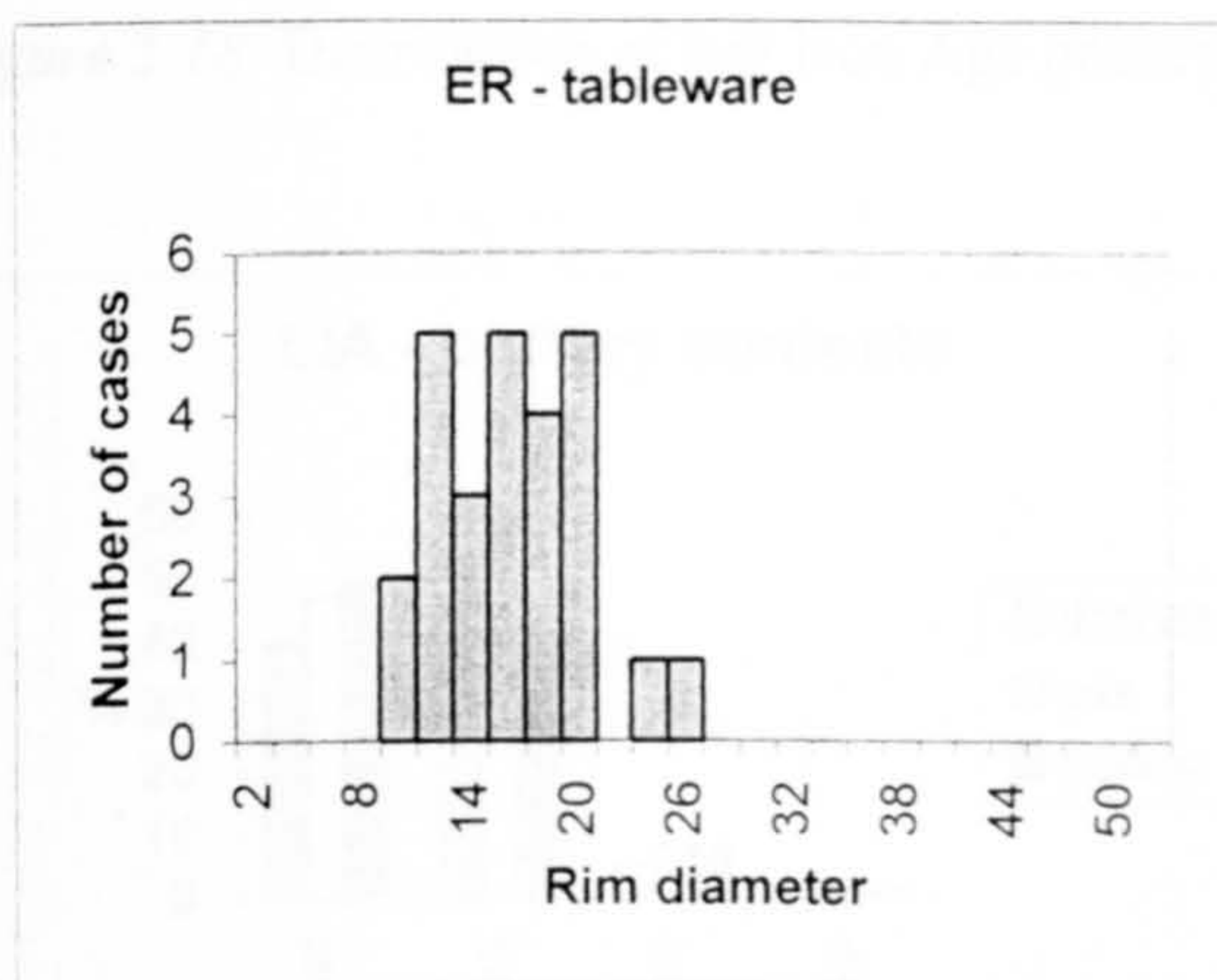


Figure 5.15 N.I.S.P. (Meadows)

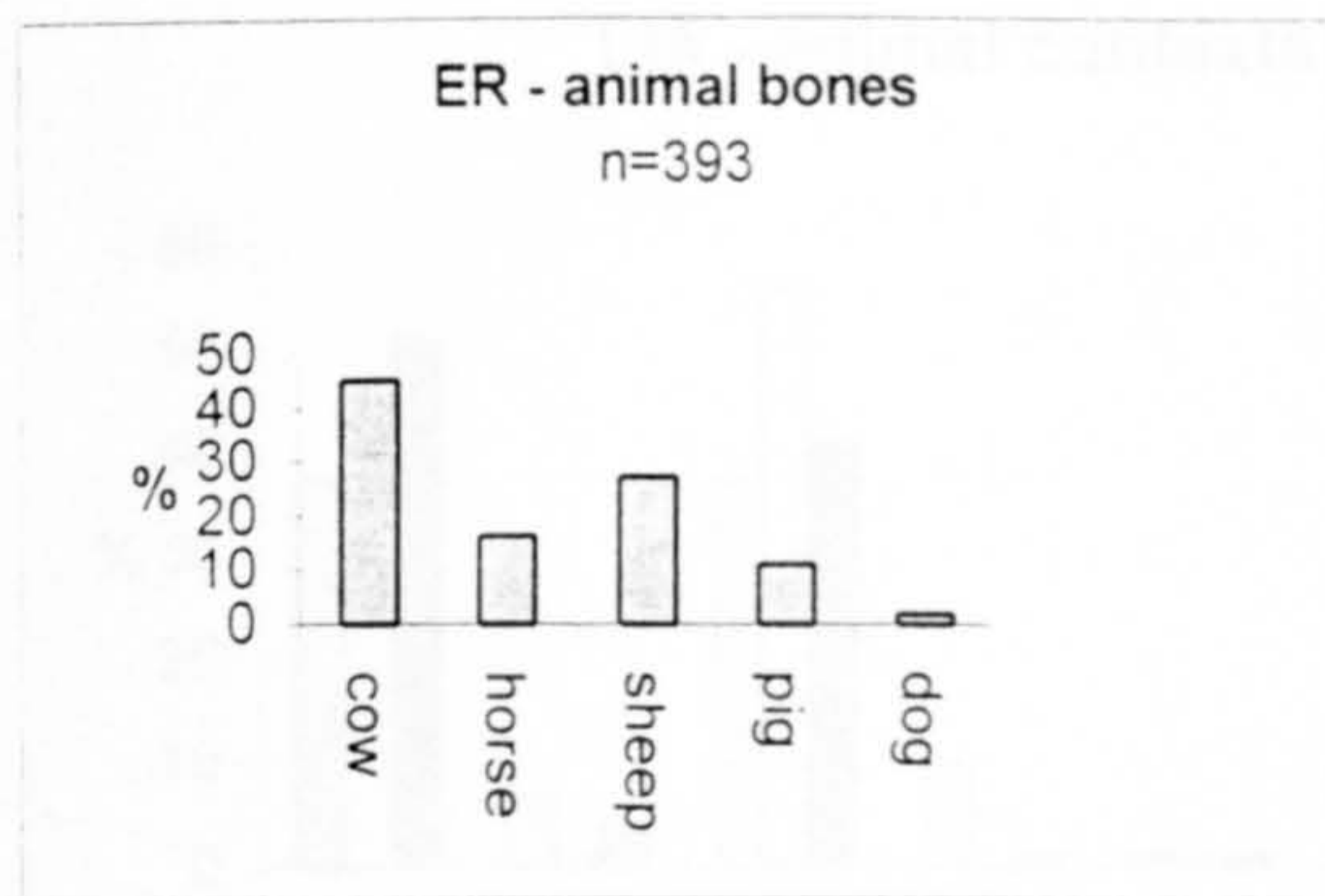


Figure 5.16 N.I.S.P. (Wilson)

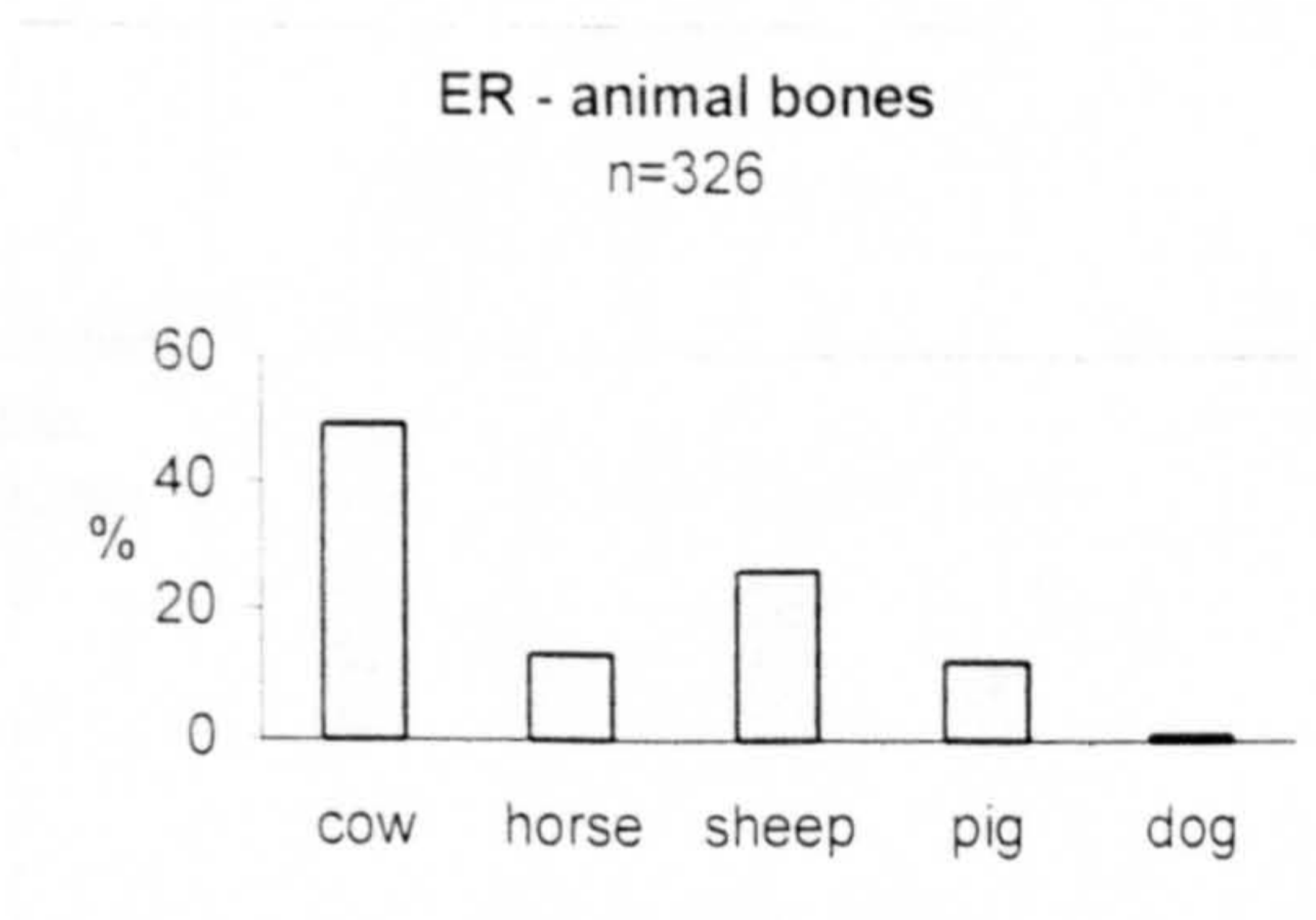
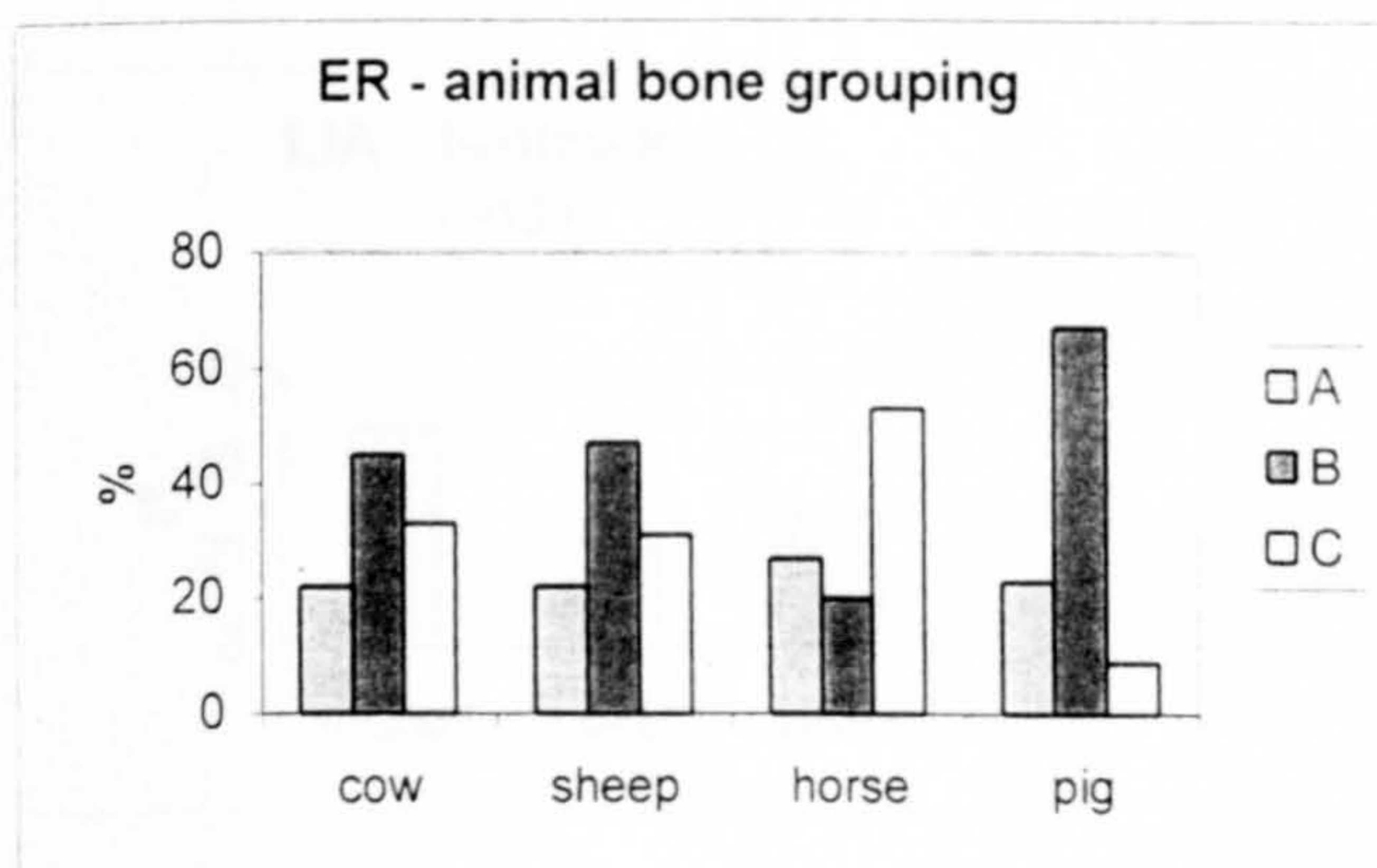


Figure 5.17 Early Roman period animal bone groups according to meat yield



Distribution of containers and ingredients at late Iron Age Barton Court Farm

Figure 5.18 Distribution of late Iron Age pottery

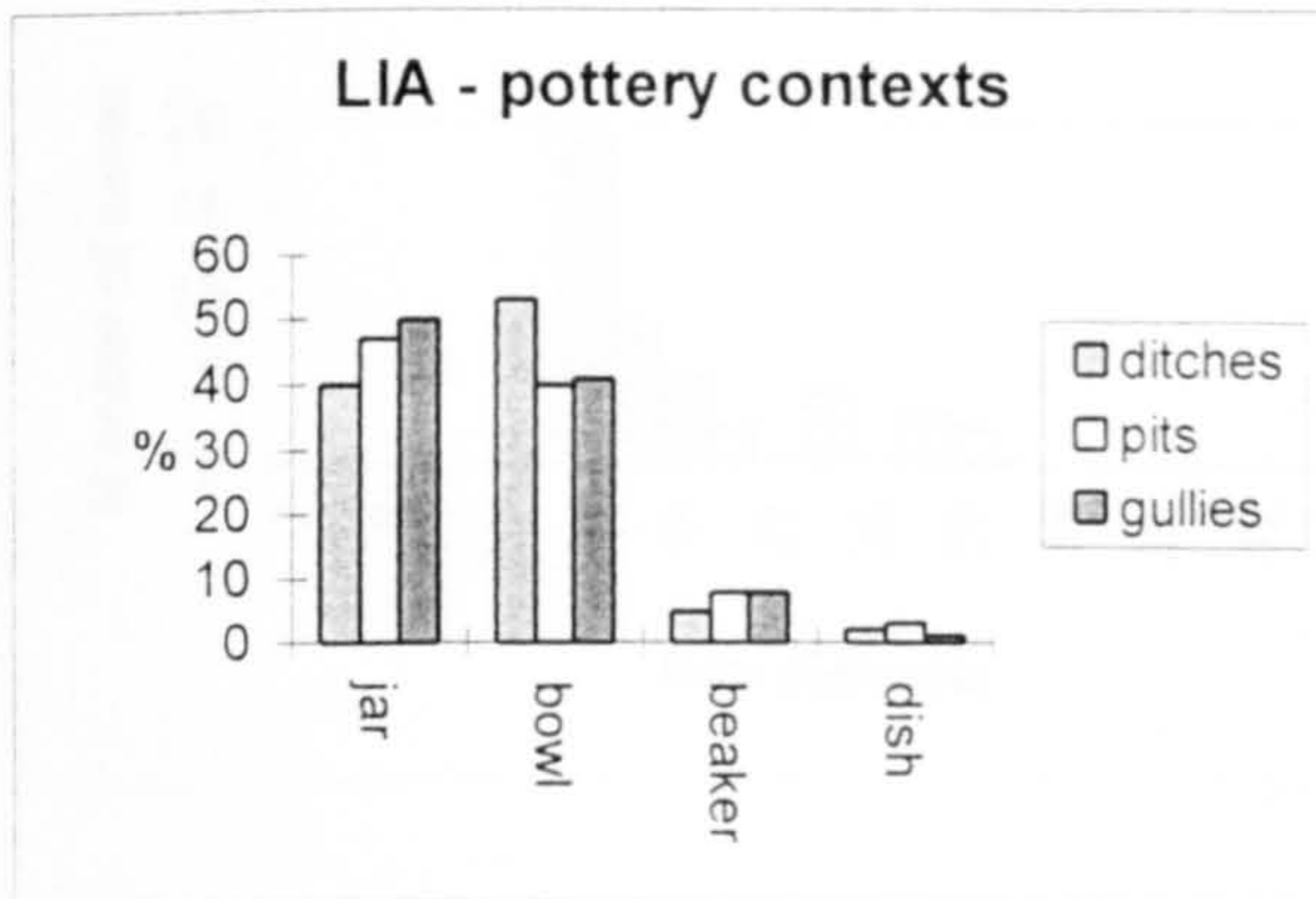


Figure 5.19 Distribution of late Iron Age animal bones

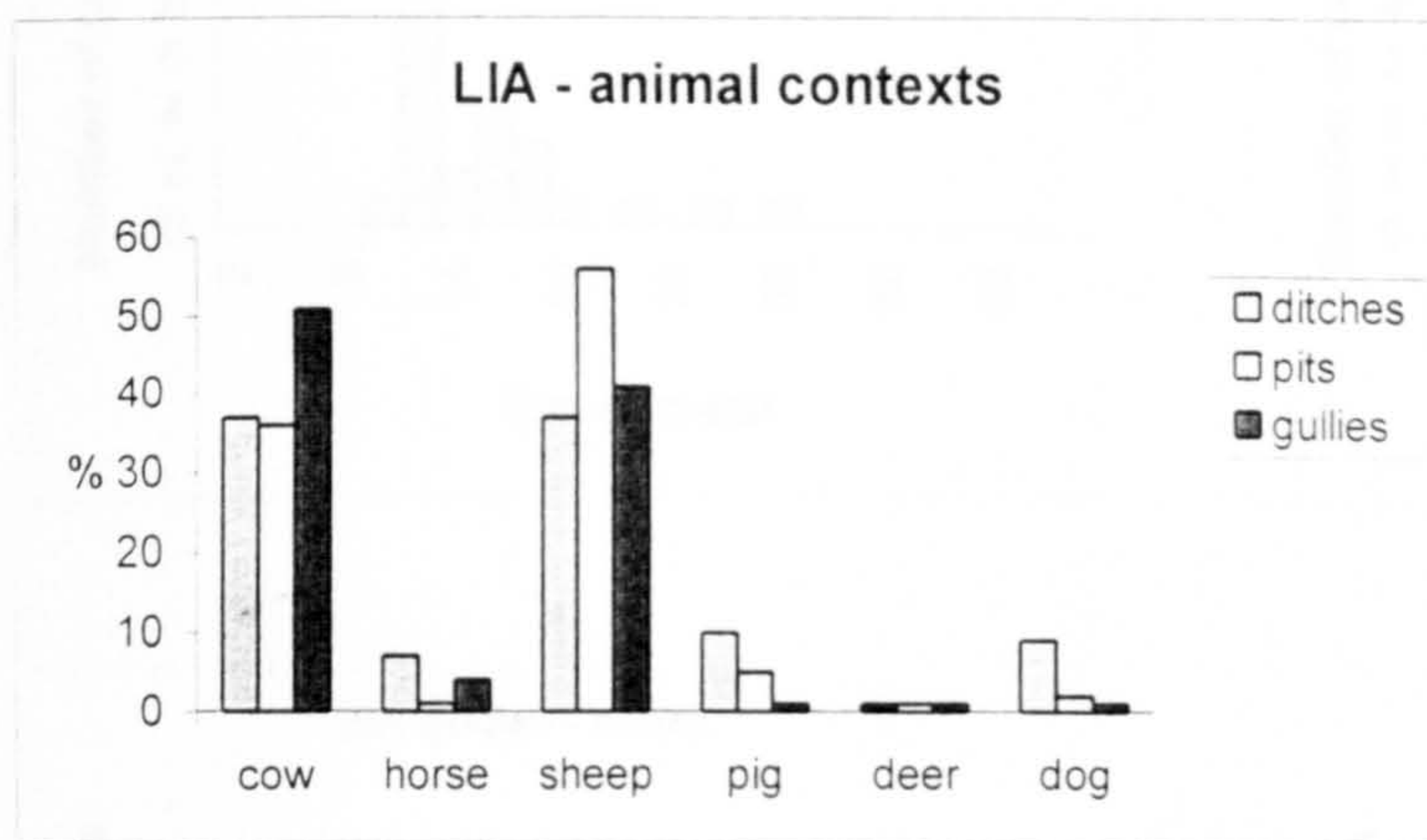
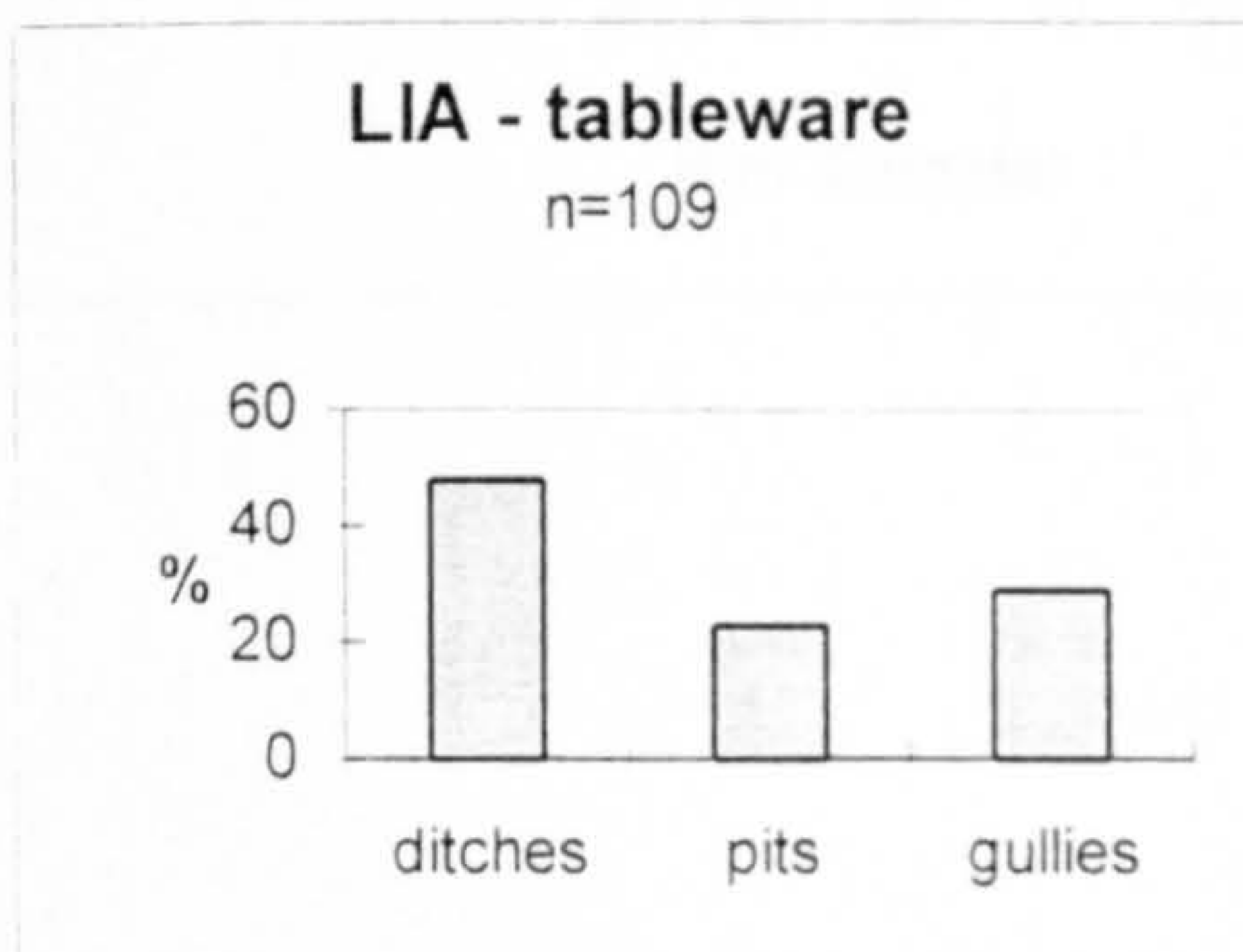
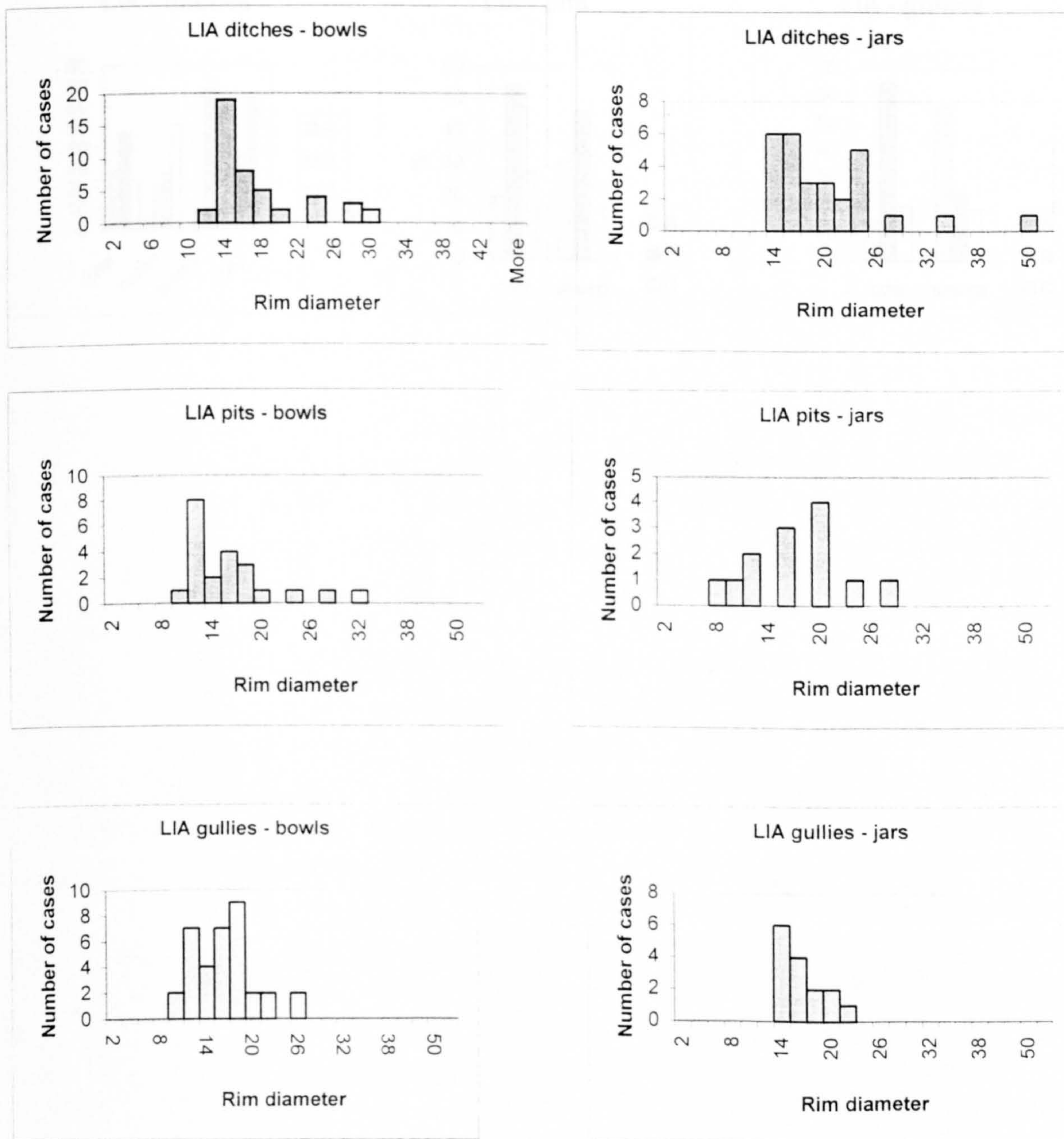


Figure 5.20 Distribution of late Iron Age tableware



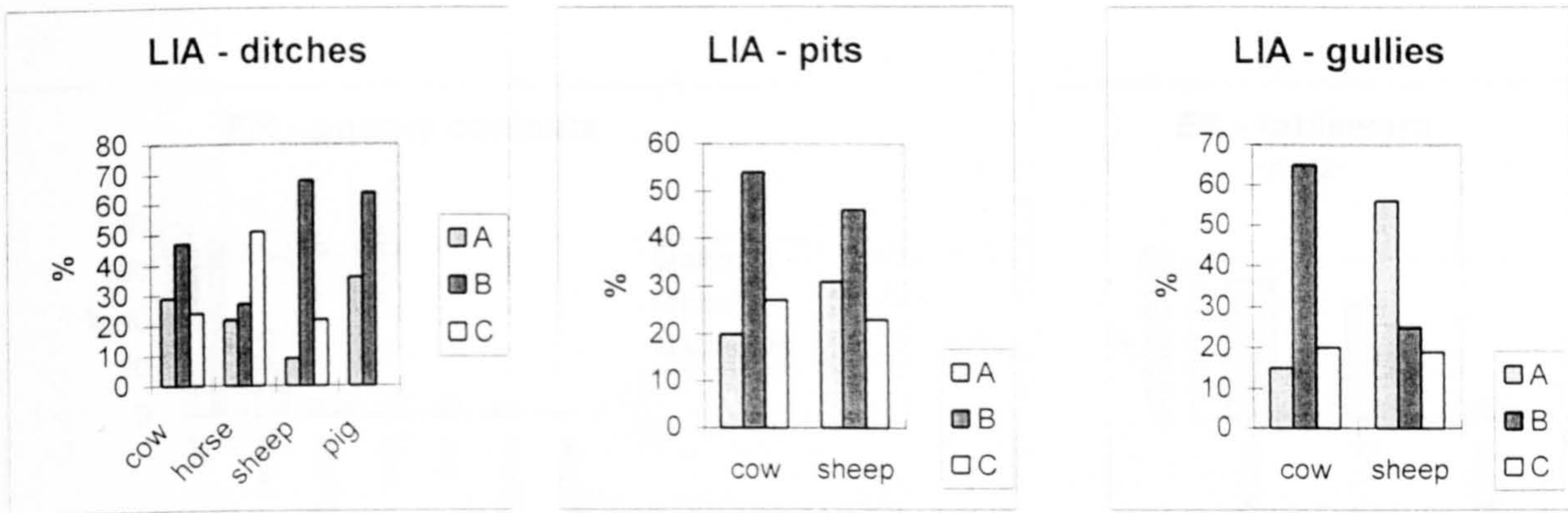
Distribution of containers at late Iron Age Barton Court Farm cont.

Figure 5.21 Histograms of late Iron Age bowls and jars by feature



Distribution of ingredients at late Iron Age Barton Court Farm cont.

Figure 5.22 Late Iron Age bone groups by feature (did not include species with less than 10 bones)



Distribution of containers at early Roman period Barton Court Farm

Figure 5.23 Distribution of Roman pottery

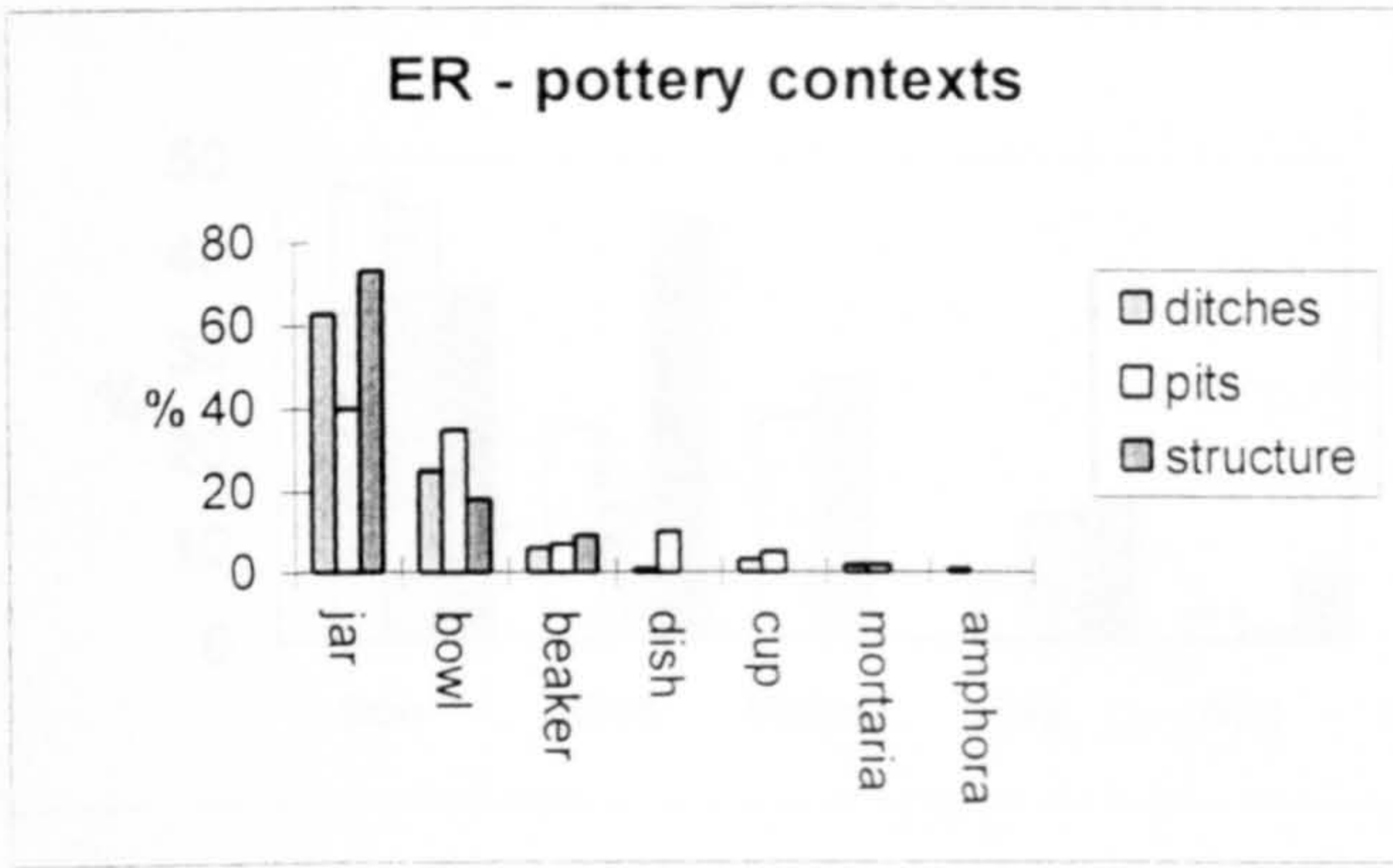


Figure 5.24 Distribution of tableware

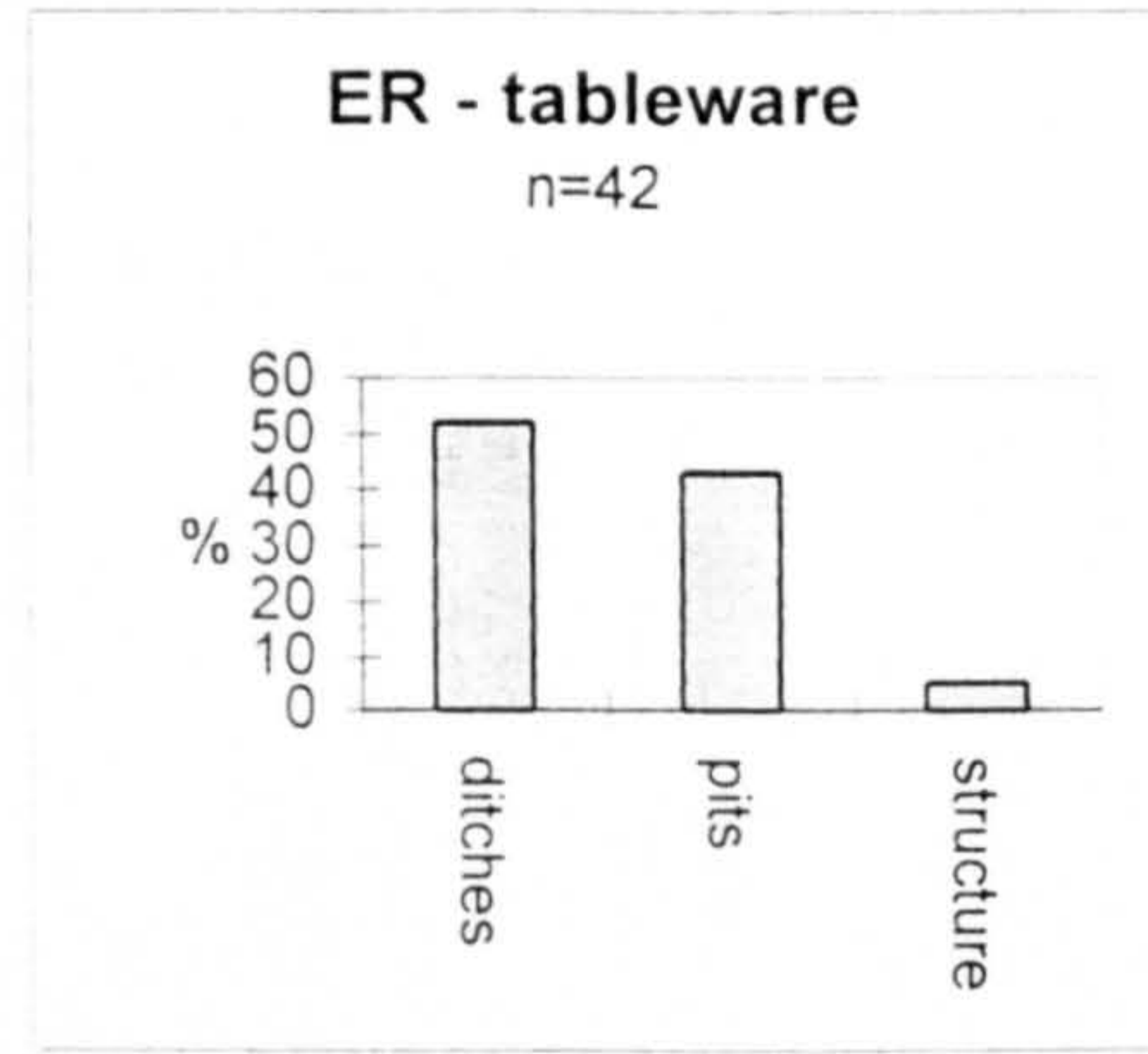
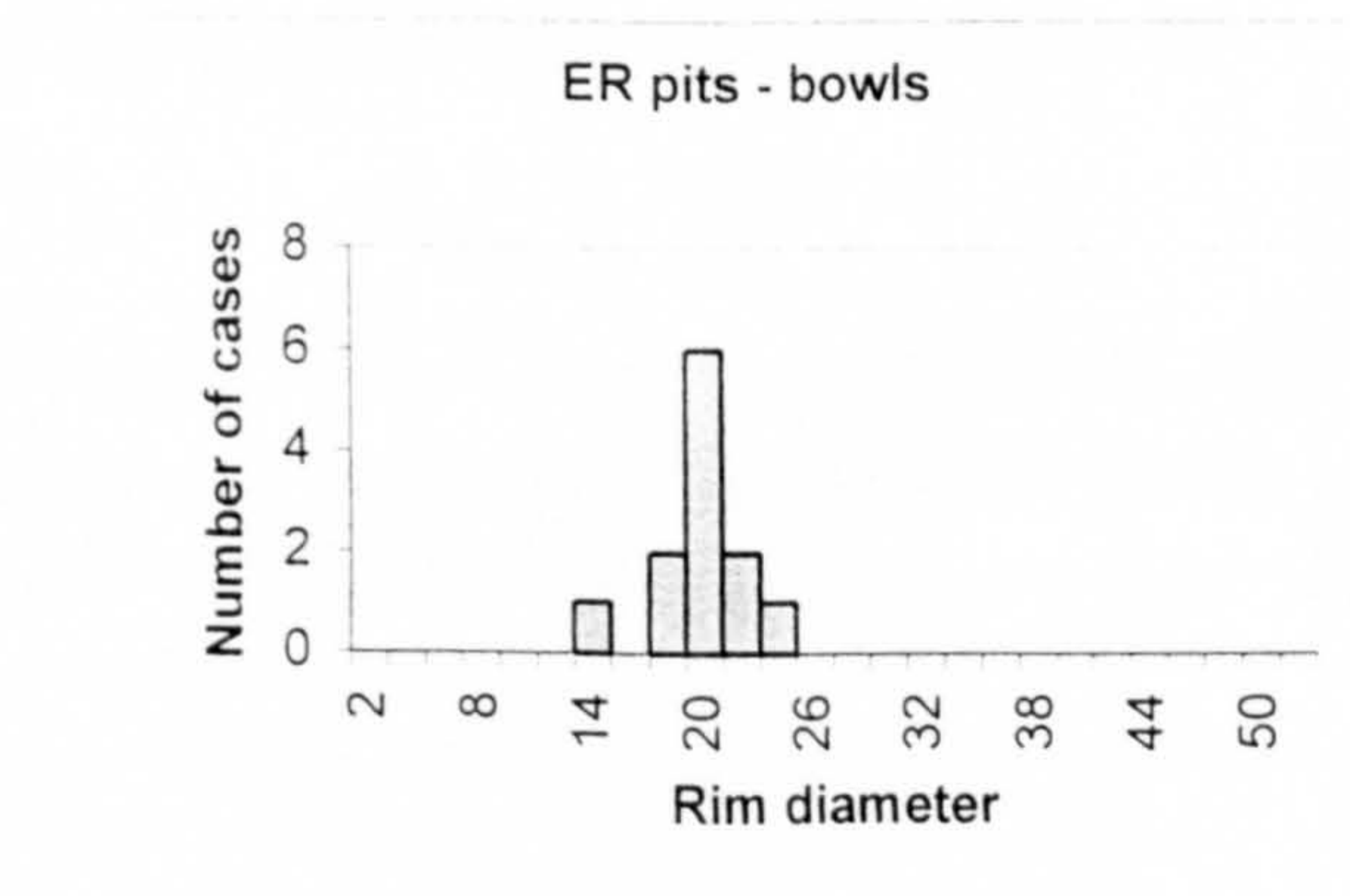
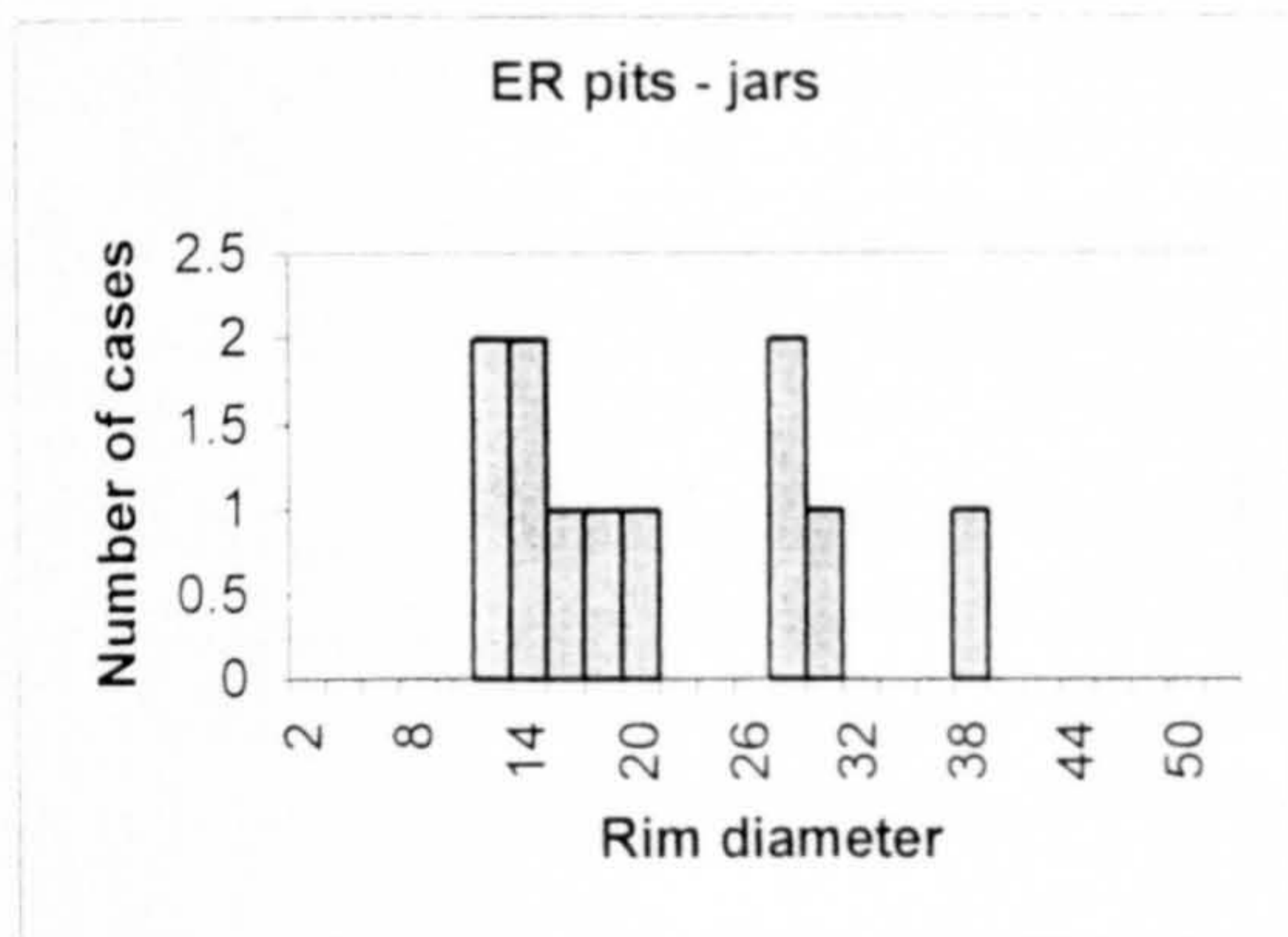
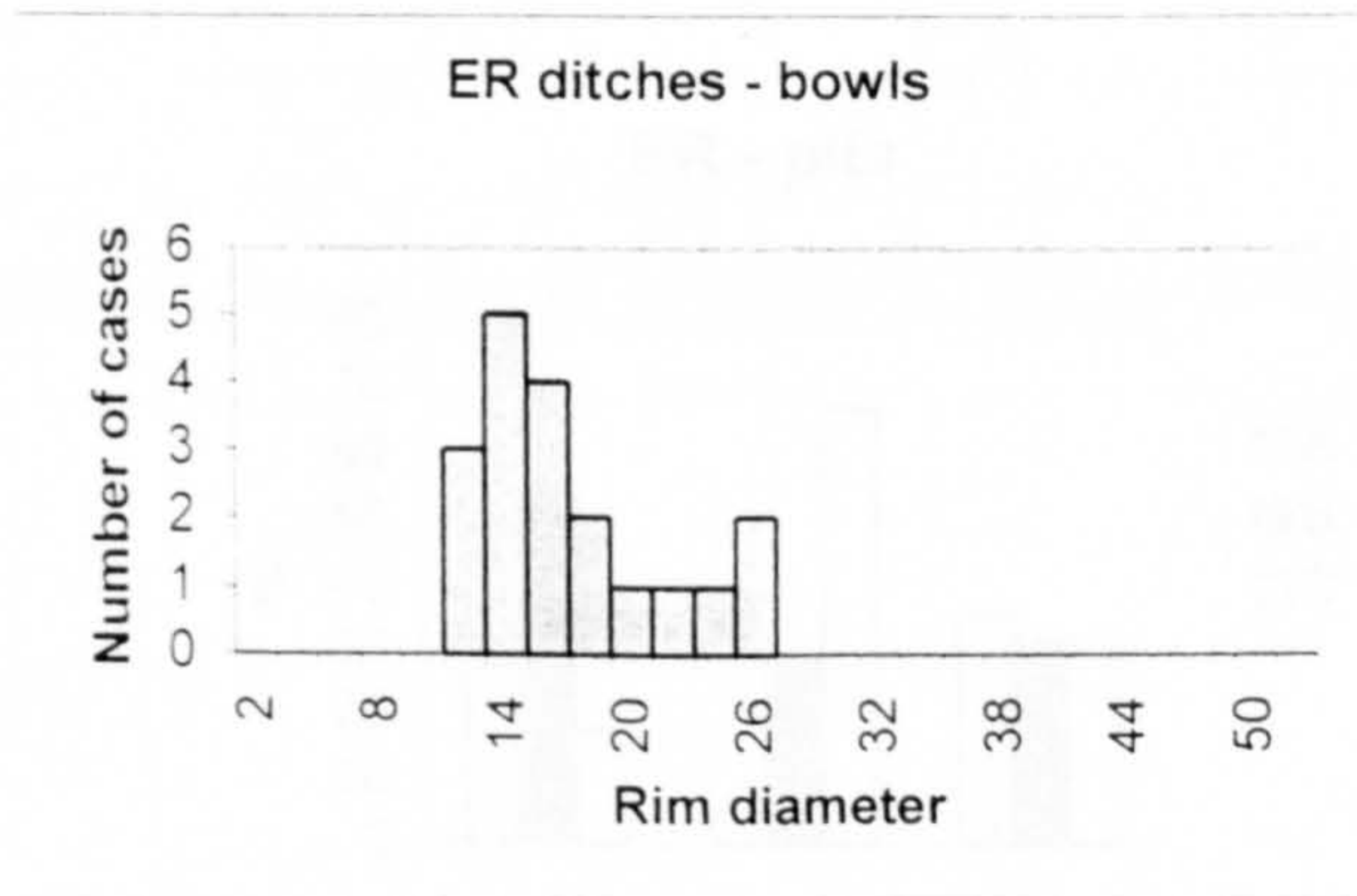
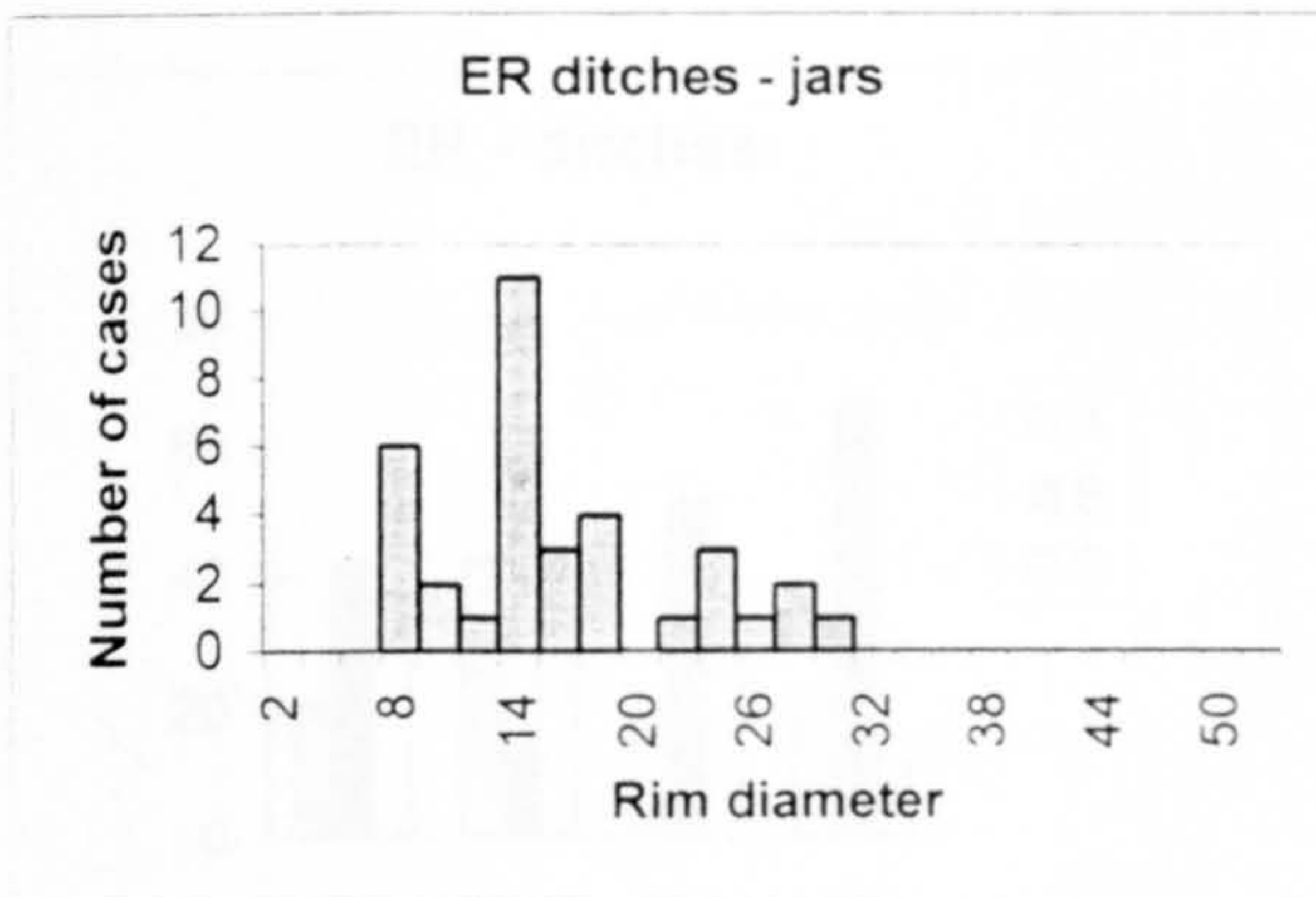


Figure 5.25 Histograms of jars and bowls by feature



Distribution of ingredients at early Roman period Barton Court Farm

Figure 5.26 Distribution of early Roman period animal bones

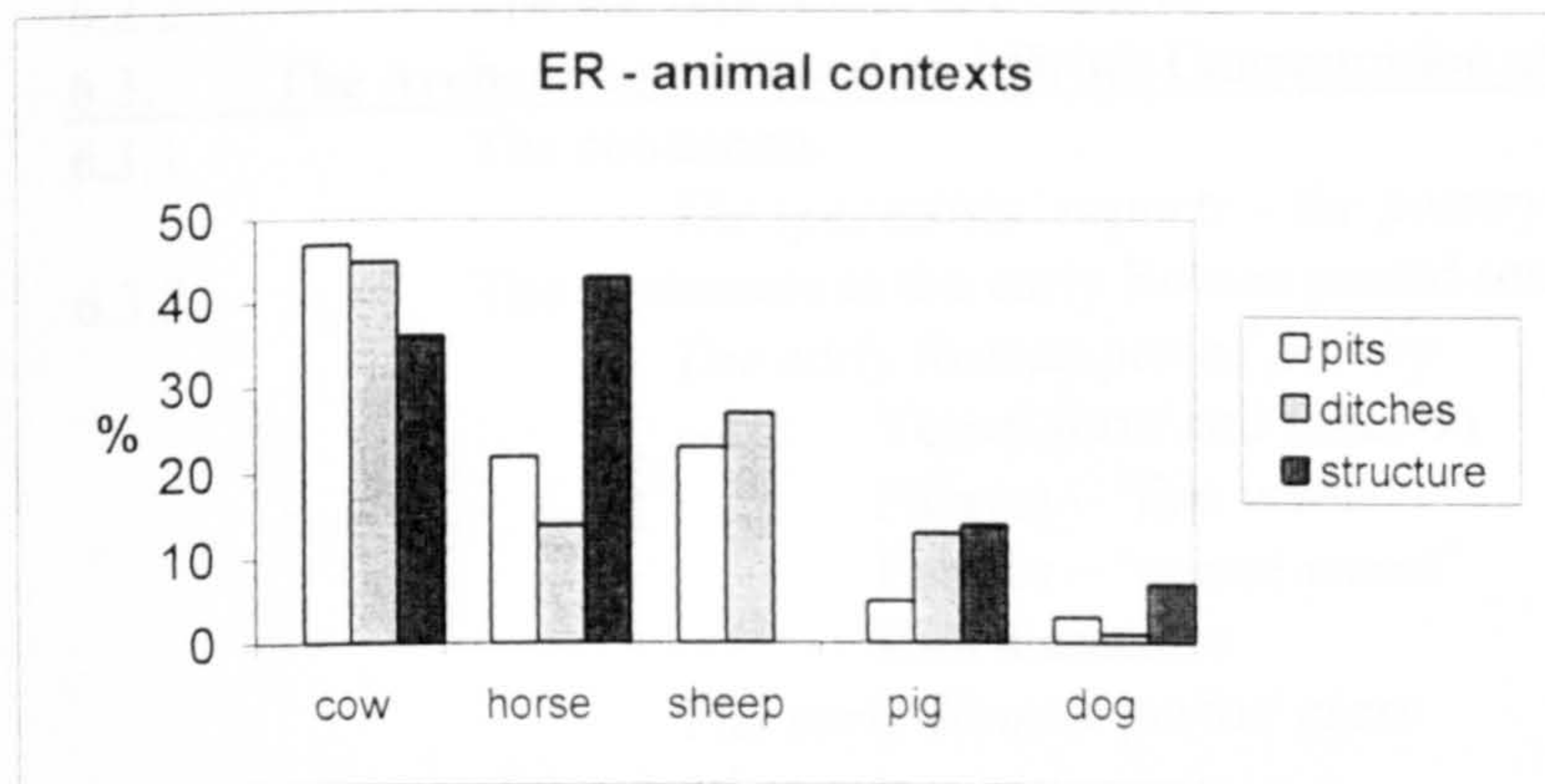
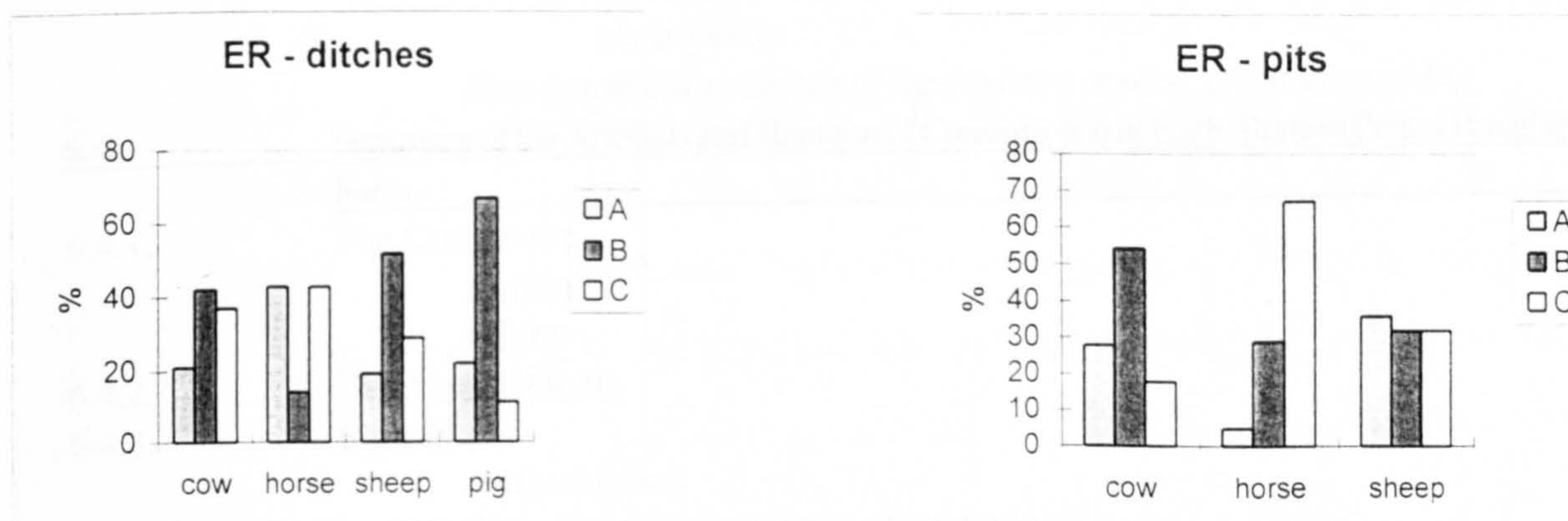


Figure 5.27 Early Roman period animal bone groups by feature (did not include species with less than 10 bone)



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Chapter 6

Roughground Farm

6.1. Introduction

Roughground Farm is situated on the second gravel terrace between the rivers Thames and Leach and has a similar geography to that of Barton Court Farm. The site is thought to have been occupied in some capacity during the Neolithic and in the late Bronze Age although clear settlement is only apparent as of the early Iron Age. The early Iron Age settlement, characterized by boundary ditches, track ways, pits, post-holes and burials, was short lived and soon abandoned; evidence of occupation during the middle and late Iron Age is minimal. A new settlement was established in the mid-first century AD and was inhabited into the early second century. Towards the end of the occupation of the early Roman settlement, in the mid-second century, a villa was constructed just south of, but within the limits of, the early Roman settlement. Thereafter the site was occupied continuously through to the end of the Roman period.

Roughground Farm is a complicated site with an excavation history that started in 1957 and ended in 1990. Most of the early Roman settlement was excavated in 1957 and 1958. There are a number of problems with the interpretation of the site as parts of it were destroyed before excavation. The excavated material also does not combine perfectly with ideas about food and drink consumption in that there is a paucity of butchery notations and botanical samples. Nevertheless, Roughground Farm is a fascinating site and suitable for inclusion in this research because the post-excavation work, site archive and site report was compiled by the O.A.U.. More importantly, as I have stated previously, the study of eating and drinking practices is a means to establishing the *diversity* of the effects of imperialism on native settlements in the Upper Thames Valley. Frankly, as will become apparent, the site (and the

site archive) was too interesting to discount despite the incongruities of its archaeological recording.

This chapter will commence with a summary of the excavation of, and configuration of, the early Roman settlement at Roughground Farm. Following this, the social practices which revolve around eating and drinking will be explored. First, through an examination of the implements and ingredients used in both the preparation and consumption of food and drink; and second, through the consideration of the various processes involved in the distribution of these remains on the site. The chapter will conclude with a discussion on my interpretation of the excavated material, within the context of imperialism.

6.2. The Excavation

Margaret Jones first excavated the site from 1957-65 and small-scale excavations were undertaken by the O.A.U. in 1981-2 and in 1990. The excavation is recognized as “one of the first landscape studies undertaken in this country” (Allen *et al.* 1993:xxi). The site was first identified through crop marks and through the discovery of artefacts and features by local people when the gravel face was exposed. Excavation began in 1957 after a watching brief during gravel extraction established the importance of the site. The excavation team was too small to clear the whole of the site, although the removal of topsoil by gravel company scrapers rendered most of the features visible; this enabled their individual excavation. The labour force was largely unskilled in archaeology, which necessitated an accessible excavation strategy; complicated stratigraphy was consequently excavated in spits. Storage of finds was highly problematic and it was decided in 1961 that non-stratified pottery (see below), fragmented animal bone and building material of no ‘intrinsic interest’ was to be discarded.

Tim Allen of the O.A.U. managed and co-ordinated the post-excavation work of the early 1957-65 excavations as well as the smaller excavations by the O.A.U. in 1981-2 and 1990. He comments on the unique task of integrating different approaches to the past and cautions that “The partial nature of the excavation and the character and the variety of the excavation and recording techniques used have left an incomplete picture of the site” (Allen *et al.*

1993:5). I can attest to the challenge of establishing the nature of the early Roman period settlement. However, although Roughground Farm is complicated by its excavation history, I would suggest that this complication is one of degree, not kind, because most excavations are partial and all methods of collecting and recording excavated material are inherently biased.

6.2.1. The site (see Figure 6.1.)

The early Roman settlement is characterized by an oval house enclosure with associated pits surrounded by a rectangular enclosure. The house enclosure has been re-cut many times, and it was not possible to identify a sequence of enclosure, although the southwestern entrance was respected for each re-cut. It is also possible that some of the enclosure ditches held a fence or wall slot. A short series of post-holes situated inside one of the ditches has been identified and they may have formed part of a house. Domestic material, particularly parts of clay ovens recovered in the terminals of the house enclosure, helped to differentiate the suggested house site from other features at the settlement. Outside the entrance of the house site, a series of contemporary pits were recovered. They are thought to have had a variety of possible functions ranging from cooking to storage – a number of the pits contained burnt stones as well as charcoal and ash which might indicate particular cooking events. A rectangular ‘animal pen’ has also been identified within the domestic area. The 40 metre square compound ditch which surrounds these features is believed to have been a slightly later addition to the settlement which was probably ‘open’ until the end of the first century AD. A large area just southwest of the main occupation area, quarried away before excavation, provides an unknown quality to the early Roman period settlement. Unlike at Barton Court Farm, there are numerous indications that there was settlement activity beyond the ditched compound. A series of gullies, pits and postholes west and south of the main occupation area have been identified as contemporary with the early Roman period settlement.

A number of disassociated contexts have also been assigned to this period (see Figure 6.1.). Possible stock enclosures beneath the second century villa building had few finds but the pottery was dated to the first century AD. It is possible that there was a second early Roman occupation area present at the site. A series of contemporary but disconnected pits, hearths,

ovens and shallow gullies have been identified and Allen has theorized that if there was a second early Roman settlement, it may have been of higher status, because of the presence of fine wares (Allen *et al.* 1993:181). In an area quite isolated from the main occupation area is an elaborately marked early Roman cremation burial that was situated next to a former early Iron Age circular structure.

The organization of the early Roman settlement is similar to other early Roman settlements in the Valley with rectangular enclosures surrounding house sites, animal pens, and irregular-shaped pits. The circular or ovoid structure of the early Roman house site at Roughground Farm, however, differs from that of neighbouring early Roman period Claydon Pike, which had a rectangular structure similar to that found at early Roman period Barton Court Farm (Miles and Palmer 1983a; see also Chapter 8 on Claydon Pike). The site has been described as “entirely native in character” (Allen *et al.* 1993:179).

6.2.2. The site report and site archive

Much of the post-excavation work was compiled or at least reviewed and co-ordinated by the O.A.U. with the co-operation of the original director, Margaret Jones. The site report was published in 1993 as part of the *Thames Valley Landscapes* series. The report comes with a microfiche element, similar in format to that of Barton Court Farm. The main text focuses on the summary of the site stratigraphy and finds and discussion of the site as it pertains to other sites in the Upper Thames Valley with much of the detail of the excavation and finds produced on microfiche. Unlike Barton Court Farm, the finds are presented according to their material composition, rather than their function. The bringing together of two different recording and excavation strategies with a fifteen-year hiatus was a challenge for the publication team. The extent of the challenge can be followed in the site archive, which contains a fascinating correspondence spanning forty years. As Allen states in his discussion of the format for the publication:

...a choice had to be made between full description, often involving lengthy discussion of the doubtful validity of particular pieces of evidence, or more summary description, based around whichever interpretative framework best fit the available data (Allen *et al.* 1993:5).

The second option was used with the proviso that full descriptions could be found in the archive (Allen *et al.* 1993:5).

The site report and accompanying microfiche are an invaluable resource for those studying the Roman period. I do have one comment on the way some of the material was presented, however. I found it at times difficult to find an early Roman period settlement in the discussion and presentation of the excavated material. Many of the early Roman finds and remains were found within the categories 'villa and environs' or 'pre/early villa', categories used throughout the report (see, for example, copper alloy objects, iron objects and animal bone). This may in part be due to the small numbers of finds recovered from the early Roman settlement; however, in the fired clay report where there was a large amount of material recovered from the early Roman settlement, the report was ordered by context number (rather than by phase) under the general category of 'Romano-British'. I should add that the early Roman occupation is specified in both the description of the excavation of the settlement and in the general discussion element at the end of the site report.

In terms of archival research, the Roughground Farm archive, which is stored at the Ashmolean Museum, was the most interesting archive consulted for this study. As a researcher, it was a privilege to follow the thought processes of some of the archaeological luminaries of the past, through scribbled thoughts, queries and a wealth of correspondence.

For my analysis it was necessary to enter into a computer data base both the pottery and bone primary records.

6.3. The Archaeology of Food and Drink Consumption at Roughground Farm

As with the previous case study, this section will commence with a discussion on the nature of the remains of eating and drinking, to include the methodologies and conclusions of the various specialists, as well as my own analysis of the data. The distinction between the work of the various specialists and my own analysis will be outlined at the beginning of the relevant subsections. The artefacts and remains are grouped as follows: '*containers*' – which include

pottery and glass, '*other implements*' which includes metal, stone and clay artefacts and finally '*ingredients*' which include animal remains and plants.

6.3.1. The containers

The specialists' reports – the pottery

The pottery from the 1957-65 excavations and the trenches excavated in 1981 and 1982 was analysed by Sarah Green, and the pottery from the 1990 excavation was analysed by Paul Booth. Most of the early Roman pottery was recovered during the earliest excavation. Although all of the pottery from the 1957-59 excavations was initially kept, many of the unstratified coarse-ware body sherds¹ were summarized in the pottery notebooks and later discarded. A complete catalogue of the pottery was not therefore possible and Green decided not to base her analysis on quantification, concentrating instead on establishing a record and catalogue of pottery forms and fabrics (1993:113-4). As this study does not emphasize non-stratified pottery, the discard practices did not directly affect the analysis and quantification of the early Roman pottery as described below.

Much of what appears in the primary pot records can be found on microfiche (fiche 3, frame 16-91) although there was more detail, including rim diameters, on the records themselves. When there was an incongruity between the microfiche pottery record and the primary pottery records, I used what was written in the primary record.

6.3.2. The containers at the early Roman period settlement

The early Roman period pottery

At the early Roman settlement, there was a wide variety of vessel types, both local forms and forms brought in from further afield. The range in pottery includes variously shaped jars and dishes, bowls, beakers, cups, flagons and a single mortarium (see Figure 6.2.). A number of

the bowls, dishes and particularly cups were samian. No amphorae were recovered from stratified contexts, although both Dressel 20 (an olive oil amphora) and Pelichet 47 (a wine amphora), which could be contemporary with the settlement, were identified in residual contexts – and therefore may have been used. The mortarium (from the Verulamium region) recovered in an early Roman context, on the other hand, was probably not a prominent vessel type as the majority of mortaria recovered at the site were from the third and fourth centuries. Small numbers of other non-local wares were identified, such as roughcast beakers, Black-burnished wares (BB1) from Dorset and vessels from Wiltshire and Herefordshire. Most of the pottery was locally made and wares of similar form and fabric have been identified at Cirencester and Claydon Pike (Green 1993:134). The presence of a variety of vessel forms implies that a number of methods were used in preparing and serving food and drink and quite possibly that the diet was equally varied (Brown 1997:100). Included in the local wares are a series of imitation wares including ‘Gallo-Belgic’ fine wares, namely beakers, bowls, and dishes. Imitation wheel-thrown Black-burnished ware is also quite prominent.

Form and function

Figure 6.2. shows that of the identified forms, jars are by far the most commonly identified vessel, followed by bowls, then cups, dishes, with beakers, flagons and mortaria present in very small numbers. Identified serving type vessels – to include bowls, dishes, cups, beakers, and flagons – amount to 21% of the total identified assemblage, 7% of which is samian ware. The distribution of plain versus decorated samian ware was similar to that found at Barton Court Farm (contra Willis 1997). The ratio of plain to decorated ware at early Roman Roughground Farm was 3:1 – the only decorated samian ware was bowls (Drag 29 and Drag 37). Jar/bowl types were not identified at Roughground Farm; it is likely that this is partly because there appears to have been more of a distinction between the two forms in the early Roman period but also because Green’s bowl types tend to be shallow (see further discussion in Chapter 7 section 7.3.1.). Wide-mouth jars are the most common type of jar, though decorated high-shouldered jars with foot-ring bases are prominent. Narrow-necked jars, straight walled jars with handles and the presence of a variety of lids made out of a number of different fabrics suggest that many of the jars had specific functions. Burnt residues were only identified on coarsely tempered jars, and although two pieces of samian ware were burnt, it is

¹ It appears as if all of the Roman-style wares were kept – a common practice in Romano-British studies.

not clear whether the burnt residues were from cooking, or were burnt accidentally or even deliberately.

	n=1072	%
fine and specialist wares*	38	4
black burnished wares	95	9
oxidised wares	64	6
brown wares	63	6
shell tempered wares	48	4
limestone tempered wares	75	7
grog tempered wares	228	21
reduced wares	447	42
misc.	8	1

Table 6.1. Early Roman period pottery fabrics

Fabrics – ‘fine wares’

Paul Booth (in press; see also Booth 1991) has assembled a list of fine ware fabrics and specialist wares for the Roman period in the Upper Thames Valley. These include amphorae, mortaria, samian and other glazed and colour-coated wares. Coarse wares such as ‘Belgic type’ wares, oxidized and reduced coarse wares, Black-burnished ware and calcareous wares are considered less of a high status indicator and are grouped together as ‘other wares’. Booth suggests that settlements with high proportions of fine and specialist wares are possibly of higher status because:

...these wares often represent non-essential vessel types the acquisition of which may be seen as a matter of choice, determined in part by ability to pay for them (economic status) and by the desire to express a particular level of (relative) sophistication (perhaps related to social status) (Booth in press).

Booth calculated the percentages of these wares (based on number of sherds) for the pottery unearthed during the 1990 excavation at Roughground Farm. It was found in the ‘early’ Roman period (which actually refers mostly to the second and third centuries) that 7.5% of the pottery identified was specialist and fine ware (Booth in press). According to my calculations (see Table 6.1.), 4% of the wares at the early Roman settlement was ‘fine’ or specialist ware,

although, the real percentage is probably slightly higher, as the number of sherds for some of these wares, i.e. some of the samian wares, were not found in the primary record.

It is also conceivable that some of the 'other wares', such as Black-burnished ware (BB1) from Dorset and the imitation Belgic wares, were priced at a premium compared to other coarse wares (although see below). Further, it is possible that non-local 'coarse' wares were more expensive than local 'fine' ware (Keith Branigan pers. comm.). Booth's observations are not based on vessel form, which may also reflect on a group's standing in the community particularly if a settlement has a high percentage of serving type vessels. Coarse ware serving type vessels found at the early Roman settlement, for example, may have been prestigious – the grey ware jar that held the cremation burial was a coarse ware vessel. Clearly, as Booth acknowledges, the linking of particular pots with settlement status is far from straightforward and there is usually an archaeological or ethnographical example that contradicts an association with numbers of imports and status or decorated pots and status and so on (for similar discussion see Pluciennik 1997:48-9; Woolf 1993:211; and Chapter 3 section 3.4.3.). The emphasis on status and fine wares has also left so-called coarse wares, which comprise the majority of the pottery recovered at archaeological settlements, out in the cold, and ignores the cultural and social practices associated with preparing and storing food and drink (Miller 1985; Bédoyère 1989:92; Pluciennik 1997:48).

Fabrics – 'coarse wares'

The coarse ware pottery recovered from early Roman Roughground Farm was made from a wide variety of fabrics. The most commonly occurring fabric was the reduced ware followed by grog-tempered ware, Black-burnished ware (BB1 and imitation BB1) and fabrics with various inclusions such as shell, limestone and flint (see Table 6.1. for breakdown of fabrics). There was a distinction between some of the fabrics and specific vessel forms: wide-mouthed and narrow-necked jars were generally reduced, vertical wall jars had limestone inclusions and the high-shouldered necked jars were grog-tempered. All of the non-samian cups were made from a Severn Valley fabric. The association of specific fabrics with specific vessel types could indicate that these vessels were recognized as being appropriate for specific uses or for specific foods (Miller 1985:152; Sherratt 1987:83; Sillar 1997:14; Evans 1987:200; Brown 1997:100). I do not wish to imply, however, that there was only one prescribed use for each

vessel type. The use of some vessels may have been quite flexible (Rice 1987:209), and histograms of the some of the forms with sufficient numbers of rim diameters show that there was quite a range of sizes for each vessel type (see Figure 6.3.). My point is that the purchase of a 'familiar series' (after Miller 1985:162) of pots might be culturally and socially prescribed rather than motivated purely by the functionality of the vessel (see for example Woods 1986:163 who observes that the shape of the Roman period cooking pot "break[s] all the rules for thermal shock resistance").

It is also possible that vessel fabric, in this case Black-burnished ware and brown ware, were as important as the form of a vessel. A variety of vessel types, bowls, bowl/dishes and jars, for instance, were of Black-burnished ware and a series of decorated jars, storage jars and dishes were made out of the brown fabric. This suggests that other factors such as point of origin or possibly the colour and texture of the vessel (see Cumberpatch 1997; Brown 1997:100) may have influenced the selection of these particular vessels. For instance, the use of brown vessels may have been significant for particular occasions; the beakers recovered at the settlement also had a brown slip and vessels made from a brown coarse fabric were decorated and/or associated with storing and serving. That Black-burnished ware was also imitated (except in its method of manufacture – the imitated wares were wheel-turned, not hand-made) suggests that it was a prominent import (Brown 1997:110) but also implies that the style and/or colour of the vessels were at least as important as their point of origin and method of manufacture (see Cumberpatch 1997:126-8). Allen (2000:4), for instance, has suggested that brown and black vessels at Iron Age sites in Oxfordshire might be imitations of leather vessels.

Rim diameters

Histograms of the jars show a prominence of medium sized vessels as indicated by their peak at 16-18 cm (see Figure 6.4.). Too few of the bowls and dishes had definable rim diameters (3 rims and 2 rims respectively) although together with the rim diameters of the cups (as a group that might reflect serving ware) (see Figure 6.5.) it is apparent that the vessels are medium to large sized – which may point to communal consumption, at least publicly. It is also possible that the large open jars, which are presumably less portable, will also have played a role in public consumption events (Howard 1981:19; Vencl 1994:310).

Discussion

In contrast, the pottery recovered at early Roman period Barton Court Farm (although the percentage of bowls at Barton Court Farm may be slightly exaggerated by the differing approaches to classifying forms) reveals a significantly higher proportion of *shallow* bowls and beakers than was found at Roughground Farm. Roughground Farm in turn has a higher proportion of cups and dishes and dish/bowls. This points to different eating and drinking practices at the two settlements. In the absence of stratified amphorae, the prominence of cups may indicate a different drinking custom rather than the consumption of a different beverage. It is also possible that cups were used for particular occasions, possibly related to significant events (see 'special deposits' below), it is notable that there was an increase in the use of beakers later at the villa site, and a decline in the use of cups (Booth 1993:139). The types of Roman-style vessels identified at the settlement appear to be associated with serving rather than preparing and flavouring food in particular ways (see Claydon Pike, Chapter 8 for opposite findings). The presence of a variety of imitation Belgic-style tableware and other non-Roman tableware, however, suggests that 'Roman-ness' was not necessarily a key factor in public consumption events. On the contrary, at early Roman Roughground Farm it appears that the variety in form and fabric reflects a complex repertoire of consumption practices.

The early Roman period glass

Most of the glass recovered from the site dates from the late second century to the fourth century. However, two fragments – a jar/flask and a hexagonal bottle – date to the late first century; these items were recovered from later Roman contexts but were possibly used at the early Roman settlement.

6.3.3. Other implements

A number of artefacts made out of different materials were recovered which have an association with food and drink. Sizeable amounts of clay oven parts, namely stoking hole arches, oven plates, plate supports, flue arches and oven wall fragments, were recovered in

several early Roman domestic contexts. It has been suggested that the ovens were probably used for bread making or for roasting grain, or both (archive report pg. 9). Three, possibly four, fired clay sling pellets associated with hunting, rather than combat, were also identified in early Roman contexts. In contrast with Barton Court Farm, numerous objects associated with grain preparation – querns, pestles/rubbers and whetstones – were recovered at the early Roman settlement.

6.3.4. Ingredients

The specialists' reports – the animal bones

It is difficult to gauge the significance of the percentages of the species and their body parts at Roughground Farm in part because of the excavation and post-excavation strategies. The allocation of animal bones to the early Roman period settlement is somewhat confusing as the site archive and the bone report, both published and on microfiche, focuses on the years of excavation rather than the chronology of settlement. From what I can determine, the numbers of identified bones are small at the early Roman settlement and there were no sieved samples. The collecting of the bones during the 1957 excavation, when the extent of the early Roman settlement was determined 'may have been less rigorous' than later excavation of the site (Jones and Levitan 1993:171). A Mr. Baxter, the local vet at the time, studied the bones during the excavation and his identifications appear to stand up to the conclusions of Eric Higgs who reviewed Baxter's identifications, and identified an additional box of bones, some of which were early Roman (although according to Higgs, pig bones may have been slightly over-represented by Baxter). Margaret Jones suggested in a 1981 archival report that the small numbers of animal bones recovered at the early Roman settlement might indicate that the emphasis at the settlement was on agriculture (see 'plants' below).

The published analysis of the animal bones does not refer specifically to the bones recovered at the early Roman period settlement, but rather, refers to the dates the animal bones were excavated. Therefore, for example, bones described under headings – "Cattle bones (recovered between 1957 and 1982)" – pertain to bones from throughout the Roman period. My analysis

is largely based on the primary bone reports as prepared by Baxter and Higgs with additional material from the bone records of 1990 excavation, which were prepared by Bruce Levitan.

The specialists' reports – the plant remains

Plant remains were not recovered at the early Roman period settlement. It does appear, however, that agriculture (or the preparation of grains) may have been important to the inhabitants as suggested by the non-botanical remains recovered at the settlement, which have been assembled below.

6.3.5. The ingredients at the early Roman period settlement

The animal bones at the early Roman period settlement

Species representation

Based on bone counts it appears that cattle were the most commonly identified species, followed by sheep, horse and pig (see Figure 6.6.). The age of death of the cattle and sheep varied indicating a range of possible uses including dairy, meat, and wool and as draft animals. Horses all tended to be adult, although molars from 'young' horses were identified. Pigs appear to have been killed when 'young', and were perhaps considered a culinary 'delicacy' (Baxter: archive report). A non-butchered horn core of a red deer and the lower jaw of a deer were identified which together with the sling pellets could indicate that the inhabitants of the settlement hunted wild species; the contribution of wild species to the diet was probably minimal although there may have been social significance to their capture and consumption. No dog remains were identified at the settlement. In 'pre/early villa' contexts from the 1990 excavation, a number of which were early Roman, cattle was also the most frequent species identified, followed by sheep; in contrast, pigs and horse were in the reverse order to what was found in the earlier excavation.

Butchery practices

It was not possible to catalogue specific butchery marks on the various species as they were not detailed in the primary record. There are indications that bones were chopped, cut and occasionally sawn. Baxter observed that “most of the larger bones were broken up and several shank bones have cross marks” (archival report). In general, it was the distal ends of the long bones that were recovered suggesting possible disarticulation of cattle and sheep at the shoulder and knee joints. A cattle phalange had ‘knife or chop marks’ mid-shaft which was seen as evidence of skinning. The distal end of a horse tibia was ‘sawn’ through; this single example of horse butchery can not be taken as evidence that horse were consumed, especially as horse bones were generally less broken up than cattle bone. However, it was suggested in an archive report that because horse bones were mixed in with other butchered bones that they might have been consumed; a number of the horse bones found with other butchered species were meat-bearing (see below).

Butchery marks identified from ‘pre/early villa’ contexts during the 1990 excavation show that the base of the scapula of cattle was chopped through and that the distal end of a humerus was chopped. No sheep, pig or horse bones had specific butchery marks, and one rib of an unidentified ‘large’ species had cuts on the shaft.

Meat yields

Although the numbers are small, when the bones are grouped according to their potential meat yield (see Figure 6.7.), we see that bones from within group ‘B’ (bones with moderate amounts of meat), with the exception of horses, are the most commonly represented bones for each species. Bones from group ‘C’ (minimal amounts of meat) are less represented, which could indicate that some animals were brought to the settlement already ‘dressed’, although the existence of animal pens and the variable ages of the main domesticates, does suggest that the animals were reared at the settlement. It is also possible that ‘C’ group bones were used to make tools or that they represent special deposits or waste deposits not recovered within the domestic area of the settlement. In ‘pre/early villa’ contexts, for example, the distribution of meat-bearing bones was quite different for cattle bones with higher percentages of ‘A’ and ‘C’ type bones and hardly any ‘B’ bones. The sheep bones identified in these contexts were all

group 'B' meat-bearing bones, 'B' and 'C' bones were identified for pig and a single maxilla and humerus of a horse was identified.

The significance of the grouping of meat-bearing bones at the early Roman period settlement, given the nature of the bone record, is arguable; the groups of bones likely have more significance in relation to their individual contexts (see distribution of remains below).

Non-botanical evidence of agriculture and/or grain processing

Plant remains were not recovered in the area of Roughground Farm where the majority of early Roman settlement is evident. Findings in contexts associated with second century villa layers indicating small numbers of spelt wheat are of note, but are inconclusive in terms of what was being processed and/or consumed at the settlement. Plant samples from the 1990 excavation are only from second and third century features. Certainly, the processing and consumption of grain was of particular significance to the inhabitants as seen in the large deposit of querns in one area of the settlement (see below). Furthermore, a number of the pits directly associated with the house enclosure have been linked to 'grain roasting' and possibly grain storage. Clay ovens that were recovered around the enclosure may also have been used to roast grain. As was mentioned above, the noticeably low numbers of animal bones recovered at the early Roman settlement may signify that the emphasis at the settlement was on agriculture (M. Jones 1981 archival report), and that animals were reared for consumption rather than as part of the settlement economy.

6.4. Summary of the Artefacts and Remains of Consumption at Roughground Farm

Before we consider the distribution of the artefacts and the remains at the early Roman period settlement, it is necessary to summarize some of the points made above on the containers, the other implements and the ingredients.

6.4.1. The Containers

The pottery

- Jars are the most dominant form, followed by bowls, cups, dishes and beakers. Flagons and mortaria are present in very small numbers.
- A wide variety of jar types was identified, which could indicate variety in the methods of preparing and cooking foods.
- The percentage of assemblage that might fall into the tableware category was 21%, 7% of the tableware was samian (mostly non-decorated).
- Histograms of the jars indicate that jars were generally medium-sized with a peak of 16-18cm.
- Histograms of serving-type vessels indicate that the vessels were predominantly medium to large sized, which could indicate communal eating.
- Four percent of the total pottery assemblage was assigned to the 'fine and specialty ware' category, which could imply that the settlement was of low status (after Booth 1991; in press).
- I have suggested, additionally, that non-local coarse ware may also have been prestigious and that the form or even colour of the vessel may have been of importance to the inhabitants.
- Presence of imitation Belgic-style tableware and other non-Roman tableware suggests that 'Roman-ness' was not necessarily a factor in consumption events.

The glass

- Two fragments of late first century glass – a jar/flask and a hexagonal bottle – were recovered from non-early Roman period contexts; they may have been used at the settlement.

6.4.2. Other implements

- A significant number of clay oven parts were recovered in early Roman contexts – used possibly for bread making and/or for roasting grain.
- Sling pellets associated with hunting have been identified.
- A relatively large collection of querns and rubbers were recovered at the settlement.

6.4.3. Ingredients

The animal bones

- Cattle were the most commonly identified species, followed by sheep, horse and pig.
- The age of death of cattle and sheep suggest that they had varied uses.
- Pigs were primarily killed when young – a culinary delicacy?
- Few wild animals were identified, although the recovery of sling pellets suggests that they were hunted, and two deer bones were recovered.
- In 'pre/early villa' contexts from the 1990 excavation, cattle were again the most commonly identified species, followed by sheep, pigs (rather than horse), and horses.

- Butchery marks are not detailed in the primary record; Baxter observed that “most of the larger bones were broken up and several shank bones have cross marks” (archive report).
- On bones found in ‘pre/early villa’ contexts from the 1990 excavation, few butchery marks were observed. Only the bones of cattle and an unidentified large species had chop and/or cut marks. Sheep, pig and horse bones did not display any specific butchery marks.
- When the bones were grouped according to their meat yield, bones with moderate amounts of meat (group ‘B’) were the most frequent.
- Non meat-bearing bones were less common at the settlement, which could indicate that some of the domesticate were brought to the settlement already dressed, although the presence of possible animal pens and the variable ages of the species suggests that at least some animals were reared at the settlement. It is quite possible that non meat-bearing bones were disposed of elsewhere.
- The animal bones at the settlement appear to indicate that animal rearing was not necessarily a major part of the site economy, but was rather for consumption by the inhabitants.

Non-botanical evidence of agriculture

- No plant remains were recovered at the early Roman period settlement.
- However, agriculture is strongly suggested by the presence of pits that indicate grain roasting and possibly storage, and by the significant numbers of ovens recovered at the settlement.
- A considerable number of querns and other cereal processing paraphernalia were recovered from the settlement.
- The low numbers of animal remains identified at the settlement suggests that agriculture may have been important.

6.5. The Distribution of the Artefacts and Remains of Consumption at Roughground Farm

Early Roman period Roughground Farm provides a unique opportunity in this study to contrast the material recovered from the main area of occupation with other areas of the site. Fine wares recovered from some of the features away from the main area of occupation have led the authors of the site report to consider whether there was a second early Roman settlement, possibly of higher status, at the site (Allen *et al.* 1993:181). It should be noted, however, that excavation of the early Roman contexts beyond the main occupation area was a by-product of the un-covering of the villa buildings and thus the features do not present a coherent plan of settlement. The analysis below of the distribution of the artefacts and remains is consequently organized into those directly associated with the main area of occupation and those areas associated with subsequent villa buildings and their environs.

6.5.1 The main area of occupation (see Figure 6.1.)

The main occupation area is characterized by a large oval house enclosure with surrounding pits and gullies that are bounded by a rectangular enclosure and small groups of gullies and ditches just outside the rectangular enclosure. The distribution of the pottery types amongst the various features is generally homogeneous, with a few notable exceptions (see Figure 6.8.): serving-type ware was found in each of the feature groups, although the main enclosure and the house enclosure had slightly higher percentages of this class of wares. Samian ware was only recovered from ditches and gullies away from the oval house enclosure. Pits that contained burnt stone, charcoal and ash were also associated with the house site and, as at late Iron Age Barton Court Farm, these features could indicate the remains of feasts (Gomez de Soto (1993:191). Consideration of other types of deposits reveals a marked distinction between the various features of the settlement. The features to the west of the main enclosure contained sizeable groups of animal bones – in fact this area of the settlement contained the largest group of identified animal bones recovered at the early Roman settlement (see below) – jars and a couple of bowls (no dishes, cups or beakers were identified) and the majority of the querns and associated paraphernalia found at the settlement. In contrast, the house enclosure and surrounding features contained ovens, hunting pellets, burnt and fragmented animal bone and a more varied selection of serving-type wares: it was also in this area of the settlement that five brooches were recovered. There is clearly a distinction between the types of deposits recovered from the two areas (see ‘special deposits’ below).

The nature of the recovery and recording of the animal remains (see comments above) dogged the examination of the distribution of the animal bones. My analysis is thus largely limited to observations on individual contexts rather than on establishing a distribution pattern for the whole settlement. Large deposits of animal bones were only recovered from one area of the settlement, just west of the main occupation area. In this area meat-bearing cattle bones were dominant in the gullies and sheep were better represented in the pits and hollows as were meat-bearing horse bones. In contrast, few identifiable bones (10) were recovered from the main house enclosure; five were from sheep, three were cattle bones and two were identified as pig. The pits around the enclosure also contained fragmented, burnt and generally non-identifiable bones thought to represent the remains of meals (M. Jones 1981 archival report).

6.5.2. Pre-villa and environs

The early Roman features found near what were later villa buildings (referred to from here as 'pre-villa and environs') will be discussed primarily in contrast to the main early Roman occupation area because they do not present a coherent group of features. As was commented on above, the authors of the site report have suggested that a second early Roman period settlement of higher status may have been present at the site. Figure 6.9. compares the percentages of identified wares in the two areas and notable differences are observable in pottery that is associated with drinking. Serving-type wares found in the pre-villa areas comprise about 23% of identified pottery in that area compared to 15% of the identified pottery in the main area of early Roman period occupation. The main distinction between the serving ware recovered from the two areas was in the percentages of cups, particularly samian cups, identified in the pre-villa and environs areas rather than in the percentages of bowls and dishes which were comparable in both areas. All but one of the cups was found in what are thought to have been stock enclosures south of the main area of occupation. The other 'high status' wares in the pre/villa area were recovered from a pit (320), which may have functioned as a well; it contained a samian cup and a samian bowl and two brown-slipped beakers as well as specific types of animal bones (see below).

	Main occupation area		Villa area and environs	
	n=548	%	n=526	%
fine and specialist wares*	13	2	31	6
Black-burnished wares	37	7	54	10
oxidized wares	30	5	34	6
brown wares	38	7	25	5
shell tempered wares	34	6	14	3
lime scale tempered wares	59	11	16	3
grog-tempered wares	154	28	80	15
reduced wares	178	32	269	51
other	5	1	3	1

Table 6.2. The distribution of early Roman period pottery fabrics at Roughground Farm

A distinction was also apparent between the pottery fabrics of the two areas (see Table 6.2.) Fine and specialist fabrics appear more prevalent in the vicinity of the villa buildings although the difference is less overt than in the comparison of pottery forms. The same coarse fabrics were identified for each area and their representation is comparable except in the case of grog-tempered and reduced wares where there was a higher percentage of reduced wares in the pre-villa and environs areas of the site than in the main area of occupation where grog-tempered and reduced wares are more equally represented. Grog temper was primarily used in production of the high-shouldered necked jar; it is considered a 'Belgic' style form and was common at other native sites until the second century (Booth 1993:135; Green 1993:134). The mortarium found in early Roman contexts was also found in the villa area of the settlement.

A small number of animal bones were identified in the pre-villa areas. Meat-bearing bones from cattle, sheep and horse were identified in some of the stock enclosures, although most of the identified bones recovered were from pits situated below villa buildings. One of the pits – pit 320, which contained some of the serving type ware as described above – also contained primarily the teeth from sheep, cattle and pig, while another pit in the area contained the lower jaws of sheep and cattle. The bones found in these pits are primarily from the 'C' group of bones – comprising mostly bones from the head. This contrasts with the animal remains found in the pits in the western part of the main occupation area described above where meat-bearing bones of the main domesticates, including horse, were identified. Again, the significance of this contrast is relative to the excavation and recording of the animal remains.

6.5.3. 'Special deposits'

A number of the pits identified at the early Roman settlement and its surrounding areas may represent 'special deposits'. The pits west of the main living area contained still functional (Allen *et al.* 1993:161) rotary querns and pestles/hammer stones (one pit, for example, has seven of these objects), a small selection of locally made jars and bowls, and significant numbers of meat-bearing animal bones. It is possible that these pits contain the remains of feasts or the ritualized preparation of food for feasts with an agrarian theme (see Gwilt and Heslop 1995:4 who similarly relate the distribution of querns to social factors). An infant

burial was recovered from the terminal of a gully in this area and it is possible that the burial was part of the ritual.

The isolated pits situated under what were to become villa buildings contained more Roman-like pottery and the remains of animal head bones which is considered a ritualized practice at other Roman period settlements (Scott 1991:117; Perring 1989); a similar range of deposits was identified in special deposits at early Roman Barton Court Farm (Roman-like pottery and non-edible animal parts). The contrast with the types of special deposits at the main settlement at Roughground Farm (local pottery, querns and meat-bearing bones) and the features that are situated in the future villa site is rather interesting. The dump of samian cups in the stock enclosures in the area of what was to become a villa may signify the reorganization of the settlement using alcohol, and the use of individualized drinking cups generally associated with the Roman consumption habits is particularly noteworthy (see below for further discussion on this issue).

Situated two hundred and fifty meters away from the main area of occupation and juxtaposed with what was possibly an early Iron Age circular structure was a square-shaped early Roman period enclosure. At its centre was a pit that featured an upright grey jar that contained the cremated remains of an adult human. Within the enclosure and surrounding the pit burial were two series of post-holes; they may have formed a fence around what appears to have been a four-post structure that was situated over the top of the burial pit. It is also possible that the four-post structure was burnt (Allen *et al.* 1993:53). The jar (which incidentally is technically coarse-ware) that contained the cremated remains and the pottery found in the enclosure was of early second century date. This type of burial is unusual in the Upper Thames Valley (Allen *et al.* 1993:192) (a similar four-post structure, which contained a cow burial has been identified at the site of Smithsfield (Allen 2000:20)). The burial tradition has been identified as originating in the Marnian region of France and has been recognized at a small number of east coast settlements in Britain in the first centuries BC and AD (Allen *et al.* 1993:53; Allen 2000:20). The association of an early Roman burial enclosure with an early Iron Age structure is also unparalleled in the area. The authors of the site report suggest that the cremation burial may be that of a Gallic immigrant (Allen *et al.* 1993:192).

6.5.4. Summary of the re-contextualized material at the early Roman period settlement

In spite of the incongruities in the archaeology and in the recording of the site, differences in the distributions of the artefacts and remains associated with eating and drinking have been established in a number of areas at early Roman period Roughground Farm. In the main occupation area, there was a distinction between the living area which emphasized cooking, serving and possibly feasting, as well as hunting paraphernalia and items of personal adornment, and the area west of the main living area where the contents of a group of pits and gullies appear to emphasize ingredients: meat-bearing animal bones, including horse bones, and particularly the tools used in the preparation of grains. These distinctions could reflect different labour domains possibly associated with gender or age; it is also possible that the different distribution patterns point to the separation of different practices linked to the preparation and consumption of food for particular occasions.

A contrast was also revealed between the main area of early Roman occupation and other early Roman period features that underlay the villa buildings and their environs. The different distributions of the pottery in the two areas could indicate the presence of two settlements of differing status. The higher percentage of samian ware, the presence of mortaria and the decline in the use of 'native' grog-tempered wares together with the differing disposal regimes of animal remains in the pits, are possible indicators of a second group of inhabitants with differing consumption practices. Alternatively, it is possible that the features were an extension of the main occupation area. Neighbouring Claydon Pike and Thornhill Farm each had stock enclosures and features that went well beyond the main occupation area. The two types of consumption practices could reflect variability in the way food and drink was consumed at different events. That the main distinctions between the pottery found in the main occupation area and the pottery recovered from the pre-villa area was in vessels associated with drinking and vessels of a distinctly 'Belgic' style could reflect the chronological breadth of occupation but may also highlight different episodes of eating and drinking prior to the construction of a villa. These enclosures and pits lie directly beneath second century villa buildings and it will be suggested below that the shift from 'native' house to villa was a marked event retaining strong links to the past.

6.6. Discussion of the Distribution of Artefacts and Remains at Roughground Farm

Similarities exist between the types of consumption practices that have been identified at early Roman periods Barton Court Farm and Roughground Farm. The range in pottery and the use of Roman-like containers at Roughground Farm, especially to serve food, are reminiscent of Barton Court Farm, and both settlements appear to have adopted customs associated with individualized as well as communal drinking. The contextual associations of the artefacts and remains linked with eating and drinking, however, also revealed clear contrasts between the two settlements. This was particularly apparent with the distribution of cups and querns at Roughground Farm where each might be associated with the reorganization of the settlement. Unlike Barton Court Farm where the reorganization of the settlement in the early Roman period is defined by boundaries and consolidated households, the structure of the early Roman settlement at Roughground Farm from the beginning appears less confined; and when the settlement was reorganized in the early second century there was a concomitant presence of both native and Roman identities.

6.7. The Social Contexts of Imperialism at Roughground Farm

The limits of the early Roman settlement at Roughground Farm are difficult to define and interpret. A rectangular ditch enclosed part of the main living area although occupation clearly existed beyond this boundary ditch. The site was not occupied in the late Iron Age, which makes the construction of a circular house site in the early Roman period particularly significant when compared to examples of contemporary rectangular structures at neighbouring settlements (e.g. Claydon Pike). The shape of the enclosure and its southwestern entrance was respected even though the enclosure was re-cut many times. The orientation of the entrance to the enclosure may have had particular significance to the inhabitants (see Parker Pearson 1996 on the symbolism of entrance orientation). It is also apparent that the use of pits for ritualized deposits continued to be a prominent feature in the daily rites of habitation well into the second century and even persisted at the site until the fourth century. This is in contrast with early Roman period Barton Court Farm, and with the Roman period in general, when the use of pits went into decline (Allen *et al.* 1993:179). The positioning of an elaborate burial site next to the site of an early Iron Age circular structure towards the end of the lifetime

of the early Roman settlement also suggests that tangible links to the past were important to the inhabitants of the settlement.

It is particularly interesting that Roughground Farm with its numerous signposts that point to a celebration of native identity, was occupied throughout the Roman period (unlike Barton Court Farm) and was characterized by villa-type buildings as of the second century, which is relatively uncommon in the Upper Thames Valley. Indeed, the site has a long history of villa construction which began either with the demise of, or in conjunction with, the early Roman settlement in the second century. The second century villa occupied the same general area as the early Roman settlement and so Allen has suggested that the deposits of querns might have had a “propitiatory significance” relating to the reorganization of the settlement and the establishment of a villa in the second century (Allen *et al.* 1993:161; see comments by Ardener 1993:13 re: the ritualized marking of significant events). The dump of samian cups in the stock enclosures and other special deposits in pits situated under villa buildings could be further examples of the importance placed on the reorganization of the settlement. That the dating of the elaborate ‘native’ burial appears to coincide with the end of the early Roman settlement and the construction of the villa further suggests that the reorganization of the settlement was bound with unabashed commemoration of a native identity at the very point when the inhabitants were making overtures towards Roman-like structures.

6.8. Conclusion

The interpretation of the site of Roughground Farm involves a complex integration of past and present approaches to the past. Emphases and priorities in excavation strategy have changed over the past fifty years, and still through all this, we have been able to glean just some of what is fascinating about this site. In this chapter, I have established contrasting traditions in the way that food and drink was consumed that appear to indicate celebrations that emphasize ingredients, possibly the agricultural cycle, and the serving of food and particularly drink, using native-style vessels in one instance and Roman-style vessels in another. These different culinary styles may represent two different groups of people living side-by-side; however, they could equally represent the marking of important events at the settlement by one household.

While Roughground Farm is difficult to typecast, it is evident that the establishment of a villa was a sufficiently important event to demand the commemoration of particular aspects of the past. Whether the movement from rounded to rectangular houses was done in celebration or with trepidation is open to debate. Old Shifford Farm, the next case study in this dissertation, is similarly difficult to typecast – except to say that it had an entirely different approach to the consumption of food and drink in the early Roman period.

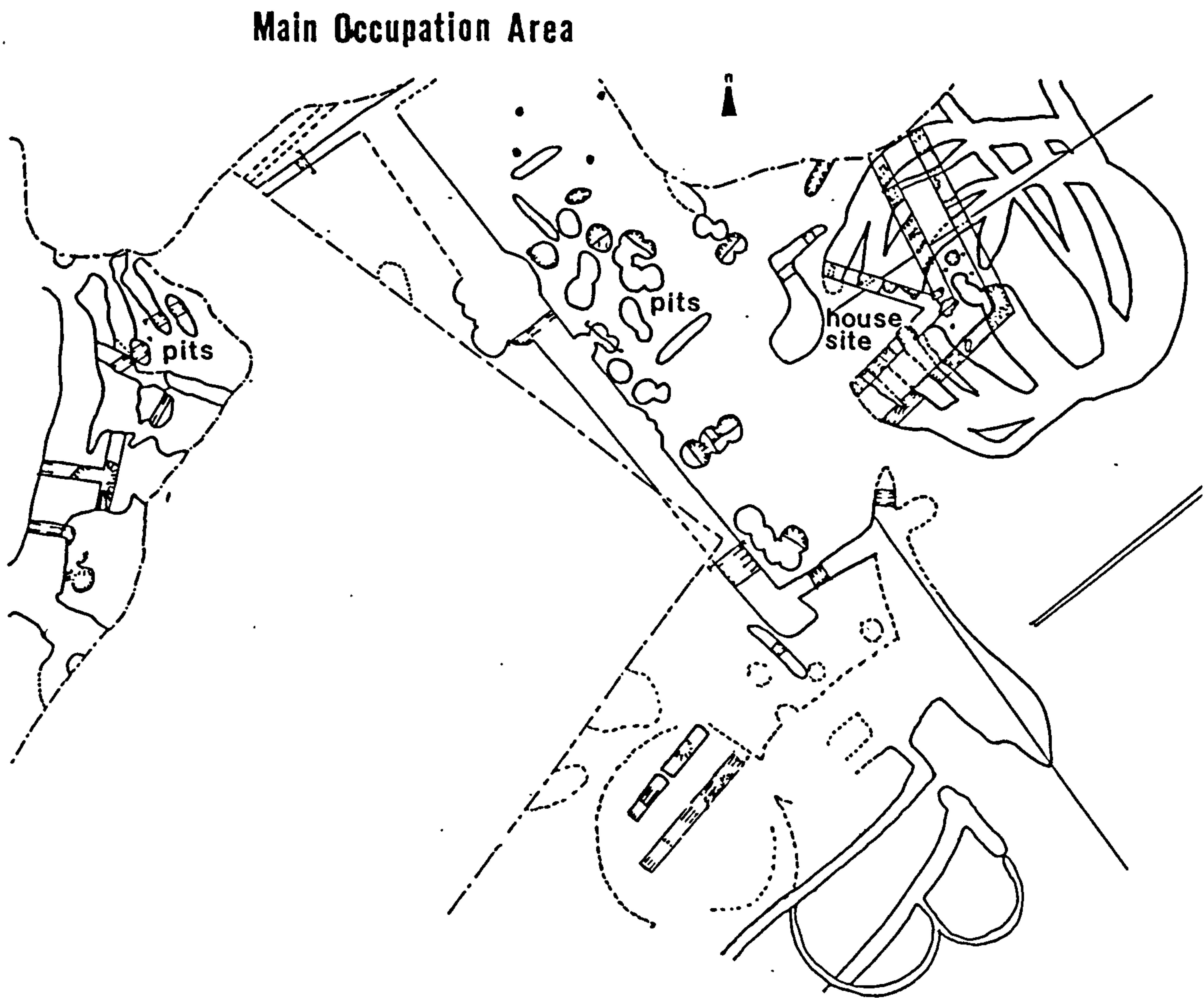


Figure 6.1 Early Roman period Roughground Farm: main area of occupation (after Allen *et al.* drawn by B. Meadows)

Rough Ground Farm early Roman period containers

Figure 6.2 Early Roman period pottery forms

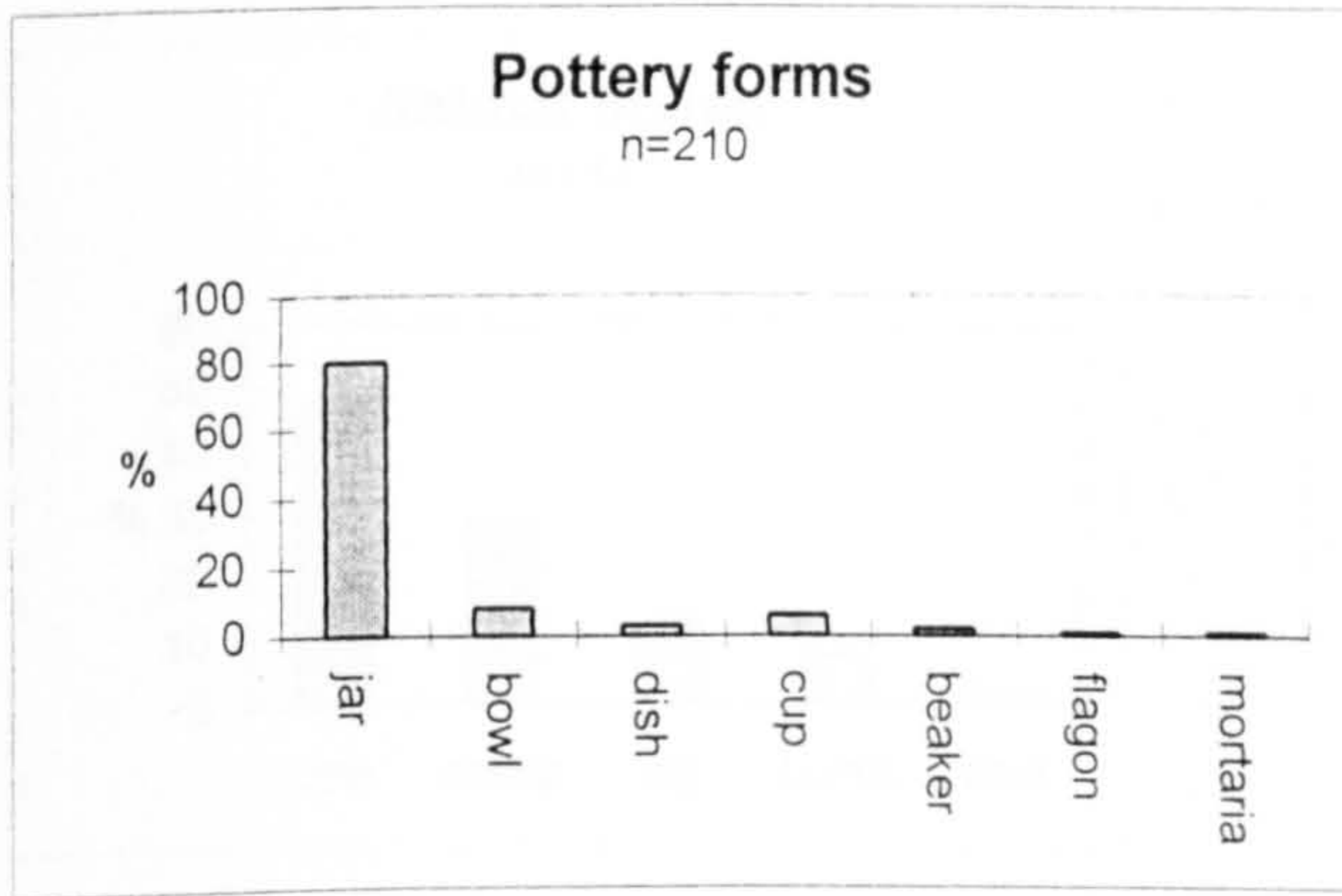


Figure 6.3 Histograms of the rim diameters of different jar types

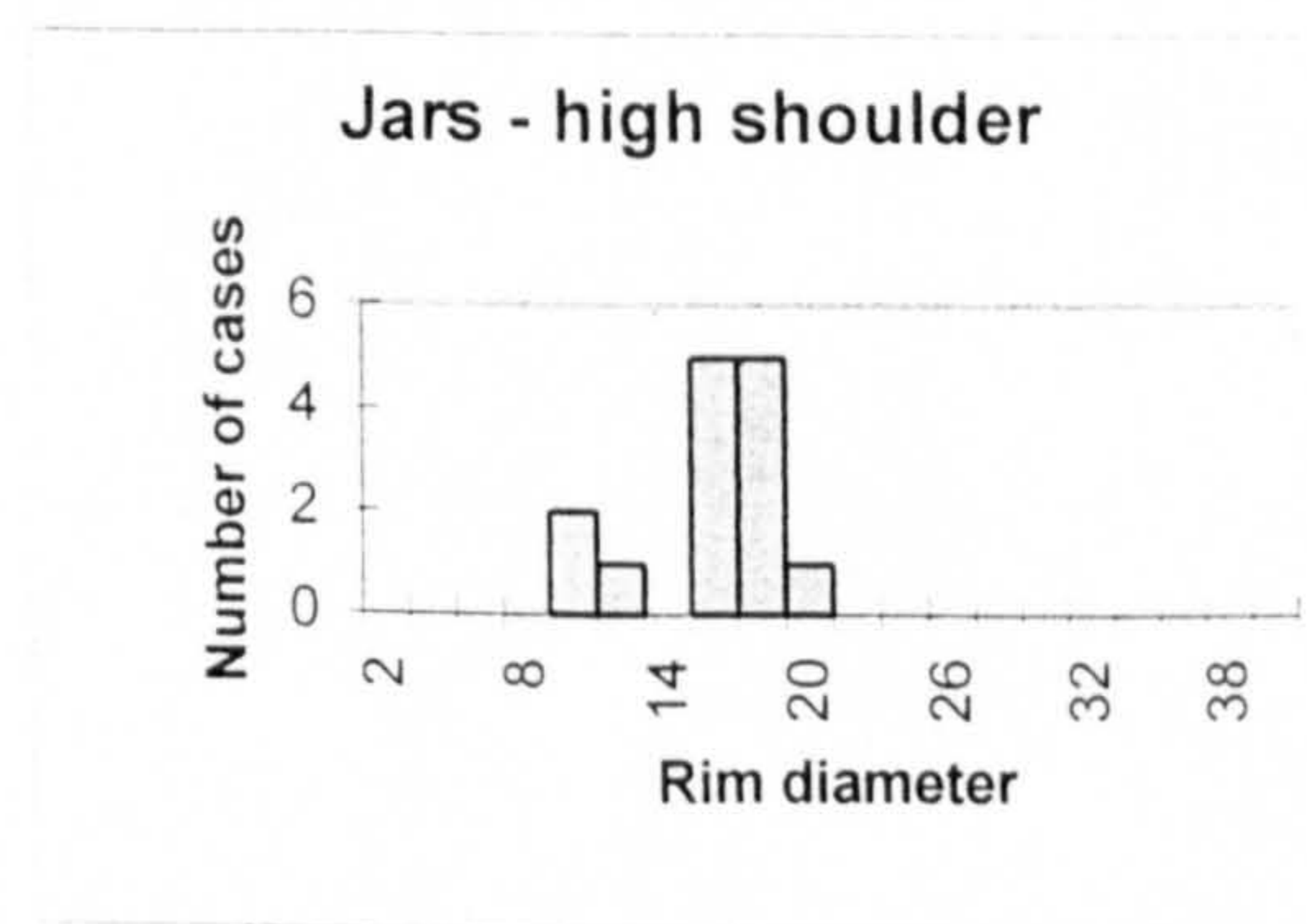
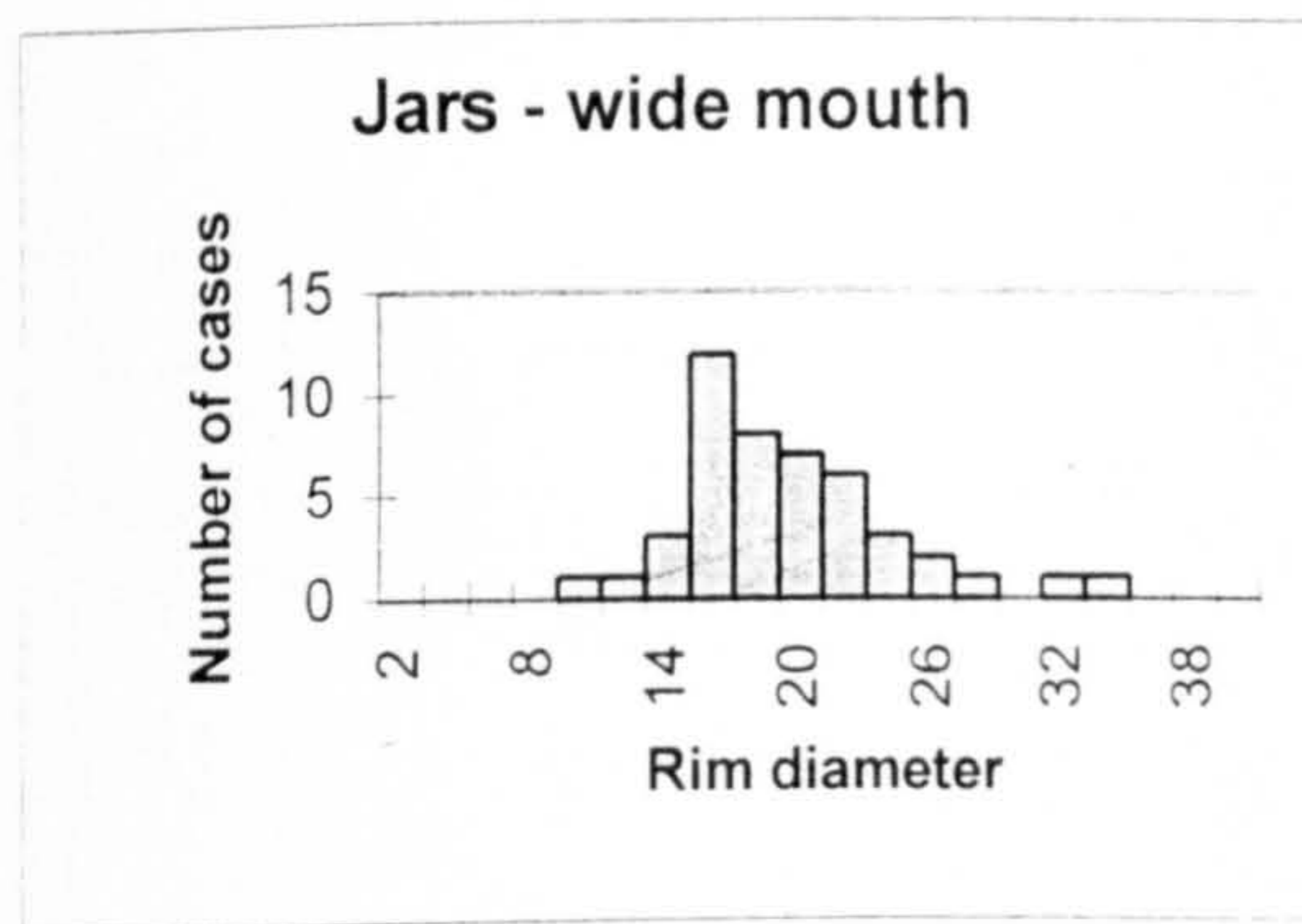
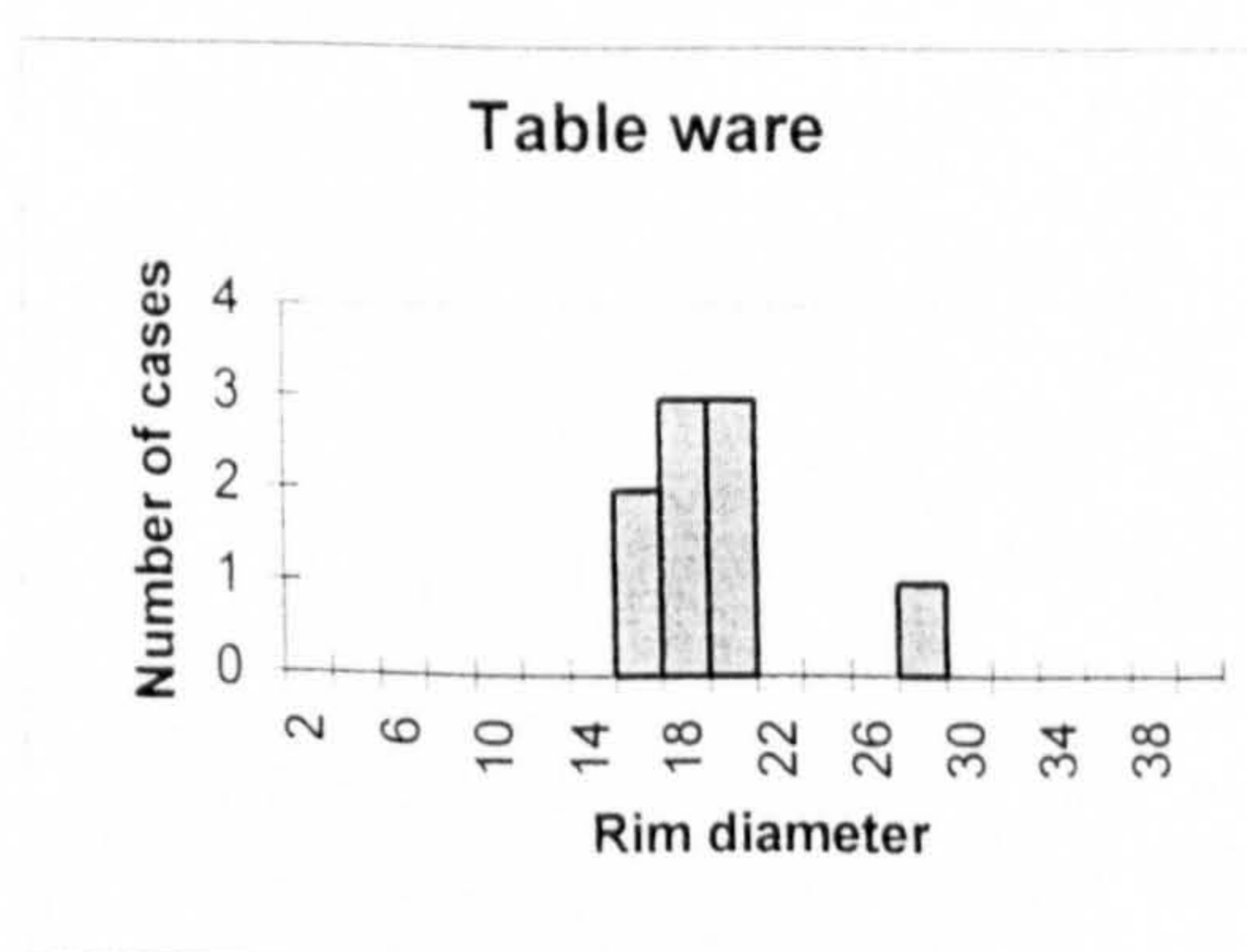
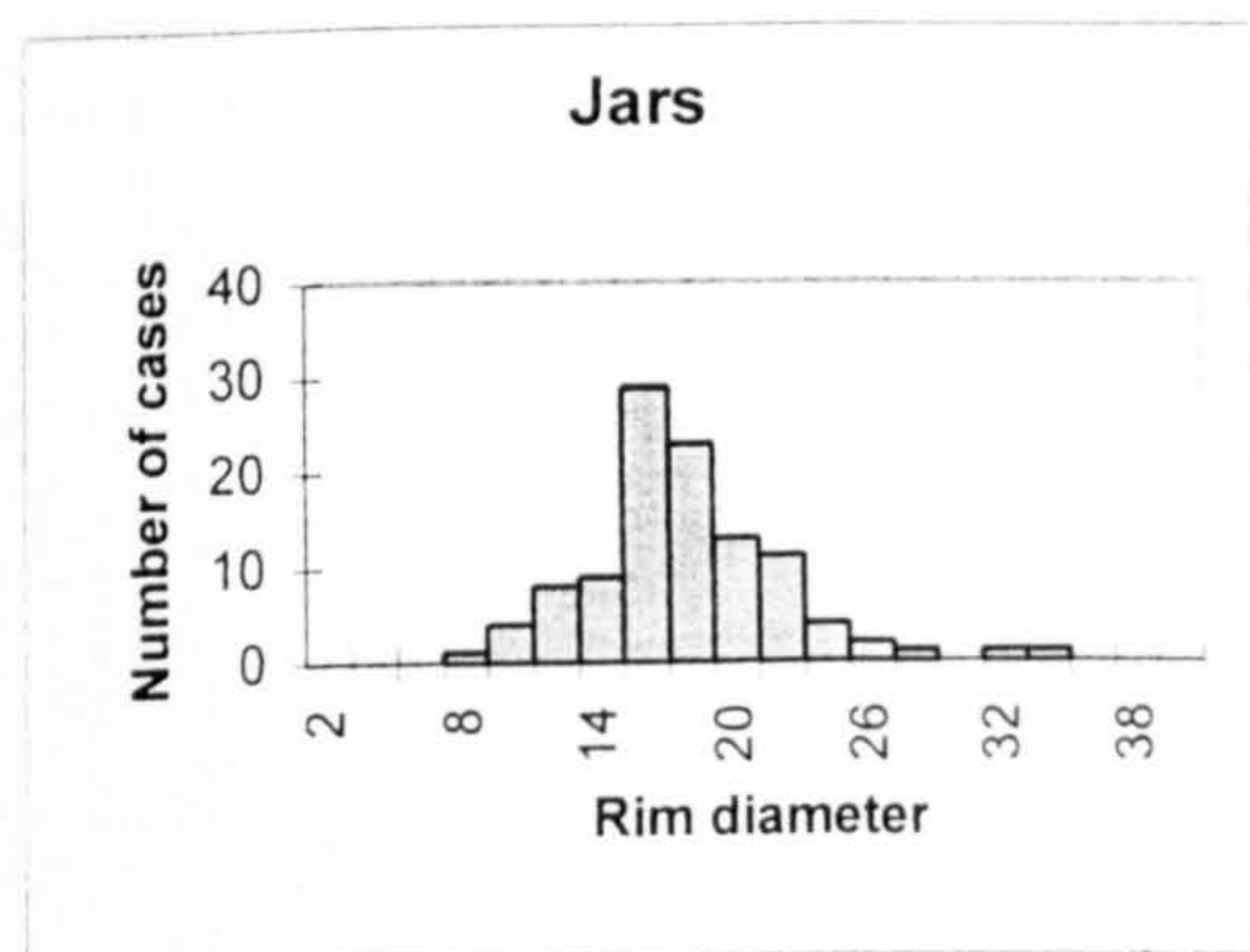


Figure 6.4 Histograms of the rim diameters of Jars

Figure 6.5 Histograms of tableware



Roughground Farm early Roman period ingredients

Figure 6.6 Early Roman period N.I.S.P.

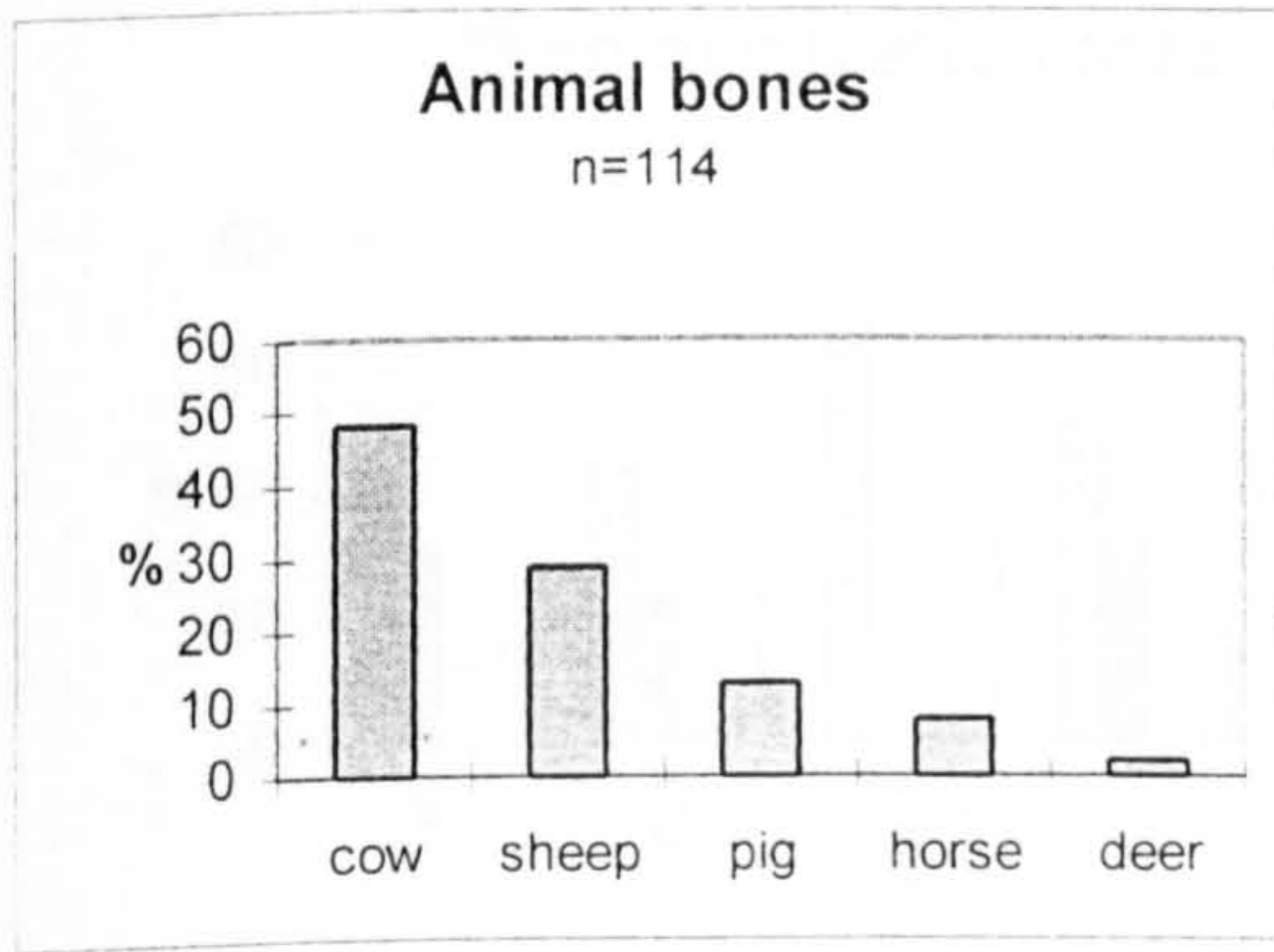
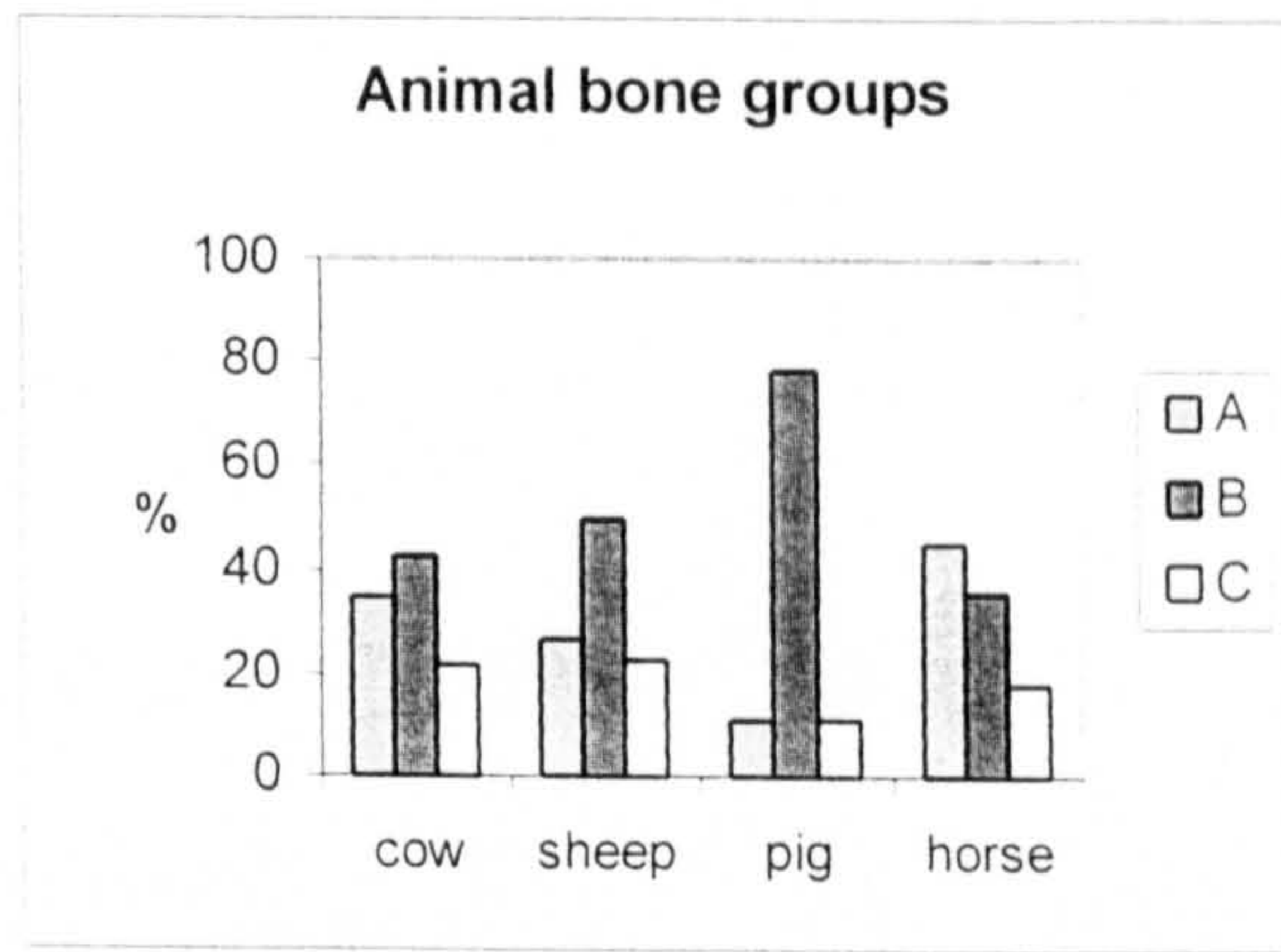


Figure 6.7 Animal bone groups according to meat yield



Distribution of containers at early Roman period Roughground Farm

Figure 6.8 Distribution of pottery in main occupation area

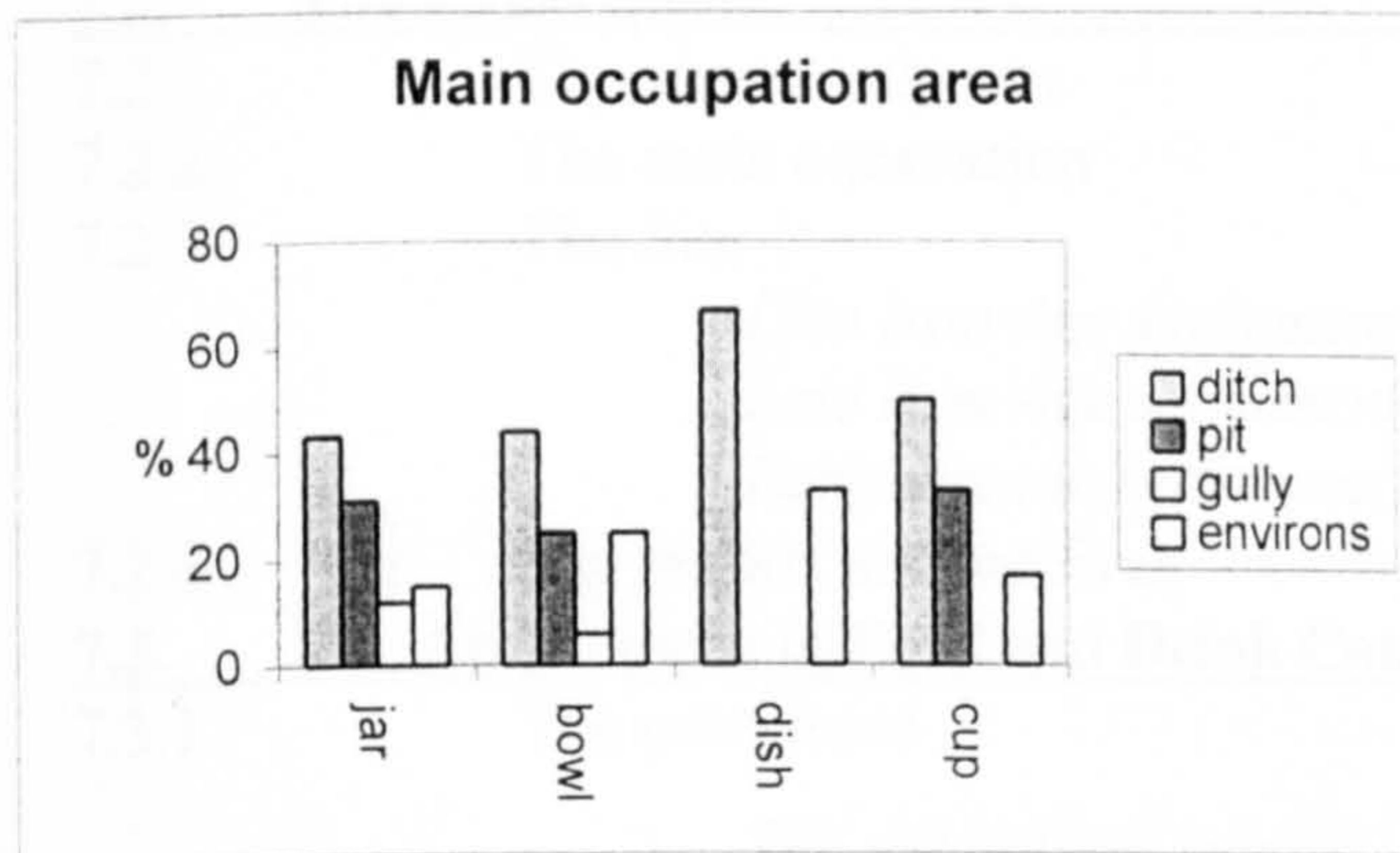
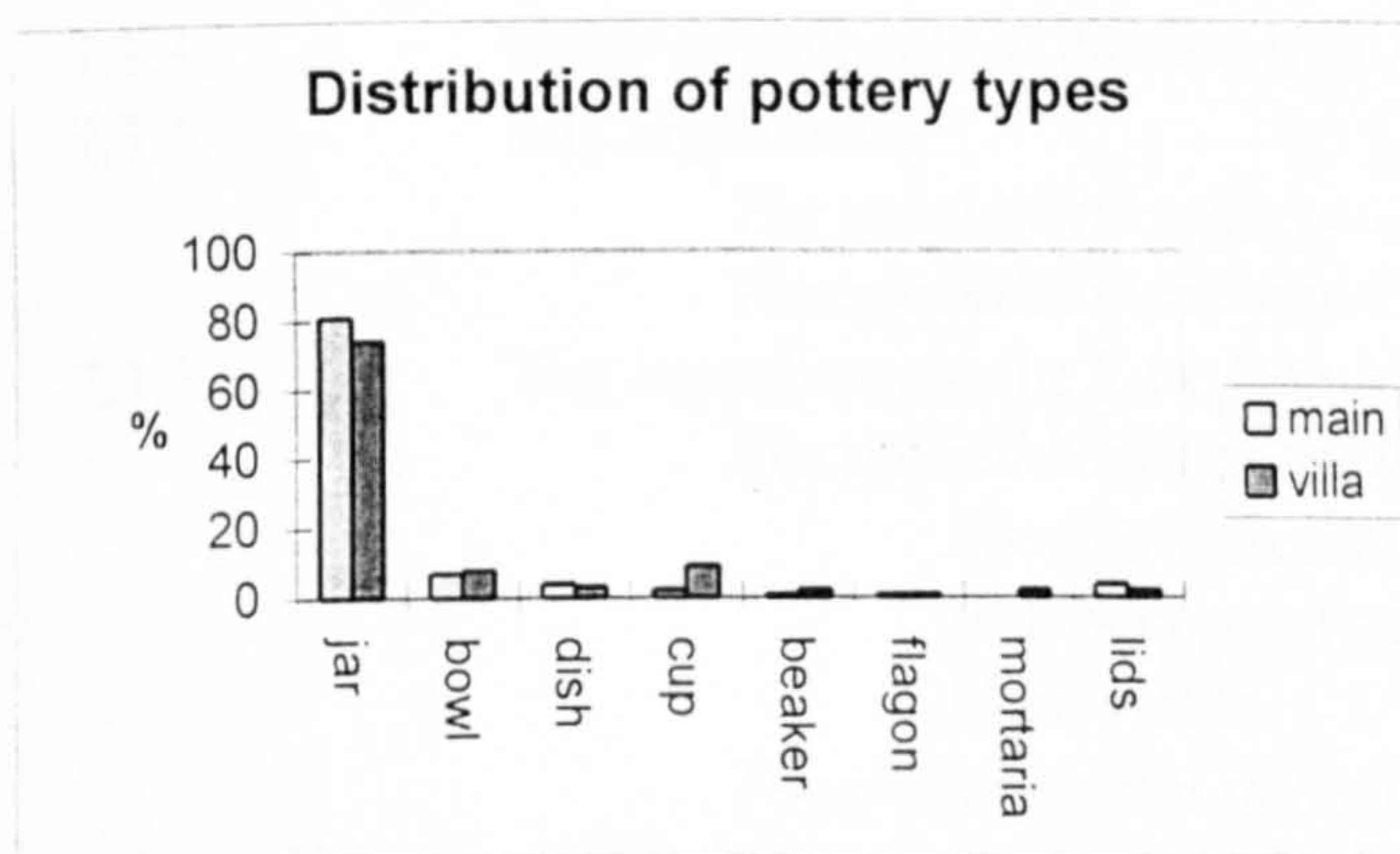


Figure 6.9 Comparison of pottery forms between pre-villa area and main occupation area



Chapter 7

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Chapter 7

Old Shifford Farm

7.1. Introduction

Old Shifford Farm is situated at the edge of the floodplain on the low-lying first gravel terrace just north of the Thames. Although the site is low-lying, the land is well drained and situated above flooding level. The site was first settled in the late Iron Age (late first century BC/early first century AD) and appears to have been continuously occupied through to the early Roman period when it was abandoned late in the first century AD/early second century AD. The site was subsequently resettled in the late Roman period.

Old Shifford Farm was the most recent excavation in this study. It is also characterized by having the smallest sample of identified pottery forms and identified animal species. It has been necessary, therefore, to emphasize different aspects of the artefacts and remains, such as the fabric and method of manufacture of the pottery and the relative size of the animal species. Using the words of Orton *et al.* 1993:175, “even an assemblage that is ‘too small’ by itself may form a useful part of some larger grouping”. The larger grouping in this case is the archaeological and social context of the artefacts and remains associated with eating and drinking.

The format of this chapter mirrors that of the preceding cases studies, commencing with an overview of the excavation process, then a brief description of the site and a comment on the site report and the site archives. Following this is a discussion of the consumption practices of the inhabitants and the distribution patterns of the artefacts and remains from within the context of the settlements. The chapter will conclude with a discussion of the possible significance of my observations within the context of imperialism.

7.2. The Excavation

Old Shifford Farm was excavated by the O.A.U. in 1988-89 under the direction of Gill Hey. Before the farmland was designated for gravel extraction, the site was contained under arable agricultural land. The site was identified through crop marks, although the recovery of finds through field walking and isolated discoveries dates back to the 1800's. Before the excavation, Tim Allen of the O.A.U. conducted a site assessment in 1988. The assessment complied with requirements by Oxfordshire County Council for the approval of gravel extraction.

7.2.1. The site assessment

Ten trenches were excavated, amounting to a 2% site sample. The topsoil and plough soil were removed by machine and 75% of the features were dug by hand. One of the aims of the assessment was to consider so-called "blank areas" not apparent in the crop marks, as these areas in particular were designated for gravel extraction (Hey 1996:98). It was established that occupation went beyond that indicated by crop marks and that these 'blank' areas were densely occupied. The assessment concluded that there were two main occupation areas, one, early Roman, the other, late Roman. Although in his evaluation Allen concluded that "Neither its state of preservation nor its character distinguishes this site from other gravel terrace settlements as especially worthy of preservation" (1988:5), Allen did nevertheless recommend the excavation of the site. His reasons were as follows: the site was part of the Windrush Valley landscape which was (and still is) undergoing intensive study by the O.A.U. (e.g. Allen 1990); the site presented an opportunity of recovering the whole plan of the site where at other sites there was more sampling employed; the site had good environmental potential because it was a dry site which also contained waterlogged features; the occupational sequence of the site – there was a hiatus between early Roman and late Roman settlement – would for the first time enable the analysis of adjacent settlement shift (Allen 1988:5), a phenomenon that was quite common in the Upper Thames Valley (Fulford 1991). The assessment also concluded (with reservations in light of the small sample size) that the two settlements did not appear to have been wealthy or of high status.

7.2.2. The main excavation

Two large areas were selected for open-area excavation, a southern area (Trench L) considered to be Iron Age/early Roman – and the focus of this study – and a northern area thought to be late Roman (Trench M). The excavation concentrated on the two central settlement areas, with a view to “establishing the stratigraphic sequence of the enclosure ditches, obtaining datable assemblages from them, examining domestic features within the enclosures, and attempting to locate structures” (Hey 1996:101). Restricted resources meant that the whole site could not be excavated by hand and was largely stripped by JCB down to undisturbed gravel. Fifteen percent of site features were excavated by hand, although, as the late Iron Age/early Roman site was larger, more of that settlement was hand excavated. Some of the enclosure ditches from Trench L were ‘emptied’ using a JCB to increase the sample size of the groups of finds. Only groups of animal bone were recovered in features that were excavated by machine, no pottery and only small amounts of fired clay were retrieved. That mainly large animal bones were recovered is understandable considering the method of extraction; the excavators felt that “the process may have biased the sample rather than enhanced it” (Hey 1996:101).

Trench L encompassed a large settlement area of 4,230 square meters. Discrete phases were difficult to identify and the case to be made for continuous occupation before and after the conquest is especially strong for Old Shifford Farm. Assigning particular contexts to specific phases was at times difficult as there was not a vertical stratigraphy for the site and some contexts were isolated. Phasing was generally determined by the physical association of particular features and was supplemented by any dating material. However, as many of the finds were not particularly diagnostic and as the length of occupation was relatively short-lived, the author of the report qualified the phasing of the settlement thus: “The scheme presented here is, therefore, an interpretation of the evidence, and its limitations should be borne in mind” (Hey 1996:101).

7.2.3. The site (see Figure 7.1.)

The late Iron Age and early Roman period settlement at Old Shifford Farm was likely occupied for approximately one hundred years. The cut-off points between the two late Iron Age phases and the early Roman occupation, however, are more difficult to isolate than at Barton Court Farm, and the development of the settlement is described as “probably more organic and continuous than a breakdown by phase indicates” (Hey 1996:101). Curvilinear enclosures and gullies were gradually superseded by angular enclosures that were then extended, and in some cases reused. Consequently, some of the material found in the various gullies and enclosures is probably residual.

Late Iron Age settlement – Phase one

The first phase of settlement is situated on the eastern half of the site and is characterized by a large D-shaped enclosure. At the northeast entrance of the enclosure are a number of irregular post-holes that indicate either a circular structure or gated pens. Beyond the D-shaped enclosure are a series of linear and curvilinear gullies. Two possible house sites have been suggested: one within the D-shaped enclosure and a semi-circular gully to the north of enclosure. These areas have been designated as possible house sites because of the density of the pottery, fired clay, burnt stone and carbonized plant remains at the terminals of the gully and enclosure.

Late Iron Age settlement – Phase two

The second phase of the Iron Age settlement extended west of the earlier settlement, although some of the boundaries from phase one appear to have been respected (see D-shaped enclosure). The structure of the settlement was no longer curvilinear but more rectangular, the interior of the main enclosure was compartmented and had a southern entrance. A possible house site has been identified in the southwest corner of the main enclosure abutting the entrance. The ditches and surrounding features of the suggested house site contained concentrated deposits of fired clay, part of the wall of an oven, charcoal, burnt stone and

pottery. It is highly likely that there was a second, northern enclosure bordering the main enclosure although later ditches obscure its ditches. Southeast of the main enclosure another enclosure was identified which was aligned with (and possibly reused parts of) the earlier D-shaped enclosure. This enclosure contained a number of curvilinear and linear gullies that appear to be controlling access to parts of the enclosure. The enclosure also contains a stack ring. There may also have been a second house site that incorporated the ditches and features southeast of the main enclosure. Deposits of charcoal, burnt stone, fired clay, an oven plate, pottery, the largest deposit of bones for the settlement, as well carbonized plant remains were concentrated in this area of the settlement.

Early Roman settlement – Phase three

In the third phase of settlement, the main enclosure was greatly enlarged and it encompassed elements of each of the earlier settlements. Former boundaries were respected but the enclosure ditches were much more substantial than for the earlier settlements. The main enclosure was initially sub-rectangular with entrances in the north and the east, but then the enclosure was expanded northwards and a single entrance was established. The approach to the settlement also appears to have been controlled by a series of shallow, linear boundary ditches that formed a “funnel-like entrance into the main enclosure” (Hey 1996:111). Two possible house sites have been identified: the first was located within the sub-rectangular enclosure and the second was located within the square enclosure (this enclosure appears to have initially been rectangular). As with the house sites in the earlier phases, concentrations of charcoal, pottery, burnt clay and stone including carbonized plant remains were recovered from these areas. Other small finds, such as brooches and worked stone, were also found in these two areas of the settlement.

One of the conclusions in the site report is that the settlements are considered to have been of low status and hardly Romanized during the early Roman period: “This part of the Upper Thames Valley was only slowly affected by the Roman conquest, as demonstrated by the slow introduction of wheel-thrown pottery and Romanized wares” (Hey 1996:97). Hey also notes that in the late Roman period the “settlement type appears little altered from the preceding period” (1996:97).

7.2.4. Site reports and archives

The site report was published in 1996 in the journal *Oxoniensia* – a different format from that of the preceding case studies, and therefore restricted in its length. There is less room for dialogue, for speculation and much of the contextual information exists only in the site archive. The site report is typically organized according to material composition. The site archive was well organized, and it was easier to locate the various reports and records than was the case for the previous sites in this study; however, it had an almost edited feel to it. It is often the ‘thrown in’ bits that are the most interesting and informative and I must admit I prefer a bit of disorder in an archive!

Unfortunately, I was not able to consult all of the primary records for the pottery as they are missing from the site archive, and their location is presently unknown. It was possible to retrieve some additional details about the pottery from drawings and other archival records but for the most part, I had to rely on computerized accounts (one by Sarah Green which is in the site archive and the other provided by Jane Timby), which I amalgamated for the purpose of this study. The record of rim diameters is consequently incomplete (see below), although information about burnt residues and sooting were detailed on the computerized accounts. It was necessary to enter the primary bone records into a computer database, as they existed in hand-written form only.

7.3. The Archaeology of Food and Drink Consumption at Old Shifford Farm

As with the previous two case studies, this section will commence with a discussion on the nature of the remains of eating and drinking, to include the methodologies and conclusions of the various specialists, as well as my own analysis of the data. The distinction between the work of the various specialists and my own analysis will be outlined at the beginning of the relevant subsections. The artefacts and remains are grouped as follows: ‘*containers*’ – which in the case of Old Shifford Farm only refers to the pottery – ‘*other implements*’ which includes metal, stone and clay artefacts and finally ‘*ingredients*’ which include animal and plant remains.

7.3.1. The containers

The specialists' reports – the pottery

The pottery analysis was started by Sarah Green (who recorded and described the assemblage) but was completed by Jane Timby, who expanded and customized the analysis according to O.A.U.'s current fabric/typology/recording system. Timby also wrote the published site report.

The current typology used by the O.A.U. differs slightly from that originally used by Sarah Green. The main difference lies in the creation of a category for 'jar/bowl' and in the specification of certain 'bowl' type vessels. According to Green's designation, which views bowls as open vessels, only one such vessel was identified in the whole of Trench L, whereas Timby assigned a number of Green's necked jars as bowls in her description of the illustrated sherds¹. The incongruity in typology is particularly significant if one was to impart particular serving type regimes and cultural practices onto the bowls (see Orton *et al.* 1993:79 and Rice 1987:209-10 re: subjectivity of typology), and as such my interpretation of the typology is a cautious fusion of the two specialists' accounts. I understand why, for example, Timby classified some of the illustrated 'bowls' as bowls, although whether these 'bowls' were used as serving ware is unclear since residues found on a number of the 'bowls' indicate that some of the vessels were used for cooking. Furthermore, because some of Green's jar types, such as jar 4 and jar 10, are each classed as a bowl, a bowl/jar and a jar by Timby, I could not assume that jar 4 and jar 10 were all bowl-like. As Timby's typology is based on the *illustrated* sherds (see Timby 1996:130-133), I have listed in the figures on pottery forms for each phase, only those bowls that were illustrated. Similarly, the jar/bowl classification has also been listed for each phase, although, I tend to view these vessels as Green did, as jars. This is a rather complicated way to say that bowls and jar/bowls may be under or over represented, depending on whose typology you prefer. This would have had more of an affect on the analysis of the pottery if more of the pottery were identified to form (see below). The confusion over typology, however, did serve as a reminder of the often-subjective nature of classifying pots. What is apparent from the pottery assemblage at Old Shifford Farm, is that for each phase of settlement the identification of serving-type ware is not obvious (see below); cups, dishes, and

¹ Timby's analysis focused on vessel fabric rather than form, the two differing typologies became apparent in the descriptions of illustrated sherds and not on Timby's computer printout.

platters were not identified at all and only single examples of a beaker and a shallow bowl were recovered in the early Roman period phase. The pottery assemblage at Old Shifford Farm in this regard differs markedly from each of the pottery assemblages from the three other sites in this study.

Nine hundred and sixty-five pottery sherds were recovered from Trench L and contemporary contexts in the assessment trenches. Of these sherds, 384 sherds contributed to the identification of 71 vessels identified to type. Spread over three settlement phases the numbers on which the percentages of pottery types is based is often quite small.

7.3.2. The containers at the late Iron Age settlement

The late Iron Age pottery – phase one and two

In both phase one and phase two, jars are the most common vessel type (see Figure 7.2.). Immediately apparent is the absence of identifiable specialized forms. No dishes, cups and surprisingly no beakers, were identified in either phase. This is contrary to a variety of late Iron Age settlements in the Upper Thames Valley, including Ashville Trading Centre, Thornhill Farm and Barton Court Farm, which while lacking large numbers of specialized vessels, did have at least a few examples of specialized wares.

	Phase 1 (LIA)		Phase 2 (LIA)		Phase 3 (ER)	
	n=86	%	n=167	%	n=686	%
shell temper	10	12	70	42	106	15
limestone temper s	11	13	2	1	4	1
sandy wares	12	14	16	10	16	2
Flint temper	27	31	0	0	2	.29
grog temper	26	30	79	47	493	72
Malvernian	0	0	0	0	65	9

Table 7.1. Late Iron Age – phase one and two – and early Roman period pottery fabrics

Form, function and fabrics – phase one

In phase one, of the four vessels for which manufacturing could be determined, three of the vessels were handmade and the other was wheel-finished. Four types of jars and one type of bowl were identified to form in this phase (the cordoned necked bowl was wheel-finished). The jars include three vessel types that are quite similar to each other, a vessel with upright walls, a globular vessel and a slack profile vessel; a fourth known as the 'Belgic type' jar had a pronounced shoulder and a grooved body. As was stated above, most of the primary pottery records for Trench L are missing, and only two rim diameters could be established for phase one, both vessels – a cordoned bowl and a slack profile jar – had a diameter of 18 cm. A number of fabrics were identified (see Table 7.1.), the most commonly occurring fabric had a grog temper, and other fabrics were tempered with shell/limestone, sand, and flint. As no evidence for pottery manufacture was found on the settlement, the presence of a variety of fabrics may indicate that the inhabitants were active consumers (Lambrick 1984:170), despite the lack of specialized and imported wares.

Form, function and fabrics – phase two

In phase two, grog-tempered Belgic type jars with everted rims and pronounced shoulders are the most prominent vessel types, followed by shell/limestone tempered vessels with upright walls and grog-tempered cordoned bowls and jars. A single base with two holes drilled post firing was recovered. Types that are typically associated with cooking were identified (see Woods 1986; Hendrickson and McDonald 1983:631). A jar with upright walls and beaded rim exhibited exterior sooting and it is possible with the absence of a means for suspension that this vessel was placed directly onto a hearth or oven floor (Orton *et al.* 1993:222; Evans 1993:105). One of the vessels with an everted rim, rivet holes and burnishing may have been suspended over an open fire – burnishing is thought to increase the heat efficiency of vessels (Orton *et al.* 1993:221). Burnishing is also thought to decrease the porosity of coarse-ware vessels used to contain liquids (Hendrickson and McDonald 1983:633). Burnished cooking pots may therefore have been used to cook stews (although see Oetgen 1984:43 who considers burnishing in terms of its aesthetics). Rim diameters of six vessels were identified; they ranged from 13 cm. to 23 cm, with an average of 17 cm. Six of the ten vessels whose manufacture was distinguishable were handmade, two Belgic type jars were wheel-finished and a necked

cordoned bowl and a cordoned Belgic type jar were wheel-turned. Vessel fabrics include most of those identified for phase one (see Table 7.1.), although no flint tempered fabrics were identified, grog was again the most common temper followed by shell/limestone. The correlation between fabric and vessel form is not absolute although there appears to be an association between necked and Belgic type vessels with grog temper and slack-profiled vessels with shell/limestone/sand temper. Both tempers are appropriate for cooking (Evans 1993:107).

Discussion

It was through the analysis of the pottery at Old Shifford that I experienced first-hand how subjective the consideration of tableware can be, particularly in the absence of more obvious specialized forms. The blurring of the distinction between vessel forms in the late Iron Age is, of course, a modern day frustration, perpetuated by a desire for neat functional categories. That the 'data' did not match my notions of cooking and serving forced me to consider the pottery in different ways and reminded me that the contents and contexts of the vessels could at times be of more importance than the shape of the vessel or its point of origin. (see comments in Pluciennik (1997:48-9) who emphasizes the importance of 'coarse ware' in the rituals of daily life). At the late Iron Age settlement at Old Shifford Farm the lack of non-local, imported and apparently specialized forms is what sets the settlement apart from the other settlements in this study and indeed from many of the settlements in the Upper Thames Valley. This does not necessarily mean that the settlement was too impoverished to engage in the definition of status markers but possibly that it had different status markers such as the giving of feasts or placing importance on animals and the way that they were consumed (see below).

7.3.3. Other implements at the late Iron Age settlement – phase one and two

A number of objects have been recovered which have an association with the preparation, cooking and storage of food. Oven walls were recovered in phase two as was a clay disk that may have been used to cover wooden or clay storage containers (Barclay *et al.* 1996:138). Similar disks described as "possibly lids for storage vessels" Sanders 1979:54, 53 fig. 28) were recovered at Roman period Farmoor (Lambrick and Robinson 1979:54). This could

indicate that vessels made out of other materials – possibly of some value – were present at the settlement. A small number of metal objects were also recovered, including a piece of an iron knife found in a phase two context, which could have had a culinary function.

7.3.4. The Ingredients

The specialists' reports – animal bones

Priscilla Lange prepared the animal report. The sample size for the whole site is quite small, 949 bones. In Trench L, 508 bones were recovered. Just over 50% (255) of the sample from Trench L was identified to species although the unidentified bone was placed in general size categories (see below). Over 90% of the bones were recovered from stratified contexts. The collection was well preserved but quite fragmented, the result of, according to Lange, butchery practices and to a much lesser degree the excavation process. The bone was primarily hand-collected during excavation. Additional bone was recovered from thirty-two soil samples that were sieved and floated and it is particularly interesting that no bird or fish bones were identified in any of the soil samples. Lange made a number of observations not made at the other case studies in this thesis, such as recording the colour of burnt bone which is thought to indicate the method of cooking and the grouping of unidentified animal bone according to the relative size of species, i.e. small sized mammals (USM) which are hare size; medium sized mammals (UMM) which are sheep/goat/pig size and large sized mammals (ULM) which are cattle/horse size (after Uerpman 1973).

In her analysis, Lange merged the late Iron Age phases one and two together to increase the sample size and for the most part considered the late Iron Age/early Roman collection as a whole. In light of the almost seamless shift from phase to phase, especially in the late Iron Age, the merging of phases is understandable. Lange did observe that the “proportions of different species vary little through time, with the exception of horse bone, which is much more common in Phase 3” (1996:150). Lange also placed the amalgamated bones from Trench L into groups of body parts of species according to the amount of meat they bear (after Uerpman 1973) and according to their distribution in various feature types. For the purposes

of this study, I have for the most part analysed each phase separately, in order to reveal possible distinctions between the three phases of settlement.

The determination of the age and sex ratios of the main species is affected by the sample size. Lange amalgamated the late Iron Age and early Roman bones in order to establish some repetition of the various attributes. Lange concluded that cattle tended to be killed between three and a half to four years although there are examples found in each phase of earlier and later mortality rates. The mortality of sheep varied, often represented by few examples, including foetus, under two and a half years and under three and a half to four years. Pig tended to be killed under two years. The indications are that cattle, sheep and pigs were primarily used for food. Horses, on the other hand, all died over the age of six. It is likely that some of the animals at the late Iron Age and early Roman settlements had multiple purposes: for their wool, as draught animals, as well as for dairying and meat (Lange 1996:158).

The specialists' reports – the plant remains

Sixteen samples were taken from features (ditches and gullies) in Trench L. The samples averaged 12 litres and “were floated over a 0.5 mm. mesh and sorted for carbonized plant remains” (Robinson 1996:159). Features with less than twenty items were added to the totals for Trench L. Mark Robinson, who did the botanical analysis, concluded that the late Iron Age/early Roman site was situated in an “open landscape with little woody vegetation” (1996: 162), and that the site was probably surrounded by grassland. Animal husbandry is suggested by the layout of the small enclosures and the presence of scarab dung beetle (see also Robinson 1983:41) and grassy plant species. Robinson also concluded that, although many species could only be identified as arable, cultigens and their by-products were abundant enough to indicate possible cultivation.

Individual contexts are listed in the site report, although, for the most part analysis was based on the entire assemblage from Trench L. The overall assemblage was dominated by cereals, small amounts of chaff and wide variety of weed species with the following breakdown: “51.4% grain: 2.3% chaff: 46.3% non-cereal seeds” (Robinson 1996:166). Robinson suggests that the sample “is best seen as the waste from the parching, de-husking and fine sieving of

hulled cereal grain” (1996: 166). As to whether the settlement was an importer or producer of cereals, it is difficult to say with Robinson suggesting that both are possibilities (Robinson 1996: see also van der Veen 1991). In comparing the concentrations of carbonized plant remains from Thornhill Farm (which had a pastoral economy) and Gravelly Guy (which practiced agriculture) Robinson determined that Old Shifford Farm lies somewhere between the two. It is also possible that production was small-scale for the consumption by the inhabitants (van der Veen 1991:357). What we can assume is that cereals and possibly other edible plant species were processed (querns and ovens have been recovered at the site) and consumed on site.

7.3.5. The Ingredients at the late Iron Age settlement

The late Iron Age animal remains (phase one and two)

Species representation

The N.I.S.P. for each species in phase one indicates that cattle bones were the most frequently recovered species, that sheep/goat and pig bones are equally represented, and horse bones were the least represented (see Figure 7.3.). No dog, deer or bird bones were identified in this phase, although a small percentage of USM were identified. The frequency of the four main species is further suggested by the frequency of unidentified large and medium sized species. Large species (ULM: cattle and horse) are the most dominant group followed by medium sized species (UMM: sheep and pig). In phase two, cattle are again the most commonly identified species, although sheep are better represented and pig and horse are now equally represented (see Figure 7.4.). Dog and deer were identified in this phase in small numbers. The shift in the frequency of the four main species is also mirrored in the groups of unidentified species, which adds credence to this type of identification when the bones are highly fragmented (see comments by Crader 1990:700 who also favours this method of identification).

Butchery practices

A variety of body parts, including feet, from the various species from each group of meat yield were recovered from phase one and two of the late Iron Age settlement, which suggests that the species were not 'dressed' and brought to the settlements (Wacher and McWhirr 1982:213) and were probably butchered on site. The butchered bones indicate that the animals' bones were both chopped and cut. As was stated above, the bone sample was highly fragmented, many of the bones were broken up but do not display any butchery marks. The discussion of the butchered bones will focus on individual butchery marks found on the various species, rather than attempt to establish a butchery pattern as such.

Of the small numbers of bones recovered in phase one, few have butchery marks. Cut marks were only found on cattle, on a mandible presumably to remove the cheek meat and on a proximal radius to disarticulate the bone from the humerus. Chop marks were found on two cattle tibiae and a radius and probably represent dismemberment and/or the recovery of bone marrow. The femur of a sheep and mandible of a pig display chop marks. Butchery marks were not found on any of the horse bones. Only one ULM bone had chop marks whereas a number of the UMM bones have chop marks, which suggests that the butchery of identified medium sized species might be under-represented. In phase two, the slightly larger sample size reveals butchery marks on a wider variety of bones, although no cut marks were recorded in this phase. In addition to chop marks on the shafts of long bones of cattle, the scapula blade is chopped and the right wing of the sacrum is chopped. Butchery marks on sheep were minimal; one mandible was heavily chopped, and chops to the pelvis and a tibia may indicate points of disarticulation. Pigs are only represented by a non-butchered mandible and some teeth. Horse bones are broken up but do not display any butchery marks. Interestingly, there are no obvious butchery marks on the phase two ULM bones, whereas phase one UMM bones appear more butchered.

The absence of evidence for the trimming of meat, together with the fragmented and chopped up nature of many of the bones, indicate that in both phases one and two there could have been a preference for one-pot cooking (Crader 1990:710). In phase one the bones from medium sized species were more commonly burnt, whereas in phase two the bones from both large and medium sized species were burnt, which may indicate differential roasting of specific species,

although burnt bones do not necessarily indicate the roasting of meat (Pearce and Luff 1994). It is also possible that the species were treated differently once they had been eaten.

Meat yields

The sample size of the identified to species bones at the two late Iron Age settlements is quite small and I hesitate presenting the bones according to their meat yield other than for illustrative purposes (see Figure 7.5.). Some species, for example, are represented by less than five bones (horse in phase one and horse and pig in phase two). That all of the horse bones recovered in phase two were from group 'A' – the group with the highest meat yield – for example, loses its impact when you consider that we are dealing with a sample of two bones (although see below discussion of the contexts of the bones). Suffice it to say that in terms of the most commonly represented bones recovered at the late Iron Age settlements, group 'B' bones were the most common for each phase.

The plant remains at the Late Iron Age settlement (phase one and two)

As with the animal remains, I have looked at the plant assemblage according to each phase. In phase one, oats and barley were identified to species, and chaff from either spelt or emmer wheat was identified. The breakdown of the carbonized deposits was: grains (identified and non-identified) 60%, chaff 5% and non-cereal seeds 35% (total number of carbonized items = 43, volume of soil processed = 34 litres thus 1.3 items per litre). Very few of the carbonized weed species were edible, they include dock and cornsalad.

In phase two, barley, wheat, including spelt wheat and oats were identified to species – barley was slightly more dominant than wheat. The breakdown of the carbonized deposits was: grains (identified and non-identified) 51%, chaff 1% and non-cereal seeds 48% (total number of carbonized items = 84, volume of soil processed = 31 thus 2.7 items per litre). Again few of the weed species identified were edible, they include small amounts of orache, flax, and dock.

The number of plant remains identified for both phases was quite low, although it is possible that crops were grown for consumption by the inhabitants. The prominence of barley (although

other grains may also have been used (Green 1981:139-40) and the presence of ovens, possibly for malting (van der Veen 1989:304) could indicate that beer was produced at the settlement.

7.4. Food and Drink Consumption at the Early Roman period Settlement

7.4.1. The Containers at the early Roman period settlement

The pottery at the early Roman period settlement

Form and function

The sample size at the early Roman period settlement was larger than both phase one and phase two combined; forty-eight vessels were identified to type. One beaker was identified and while the types of jars (and jar/bowls) are similar to those recovered at the other early Roman settlements in this study, the range in types of pots does not appear to include forms other than jars and, to a much lesser extent, bowls (see Figure 7.6.). No samian ware or mortaria were recovered at the settlement, and a single sherd of amphora from a late Iron Age context is inconclusive. Indeed, compared to other early Roman period sites in the area, the early Roman period settlement at Old Shifford had hardly any identifiable specialist wares (Allen 1990; Booth in press). Interestingly, when settlement at Old Shifford Farm was re-established in the third century, specialized forms such as beakers, tankards, dishes and Roman style wares were only recovered in the latest phases of occupation. Timby suggests that the lack of Romanized wares may indicate a “lack of access to such items, an inability to purchase fine tableware or products, such as olive oil and wine, or simply a lack of desire for items clearly related to Roman eating and drinking habits” (Timby 1996:129). The possible significance of the absence of Romanized pottery at the early Roman period settlement will be examined below.

As has been discussed in previous chapters, specialized forms with specific uses, especially for serving food, are characteristic of the Roman period (Millett 1979). However, to conclude here that the pottery, and by association the dining practices, at Barton Court and Roughground Farms were more Romanized (in a native non-Roman kind of way!) than the pottery at Old

Shifford, is premature and ultimately meaningless without considering other aspects of the pottery, and studying the pottery within the context of the other remains recovered at the settlement.

Fabrics

Some of the observed distinctions between the jars, for example, require further comment. Certain forms appear to have a more obvious association with function. We see for the first time, narrow-necked jars, short-necked jars, wide-mouthed jars and vessels with perforated bases. All of these specialized jars were tempered with grog, as were the necked jars and bowls and Belgic jars. The majority of the vessels (at a ratio of almost 3:1) are also wheel-turned. A number of the vessels had sooting or burnt exteriors and some even contained burnt residues. The vessels with evidence of cooking (or burning) include a short-necked jar and bowl, a wide-mouthed jar and a thick-rimmed bowl. The fabrics of these vessels were tempered with either grog or shell/limestone all of which are suitable for heating (Woods 1984:27).

The proportion of identified forms is, as with the late Iron Age phases, proportionally low; however, the fabrics of both identified and non-identified forms at the early Roman settlement are the same as that found at the late Iron Age settlements (see Table 7.1., section 7.3.2). In other words, they are almost exclusively local – with one exception. In the early Roman phase, when vessels were increasingly wheel-thrown rather than handmade, the only example of non-local wares were hand-made Malvernian pots (see also Lambrick 1984:170; and Green 1980 for other examples of the persistence of handmade pottery in the Roman period). One of the Malvernian pots contained burnt residues.

Rim Diameters

The recording of rim diameters was slightly higher than for the late Iron Age phases (see Figure 7.7.). The histogram, however, should be viewed as a presentation of the range in the

diameters of select pots, rather than the identification of particular patterning for the whole assemblage.

7.4.2. Other implements at the early Roman period settlement

A number of implements were recovered at the early Roman settlement that have an association with cooking and preparing food. These include fired clay objects that have been identified as part of oven walls and disks that may have functioned as lids. Part of an iron knife was also recovered. A complete Whittle tang knife was found which although un-stratified has been dated to the mid-first century AD and may have had a culinary use in either the late Iron Age or early Roman phase. A few un-stratified small lead weights have been identified that may have been used for fishing nets (Allen and Glass 1996: 142-144); these may have been used in either the late Iron Age or early Roman period. A small number of stone objects associated with grinding, were recovered in this phase, including quern stones and rubbers (Roe and Glass 1996:145). Burnt limestone, used in the cooking process, was only found in Trench L; its nearest source is eight kilometers away in the Witney area.

7.4.3. Ingredients at the early Roman period settlement

The animal bones at the early Roman period settlement

Species representation

At the early Roman period settlement, cattle was the most commonly identified species followed by sheep/goat, and in contrast to the late Iron Age phase of settlement, horses were the third most dominant species, followed by pigs (see Figure 7.8.). The increase in percentage of horses is further suggested by the increase in ULM. Coincidentally – or not – the percentage of ULM is the percentage of identified cattle and horse combined! Small numbers of dog and deer were identified at the settlement.

Butchery practices

Cattle long bones – humerus, radius – at the early Roman settlement were often chopped longitudinally, which suggests that bones were split for their marrow (Maltby 1985a:50 has observed that marrow extraction is more common in the Roman period than in the Iron Age). Cut marks, as with the first late Iron Age phase, occurred mainly on the bones of cattle, and appear to indicate the removal of the horn, skin and cheek meat and particularly the dismemberment of body parts. There is less evidence of the butchery of sheep than in the late Iron Age phases, the head does not display any butchery marks and neither do the long bones. The neck of a scapula has been chopped where it attaches to the humerus, and chops on the dorsal edge of the ischium indicate the separation of the pelvis from the femur. Other evidence of butchery was found on the tarsal and metatarsals. Pig bones also have fewer butchery marks; with isolated butchery marks found on a radius, an ulna and a mandible.

Horse bones, on the other hand, are clearly butchered at the early Roman settlement. Chop marks were found on the cranium and appear to suggest that it was broken up, the proximal end of a femur was also chopped as was the distal end of a metacarpal and a couple of phalanges. Few major meat-bearing bones were butchered which makes the consumption of horsemeat at the early Roman settlement less conclusive than was the case at Barton Court Farm. In contrast with both phases of late Iron Age settlement, more of the bones from the ULM group are butchered and only a few of the UMM bones display butchery marks. This seems to parallel the increase in butchery marks found on horse bones and the decrease in butchery marks found on sheep and pig bones.

Meat yields

The sample size of the identified species, though still quite small, is larger at the early Roman period settlement. The grouping of bones according to their meat yield indicates that bones from group 'B' continued to be the most commonly identified bones; once again, horses are the exception (see Figure 7.9.). The varying proportions of body parts are actually quite similar to the Iron Age assemblage (see Figure 7.5. and section 7.3.5.) except that group 'C' bones were more commonly identified for both sheep and horse.

The plant remains at the early Roman period settlement

At the early Roman settlement, a number of plant species associated with middens (henbane) and muddy areas such as animal corrals (red goosefoot and toad rush) were identified. It is further suggested, through the presence of waterlogged plant species and particular species of mollusc (*Lymnaea truncatula*, *Anisus leucostoma*, *Planorbis* and *Armiger crista*) that some of the enclosure ditches contained stagnant or 'slow-moving' water (see below) (Robinson 1996:162-3).

The early Roman samples have higher numbers of carbonized cereals and chaff than in the earlier phases, but the numbers of items in each sample is still generally small. Wheat, barley and oats were identified to species and as with the identified cereals at the late Iron Age settlement, barley slightly outnumbered wheat. The breakdown of the carbonized seeds and chaff was 51% grains: 2% chaff: 47% non-cereal seeds (total number of carbonized items = 390; volume of soil processed = 62 litres thus 6.3 items per litre). However, 135 items of silicified wheat chaff and a wide variety of non-cereal waterlogged seeds (measured in terms of 'present', 'several', and 'abundant') were also identified in one early Roman deposit. These non-carbonized samples suggest that the ratios of grain to chaff presented above is simply a breakdown of the carbonized samples and may not represent production/consumption patterns. Waterlogged deposits reveal a rich variety of plant species. Opium poppy was found in early Roman contexts, possibly cultivated, which could have been used in the production of oil or possibly medicinally. Mint, parsley and wild turnip were also identified at the early Roman phase of settlement. Other edible species that may have been consumed include fat hen, common orache, and nettle. This suggests that with the absence of late Iron Age waterlogged deposits, edible species may have made more of a contribution to the diet at the earlier settlements.

As was suggested at the late Iron Age settlement, the prominence of barley could indicate that beer was produced at the settlement, malting being one possible function of the ovens that have been identified (van der Veen 1989:304).

7.5. Summary of the Artefacts and Remains of Consumption at each settlement

Before we consider the distribution of the artefacts and the remains at the late Iron Age and early Roman period settlements, it is necessary to summarize some of the more salient points that have been made on the containers, the other implements and the ingredients for each phase.

7.5.1. Late Iron Age settlement – phase one and two

The containers

Pottery

- In phases one and two, jars are the dominant form. No dishes, shallow bowls, cups or beakers were identified in either phase.
- In phase one, most of the vessels whose manufacturing technique was determined were handmade, though one Belgic type jar was wheel-finished.
- The jars in phase one had similar profiles, although a variety of fabrics were identified at the settlement. Grog-tempered fabrics were the most commonly occurring fabrics used.
- The most commonly identified jar in phase two was the Belgic type jar, which was wheel-finished and grog-tempered – however, six of the ten vessels whose manufacturing was identified were handmade.
- In phase two sooting of the exteriors of pots indicate that pots were both suspended above fires and placed directly on the hearth.
- For both phase one and two I have suggested that the importance of the pottery may not have been in its place of origin or style but rather in the methods of preparing and cooking food, the food and drink itself or possibly how and where it was consumed.

Other implements – phase one and two

- Clay oven walls were identified in phase two as well as a clay disk that may have been used as a lid for a container.
- A piece of a metal knife was found in a phase two context, which may have had a culinary use.

Ingredients

Animal bones – phase one and two

- Cattle were the most commonly identified species in phase one, followed by sheep, pig and horse.

- No dog, deer or bird bones were identified in phase one.
- In phase two cattle are again the most commonly identified species, followed by sheep, which are better represented than in phase one; pig and horse are equally represented.
- Dog and deer bones were identified in phase two in small numbers.
- The frequency of the various species in both phase one and two is also suggested by the frequency of bones that have been grouped according to animal size.
- The sample size was too small to give great significance to the distribution of bones according to their meat yield. Bones from group 'B' (moderate meat-yielding) were the most commonly identified bones for both phases.
- The animal bones in both phases one and two were quite fragmented but they did not display a lot of evidence of the butchery practice.
- In phase one the only species with cut marks was cattle, the bones of the other species displayed chop marks.
- No butchery marks were identified on horse bones for either phase.
- In phase two, bones with obvious butchery marks were chopped and no cut marks were identified on any of the butchered bones.
- The lack of evidence for trimming of meat and the fragmented and chopped up nature of the bones could indicate that there was a preference for one-pot cooking in both phases one and two.
- In phase one the bones from medium sized species were more commonly burnt; in phase two it was the bones from large species that were generally burnt. This could be taken as evidence of differential roasting of the species between phases of settlement or possibly of different treatment of the species once they were killed.

The plant remains – phases one and two

- Small numbers of carbonized plant remains were recovered from samples taken in both phase one and two.
- Barley and oats were identified to species in phase one, the breakdown of the carbonized deposits was grains 60%, chaff 5% and non-cereals 35%
- Wheat, barley and oats were identified to species in phase two, the breakdown of the carbonized deposits was grains 51%, chaff 1% and non-cereals 48%
- A small number of edible weeds were identified in both phases including dock, flax and orache.
- Mark Robinson is undecided as to whether crops were produced at the late Iron Age–early Roman period settlement. Production may have been small-scale for consumption by the inhabitants.

7.5.2. The early Roman period settlement

The containers

Pottery

- Jars continue to dominate the assemblage; a small number of bowls and one beaker were identified.
- No samian ware, mortaria or amphorae were recovered from the settlement.
- There was an apparent increase in the specialization of jars, narrow-necked jars, wide-mouth jars and jars with perforated bases have been identified.
- The majority of the jars are wheel-turned, although hand-made jars were still used at the settlement.
- Similar local fabrics identified in the late Iron Age phases were found in the early Roman period assemblage – with one exception, the only example of non-local wares were hand-made Malvernian pots. One of these pots contained burnt residues.

Other implements

- Clay oven parts and fired clay disks that may have functioned as lids were recovered at the settlement.
- Part of an iron knife was recovered and an un-stratified Whittle tang knife dated to the mid-first century AD may have been used at the settlement.
- Small numbers of querns and rubbers were identified in early Roman period contexts.

Ingredients

Animal bones

- Cattle bones were the most commonly identified species, followed by sheep, and unlike the late Iron Age phases, horses were more commonly identified than pigs.
- The apparent increase in the proportion of horse is mirrored in the increase in the proportion of bones from large species.
- Both knife cuts and chop marks were identified on the bones of the various species at the settlement, cut marks appear primarily on cattle bones although two bones from a sheep and a pig display evidence of cutting.
- Cattle long bones are chopped longitudinally which could mean that marrow was extracted from the bones.
- Horse bones display clear evidence of butchery; more of the bones from large species are also butchered.
- Whether horses were consumed at the settlement is undecided as only a few of the more meaty bones were butchered.
- None of the dog or deer bones was butchered.
- The distribution of bones according to their meat yield was similar to the late Iron Age assemblage. Bones from group 'B' were the most commonly identified bones for each species except horses. Group 'C' bones were commonly identified for both sheep and particularly horses.

Plant remains

- There was an increase in the number of plant remains per sample at the early Roman period settlement although the numbers are still small.
- Wheat, barley and oats were identified, with barley slightly outnumbering wheat.
- The breakdown of the carbonized deposits was grains 51%, chaff 2% and non-cereals 47%
- A waterlogged deposit revealed a variety of edible weedy species including opium poppy, orache, stinging nettle, mint and fat hen.
- As was mentioned above for the late Iron Age settlement, Mark Robinson is undecided as to whether crops were produced in any of the phases at the late Iron Age-early Roman period settlement.
- The prevalence of barley could indicate that beer was produced at the settlement.

7.6. The Distribution of the Remains of Eating and Drinking at Old Shifford Farm

The remainder of this chapter will consider the artefacts and remains from each phase of settlement presented in the preceding section from within their archaeological contexts. General observations on the re-contextualized material will be presented and discussed. Following this, a number of deposits thought to represent special meals and/or libations will be highlighted. A brief summary of my findings will be made for both the late Iron Age and early Roman period settlements.

7.5.1. Distribution of the artefacts and remains at the late Iron Age settlement

Phase one

The first phase of late Iron settlement is characterized by a series of gullies and a small number of ditches. Two possible house sites have been identified at the settlement, one in the northern area and the other in the eastern area. The eastern house site – a series of gullies in and around the entrance to the D-shaped enclosure – contained the vast majority of the pottery recovered in this phase. The bulk of the burnt clay and burnt stone assigned to phase one were also recovered from these gullies. The northern house site, a semi-circular gully, contained a small group of indiscriminate grog and limestone wares. A pit located at the southern arm of the D-

shaped enclosure contained a single sherd of a grog-tempered jar. Other than three sherds recovered from the southern arm of the D-shaped enclosure, no other pottery was found in any of the gullies south of the enclosure, or in the gullies abutting the northern arc of the D-shaped enclosure.

Similarly, the majority of animal bones are associated with the D-shaped enclosure. The bones were primarily concentrated in two sections of the enclosure: one in the area designated as a possible house site at the entrance to the D-shaped enclosure, the other, situated away from the domestic areas of the settlement at the southern-most section of the D-shaped enclosure. Bones with butchery marks were also found in these two areas of the settlement. Only a small group of burnt bones are associated with the northern house site. The distribution of the bones in the ditches and gullies (see Figure 7.10.) indicates that the remains of larger species, namely cattle, were situated in ditches whereas pigs and sheep were more prevalent in the gullies. The ULM bones recovered from the gullies came from the two areas thought to have been house sites. The deposit of bones recovered in the southern section of the D-shaped enclosure is primarily of butchered cattle and butchered ULM bones from the 'A' and 'B' groups of meat-yielding bones. It is particularly interesting that the only evidence for the cutting of bones was found in this section of the D-shaped enclosure. Burnt and weathered bones were only found in the gullies associated with the house sites, which suggests that these features may have been 'open' whereas the ditches may have contained material that was covered up.

It is difficult to comment on the significance of the distribution of the plant remains at the settlement because, even with a systematic sampling strategy, the samples represent a limited selection of contexts, and only a segment of those contexts at that (for similar comments see Hill 1995:23; van der Veen 1991:359). With this in mind, in phase one, the two gullies thought to represent the location of house sites were sampled for their plant remains. Both samples comprise small amounts of non-grain seeds and primarily non-identified carbonized grain, with just one item of chaff in each context.

Phase two

The distribution of the artefacts and remains in phase two was quite different to phase one. Two possible house sites have been identified in the southern area of the settlement, one to the

east and the other to the west. The pottery and the animal bones were recovered in small quantities throughout the various gullies and enclosure ditches that help to define the two main activity/occupation areas at the settlement. The largest concentration of pottery, and the area with the most pottery identified to form, was the southeast house site. The types of vessels recovered from this house site were jars with everted rims, which are often associated with cooking, and jars with upright rims. In another area of the settlement, a jar with an upright rim had sooting which suggests that these types of vessels were also used in cooking. Small quantities of necked and globular bowls and jars were only recovered from within the rectilinear enclosure and other features around the settlement generally contained non-typed pottery.

In contrast to the first phase, cattle bones were found more commonly in the gullies, whereas sheep were prevalent in the enclosure ditches (see Figure 7.11.). Interestingly, horse, dog and deer bones were recovered only in the enclosure ditches. The frequency of ULM bones and UMM bones seem to reaffirm the distribution the identified species, although it is possible that the percentage of cattle in the ditches (as well as the percentage of horses) may be slightly higher. Comparably with the features in phase one, gullies contained a higher percentage of weathered and burnt bones whereas the ditches contained more bones that were butchered.

Two different distribution patterns of animal remains were identified at the two house sites. The southwestern house site contained primarily sheep bones and the bones of medium sized species. Over forty percent of the bones recovered from this house site were from the head, the rest of the bones were from the 'A' and 'B' meat yielding groups of bones, none of the bones were burnt and there was minimal butchery. This suggests that not all the animal remains at this house site are related to consumption and that possibly the cranial bones were a ritualized deposit (for similar conclusions see Wilson 1996:79). The southeastern house site, on the other hand, contained primarily the bones of ULM and UMM. The bones were primarily 'A' and 'B' type bones, bones associated directly with consumption, a number of which were butchered and burnt. As with the first phase, a large group of bones was deposited away from the domestic areas of the settlement, in a northern boundary ditch. It was in this area that the only identified dog bones were found at the settlement; the bones were largely complete and they likely represent the burial of a single dog (see Wilson and Allison 1990:58-9 for similar distribution of dogs).

Five plant samples were taken from four gullies and one ditch, although only one ditch and one gully contained twenty items or more. The samples with fewer than twenty items were taken from the southwestern house site and from the stack ring and their contents are grouped in with 'other Trench L samples' in the site report. One of the samples with more than twenty items was taken from the southeastern house site; the other was taken from a gully east of the house site. Hey (1996:107) has suggested that the house site may have been involved in processing the plants because this sample had a 2:1 ratio of non-cereal to cereal items whereas the sample taken from the gully situated away from the domestic area, had a ratio of cereals to non-cereal items of 2:1 (although it should be noted that up to a third of the non-cereal seeds, were orache which is an edible species).

'Special deposits' at the late Iron Age settlement (phase one and two)

The identification of 'special deposits' is not obvious in either phase of the late Iron Age settlement. At low-lying Old Shifford Farm, there was only a scattering of pits and they contained no animal bones and only one sherd of pottery. The absence of isolated groups of remains affects the identification of specific meals and/or events. However, it reinforces the importance of other types of features at the settlement when considering distinctive deposits. For example, do the limited amount of cut marks found primarily on cattle bones in phase one of the late Iron Age settlement indicate the special preparation of these animals before they were consumed? Tambiah (1969:437) has observed that species important to the economy of a settlement may receive ritualized treatment. The correlation of separating bones through cutting through the ligaments, with the traditions of the Iron Age (Grant 1989:141), is, in this context, particularly significant. The deposit of burnt stones in the terminal of the house site in D-shaped enclosure in phase one and in both of the house sites in phase two, could indicate that the houses were areas of feasting activity. In phase two there was a large deposit of cranial bones associated with one of the house sites, which could have been a deliberate and specialized deposit. The deposition of animal bones not generally associated with butchery waste away from the domestic areas in both phases of late Iron Age settlement (a dog burial was also found in these contexts in phase two) may indicate special meals or the marking of areas that bounded the settlement (Hingley 1990b; Edmonds 1993; Moore 1981:92).

Summary of the re-contextualized material at the late Iron Age settlement

In phase one, two different distribution patterns for the remains of food consumption at the two suggested house sites have been identified. The artefacts and animal remains at the northern house site are few and non-distinguishable and all the bones recovered are burnt. The house site situated around the entrance to the D-shaped enclosure has larger groups of identifiable pottery and animal bones, some of the bones are burnt, and many are butchered and sizable amounts of burnt stones. It also appears that the southern arm of the D-shaped enclosure was the receptacle for meat-bearing bones and the butchered bones of large species, primarily cattle. The bones in this area were less weathered and not burnt and were probably covered up periodically.

There are a number of possible scenarios that might account for the distribution patterns described above. It is possible, for example, that the house site associated with the D-shaped enclosure was a principle residence associated with consuming whereas the northern house site was associated with food preparation. It is also possible that the differing functions of the two house sites were prescribed through the status, age or sex of the inhabitants (see Parker Pearson 1996). The animal bones deposited away from the house sites, consisting primarily of consumable body parts, may, in either scenario, have been a focal area for the consumption of beef or the repository for the remains of particular meals.

Similarly with phase one, the two house sites and their associated features in phase two have quite different distribution patterns of artefacts and remains from each other. The southeastern house site contained a number of vessels that appear to be associated with cooking and food preparation. The composition of the plant sample from the house site is also typical of the preparation of grain. The animal bones, on the other hand were of the high meat-yielding 'A' and 'B' group of bones. High meat-yielding bones were also recovered from the southwestern house site; however, there were also a high proportion of cranial bones, which may indicate butchery waste or possibly ritualized deposits. Globular and cordoned necked bowls and/or jars, vessels possibly associated with serving, were only identified in the rectangular enclosure that surrounded the southwestern house site. In spite of the different distributions of containers and ingredients identified for phase one and two, it is possible to envision similar scenarios for the patterning. Again there are suggestions that there may have been a demarcation of areas

according to the preparation and consumption of food which may relate to the seasons or possibly the gender, age or rank of particular inhabitants (Schuster Keswani 1994:261). As with phase one there also appears to have been a large deposit of animal remains away from the domestic areas of the settlement, which may represent the special marking of the settlement boundary.

7.6.2. Distribution of the artefacts and remains at the early Roman period settlement

The early Roman phase of settlement is defined by a series of deep and quite substantial ditches and a prominent entrance way. Both the pottery and the animal bones in this phase were more evenly distributed around the settlement than was the case in the late Iron Age phases. Each arm of the main enclosure, including the southern arm away from the two domestic areas, contains relatively large groups of pottery. Pottery with evidence of cooking residues, however, is confined to the two suggested house sites, which each have large concentrations of pottery. Large deposits of burnt stone were recovered from contexts that are associated with the two house sites. Malvernian pottery appears restricted to the northwest area of the settlement in and around the square-shaped enclosure. It is possible that the Malvernian pots were not 'general purpose' pots but were used during special occasions, possibly for the cooking of particular ingredients (see comments in Orton *et al.* 1993:225-6). The two house sites had similar types of pottery, although more of the pottery at the house site situated within the square-shaped enclosure had cooking residues. The only beaker recovered at the settlement was also found in this context.

Large groups of bones were also found in most ditches and each ditch displayed evidence of butchery (including cut marks), weathering, gnawing and concentrations of burnt bones (although see below). This suggests that each ditch was variably 'open' and 'closed' at various points in its history. The main enclosure (ditch C) contained the largest group of bones; cattle and sheep are equally represented, followed by horse and then pig (see Figure 7.12.). A significant number of ULM bones were identified, which suggests that cattle and horse may have been even more prominent than species identification indicates. In grouping the bones according to their meat yield (see Figures 7.13.), more bones from group 'C' – bones with the least amount of meat – were deposited in the main enclosure; indeed it is the only area where

group 'C' pig bones were recovered. Similarly with both late Iron Age settlements, a large group of bones was deposited along the southern arm of the main enclosure away from the two domestic areas of the settlement. This group of bones represent more of a mix of species and body parts, but only two of the bones display any butchery marks and there are few burnt bones in this group.

It was also possible to identify different grouping of bones at the two suggested house sites. The sub-rectangular enclosure (ditch B) features a large deposit of mostly large-sized species, particularly of horse. In fact, it is from this enclosure that the most convincing evidence for the consumption of horses at the settlement was recovered; butchery marks were found on meat-bearing bones and a number of the horse bones were burnt. Horse bones from group 'B' of the meat yielding bones were also more prominent here than at any of the other ditches (see Figure 7.12.). At the second suggested house site (situated within the square shaped enclosure – ditch D), cattle is again the most predominant species represented, fewer horse bones were identified and it is probable that both sheep and pigs were more prevalent than is indicated by identified species (see ditch D in Figure 7.12.). Group 'B' meat yielding bones are also the most common in this enclosure with the exception of horse of which only bones from group 'C' was recovered (see Figure 7.13.). Fewer burnt bones were found in this enclosure although a variety of the bones display butchery marks.

Nine soil samples were taken for environmental assessment, four of which were taken from two features in different sections (see below). All the features sampled were ditches, although it should be noted that there were only two gullies identified at the settlement, and they are not associated with house sites. Five of the samples contained more than twenty items and they were recovered from the two areas in the settlement that contain the suggested house sites. Samples taken from the main enclosure ditch that bounded the settlement contained very little carbonized material and their contents are grouped in with 'other material from Trench L'.

Distinctions in the plant composition between the two house sites are apparent. The two samples taken from the sub-rectangular enclosure (ditch B) contain the highest amounts of chaff recovered in the whole of Trench L (both carbonized and silicified); a fragment of a rotary quern and a rubber were also recovered from this feature. Conversely, two of the three samples taken from features associated with the square shaped enclosure (ditch D) contain the

highest amounts of cereal recovered from Trench L; no chaff was identified in any of these samples and a single rubber was recovered in this area. One of the samples taken from the sub-rectangular enclosure was waterlogged and contained 'abundant' amounts of edible wild species including orache, chervil, nettle, and 'several' specimens of opium poppy.

'Special deposits' at the early Roman period settlement

The definition of 'special' deposits at the early Roman period settlement was not obvious as only a few non-descript pits were identified at the low-lying settlement. Once again, I had to consider whether the treatment and placement of particular species was specialized. In an apparently similar practice identified at phase one of the late Iron Age settlement, there were cut marks primarily on cattle bones, which again may indicate that cattle were at times specially prepared before they were consumed. As with the earlier two phases of settlement, meat-bearing bones were deposited away from the domestic areas, which as was theorized above could indicate an association between the consumption of meat and the boundary of the settlement. A deposit of loose human bones along the outside arm of the square-shaped enclosure (a suggested house site) further accentuates the boundary of the settlement. It has been suggested that the deposition of human bones at the boundaries of settlements represents a concern with marking the inside and outside zones of a settlement (Parker Pearson 1996:123; see also Wait 1985:116-8 who notes that the dispersal of single human bones at Iron Age settlements is not random), or quite possibly that the bones represent trophies of war (Allen 2000:19).

Another possibility of a ritualized deposit is suggested by the consumption of particular species in particular areas of the settlement. The eating of horsemeat is inconclusive at both the late Iron Age and early Roman settlements, except in the early Roman sub-rectangular enclosure in which butchered meat-bearing bones and burnt horse bones have been found. It is possible that on occasion, at a time when they were gaining importance at the settlement, horses were also consumed. At Barton Court Farm, evidence for the butchery of horses was also minimal for the late Iron Age period, but in the early Roman period, butchered meat-bearing bones were found at the periphery of the settlement. The suggestion at both early Roman period settlements is that at certain times and in certain places the eating of, and

preparations for consumption of, horse was differentiated (see Dewar 1969:194-5 re: the consumption of horse meat on special occasions).

Summary of the re-contextualized material at the early Roman period settlement

The two house sites at the early Roman settlement appear quite distinct from each other. Each house site has distinguishing features relating to the preparation and consumption of food. The square-shaped enclosure contained the only non-local pottery – a *handmade* jar, one such vessel contained burnt residues, the only beaker identified at the settlement and the majority of the vessels that bore residues of cooking. No chaff was recovered from the plant samples taken from the enclosure suggesting that the cereals had already been processed for consumption. The second house site situated within the sub-rectangular enclosure, on the other hand, had the strongest evidence for the consumption of horsemeat. It was also at this house site that substantial amounts of chaff were recovered from the plant samples. The only rotary quern identified at the settlement was recovered from this context. A loom weight and a spindle whorl were identified in this area of the settlement. This suggests that there might have been specialized areas for particular activities including either preparing or possibly consuming specific types of food, both house sites contained large deposits of burnt stone. It is possible that the preparation and consumption of particular foods was associated with special times of the year or particular inhabitants or visitors (see Lambrick 1984:169 for similar observations at Iron Age Mingies Ditches). Unlike the late Iron Age settlements, the distinctions between the two house sites do not appear to emphasize one house site – and possibly its status – over the other, it is particularly noteworthy that both house sites appear involved in the preparation and consumption of specific foods. The two house sites both straddle the entrance to the settlement and one bronze brooch was recovered in each area.

7.7. Discussion of the Distribution of Artefacts and Remains at Old Shifford Farm

Images of cooking, roasting and food preparation were more vivid at the settlements at Old Shifford Farm than in either of the case studies discussed thus far. Cooking residues and the condition of the animal bones were a focus for each of the specialists and we have seen the

benefits of such an approach to the study of consumption. The lack of imports and vessels that typify 'tableware' also meant that, not only did I have to pay more attention to the fabric and manufacture of the vessels, but that I also had to consider alternative expressions of eating and drinking. The importance of considering the context of the artefacts and remains was re-affirmed.

7.7.1. The late Iron Age period settlement – phases one and two

The change in settlement during the late Iron Age settlement was an organic movement that was often difficult to define to one phase or the other. There was a shift in the shape of the boundaries, which became more angular with time although existing boundaries helped to make up the new shapes. Two possible house sites were identified in each phase and in both cases, there appears to have been a distinction between consumption and food preparation, which may or may not relate to the status, age or sex of the inhabitants. Similar traditions of positioning meat-bearing animal bones away from the domestic areas of the settlement, reiterate the continuity of settlement and possibly of families from one phase to the other.

7.7.2. The early Roman period settlement

In the early Roman period, the boundaries around the settlement become substantial, and some of them may even have contained moving water. However, once again, earlier boundaries are perpetuated. The two suggested house sites flank what is quite a large entrance to the settlement; and they both appear involved in preparing food in a specialized way – the butchery of horses on the one hand and cooking using hand-made non-local pots on the other. The positioning of these houses at the entrance to the settlement implies an engagement with those who enter the settlement. There is a general consensus among the various people who were involved in the production of the site report that the early Roman period settlement was of low status because of its lack of Romanization and imported goods; however, it is possible that the settlement's status and wealth was being realized through the rearing of horses (see Reynolds 1995a:191 on horses as high status animals) and was expressed to the community in less visible ways such as through the actual consumption of food and drink.

7.8. The Social Contexts of Imperialism at Old Shifford Farm

Stepping back for a moment to consider the wider implications of some of these observations, I have approached the study of the early Roman period dietary and culinary practices at Old Shifford Farm from the position that ultimately the early Roman settlement housed people who were subject to direct and indirect forces of imperialism. Such a stance has had a strong bearing on my interpretation of the artefacts and remains throughout this thesis, and has led me to question the association of change with the concept of Romanization. I instead place greater significance on the relationship between the restructuring of the settlements and the apparent changes in eating and drinking customs.

The shape of the structures during the late Iron Age and early Roman occupation of Old Shifford Farm is not clear. Wattle was recovered in each phase and judging from the contours of the gullies and sub-enclosures it is possible the structures were circular in the earliest phase and that some of the structures may have been rectangular in the latest Iron Age and early Roman phase, although this is speculative. What is apparent is that Old Shifford Farm went from a non-enclosed settlement in the late Iron Age to an enclosed settlement with a defined and controlled entrance by the early Roman period (see Parker Pearson and Richards 1994 re: entrances and the control of movement). Although the settlement was redefined and possibly reinforced, traditional boundaries were respected. This is the opposite of what occurred at Barton Court Farm where the early Roman settlement was constructed on a completely different alignment (see comments by Hingley 1995:189 on the significance of the re-use of existing boundaries).

There are also suggestions that some of the pre-existing customs and traditions that surround eating and drinking were reinforced. The containers that held the ingredients, though increasingly wheel-made, were in each phase locally acquired. The few pots from outside the local area were hand-made and non-Romanized. The distinction between kitchen and serving ware was difficult to isolate which suggests that there was an emphasis on ingredients rather than on serving throughout the history of settlement. The dismemberment of cattle using knives identified in the first phase of the late Iron Age settlement was re-established in the early Roman phase. In each phase, the remains of eating and drinking were concentrated around two house sites, and in each phase, the two house sites had

distinct links to the preparation and consumption of food; although at the early Roman settlement, the two house sites appear affiliated in their positioning on either side of the entrance to the settlement and in the shared distribution of prominent consumption rites. The narrow range in pottery identified at Old Shifford might indicate the use of other types of containers (see Dyer 1982:39) or quite possibly reflect the lack of resources and poor status of the inhabitants. However, it also might indicate that the inhabitants had different expressions of status that involved the giving of feasts, as possibly seen in the large deposits of burnt stones, the special preparation of animals for consumption, the continued use of hand-made vessels and possibly the drinking of beer. Viewed in the context of the changes in settlement, the apparent indifference to, or total rejection of, Roman-like pottery and quite possibly the consumption practices that are associated with them, is quite striking and suggests that ties to the local community were strong. No people live in a vacuum regardless of their status, but what ever message the inhabitants of the early Roman period settlement wished to communicate to those that entered the settlement, there does not appear to be any attempt to acknowledge a Roman presence.

7.9. Conclusion

For each settlement at Old Shifford Farm, it is perhaps the accumulated material from the gullies and the ditches that provides the most vivid images of the rituals of daily living. In both the late Iron Age and early Roman phases of settlement, the differing distributions of pottery with cooking residues, meat-bearing animal bones, burnt bones, burnt stones and residues of cereal production served to differentiate the various house sites. It is these apparently distinctive concentrations of artefacts and remains that help situate acts of eating and drinking within the context of tradition, mores and outside forces that govern the whole cycle of consumption, including procurement and discard.

It has been established in this chapter that the settlements at Old Shifford Farm are as different as they are similar to the other settlements in this thesis. The distribution of artefacts and remains in all three phases of settlement is patterned, variable and appears to have a direct association with the social context of eating and drinking. What the material culture recovered at Old Shifford Farm lacks in quantity it certainly makes up in diversity.

In the next chapter, Claydon Pike – the fourth and final case study in this thesis – provides an interesting contrast to Old Shifford Farm through the presence of significant amounts of ‘Romanized’ material recovered at both the late Iron Age and early Roman period ‘native’ settlements.

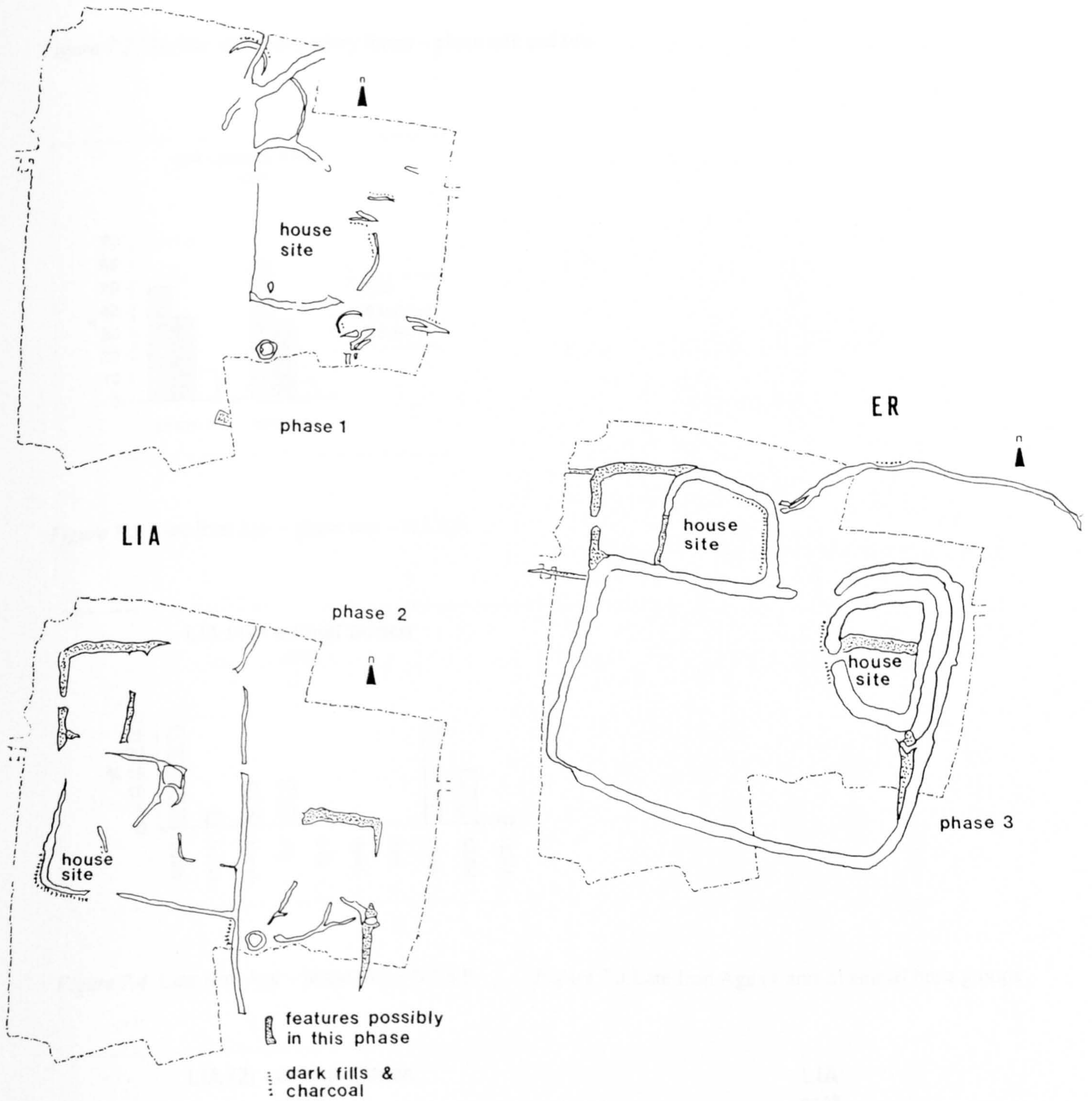


Figure 7.1 Late Iron Age and early Roman period settlements at Old Shifford Farm (after Hey 1996, drawn by M. Seymour)

Old Shifford Farm late Iron Age containers and ingredients

Figure 7.2 The late Iron Age pottery forms – phase one and two

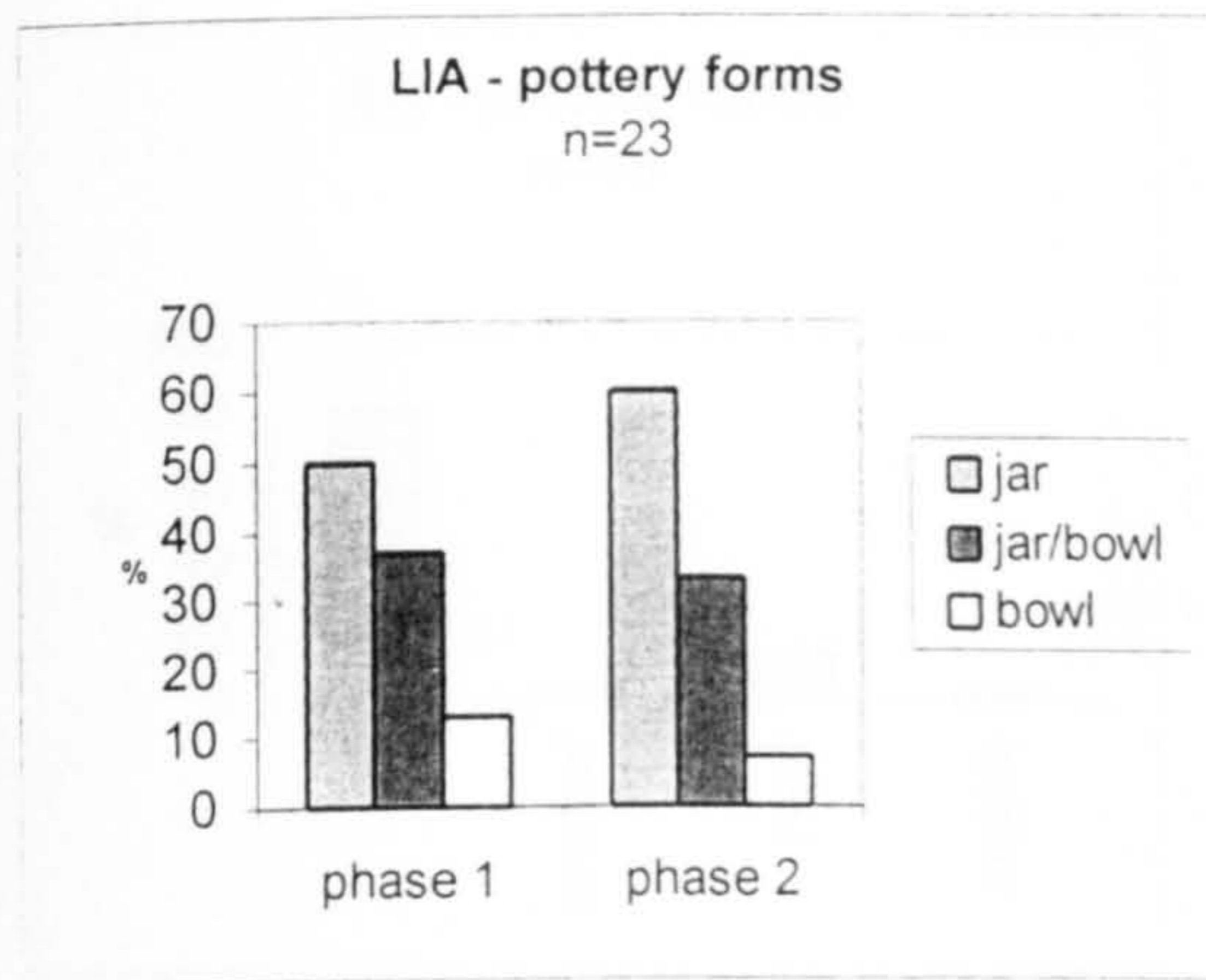


Figure 7.3 Late Iron Age – phase one – N.I.S.P.

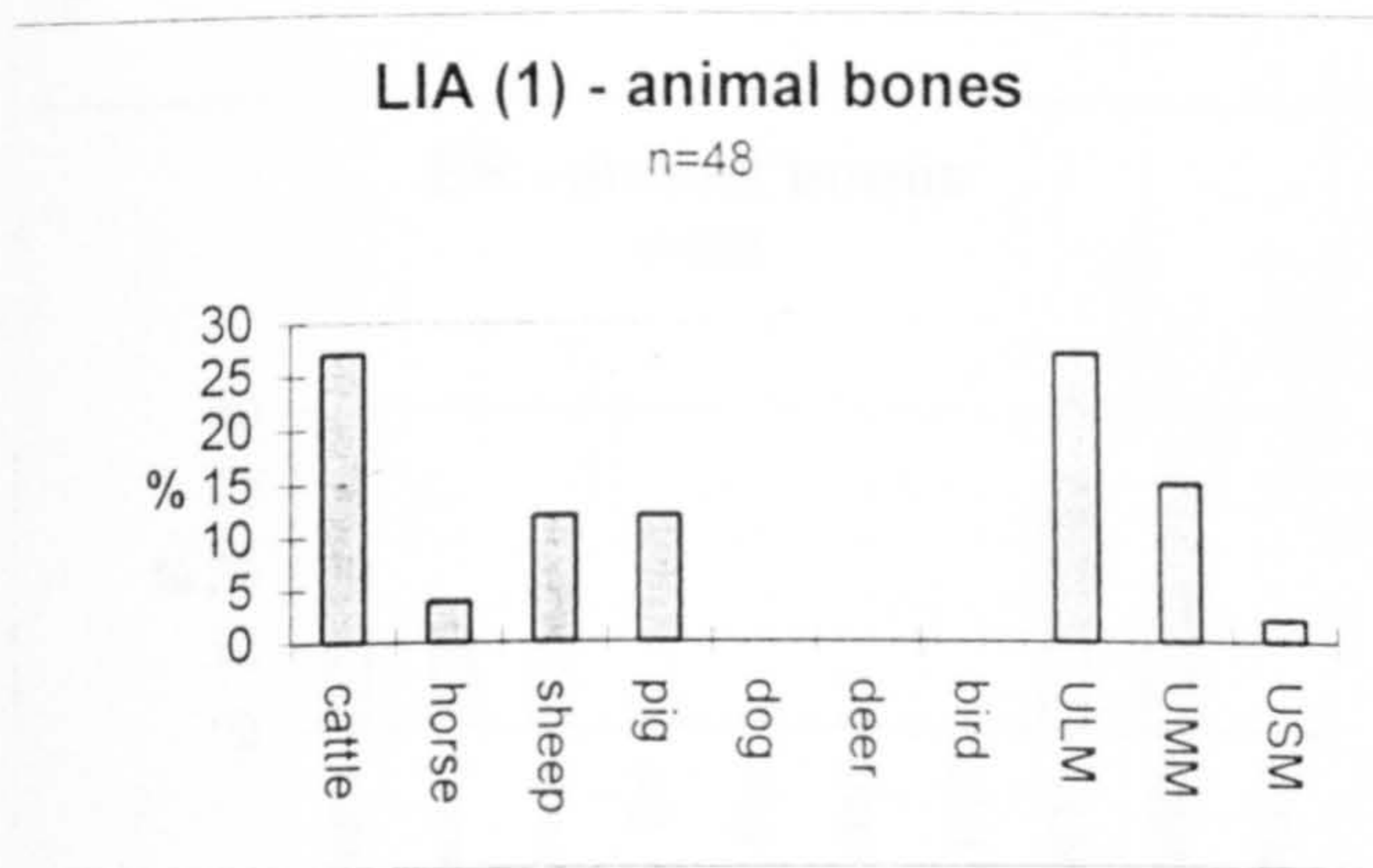
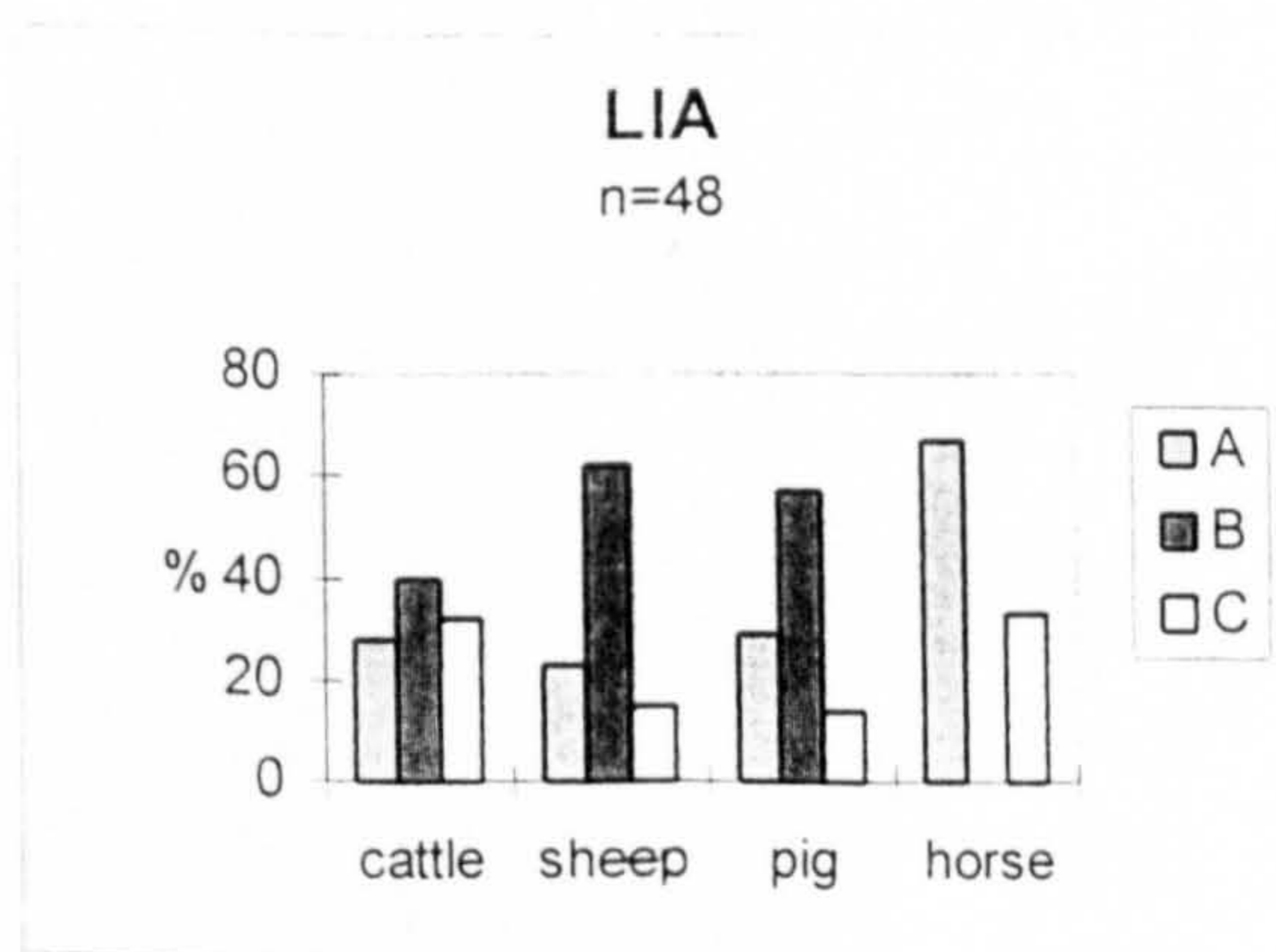
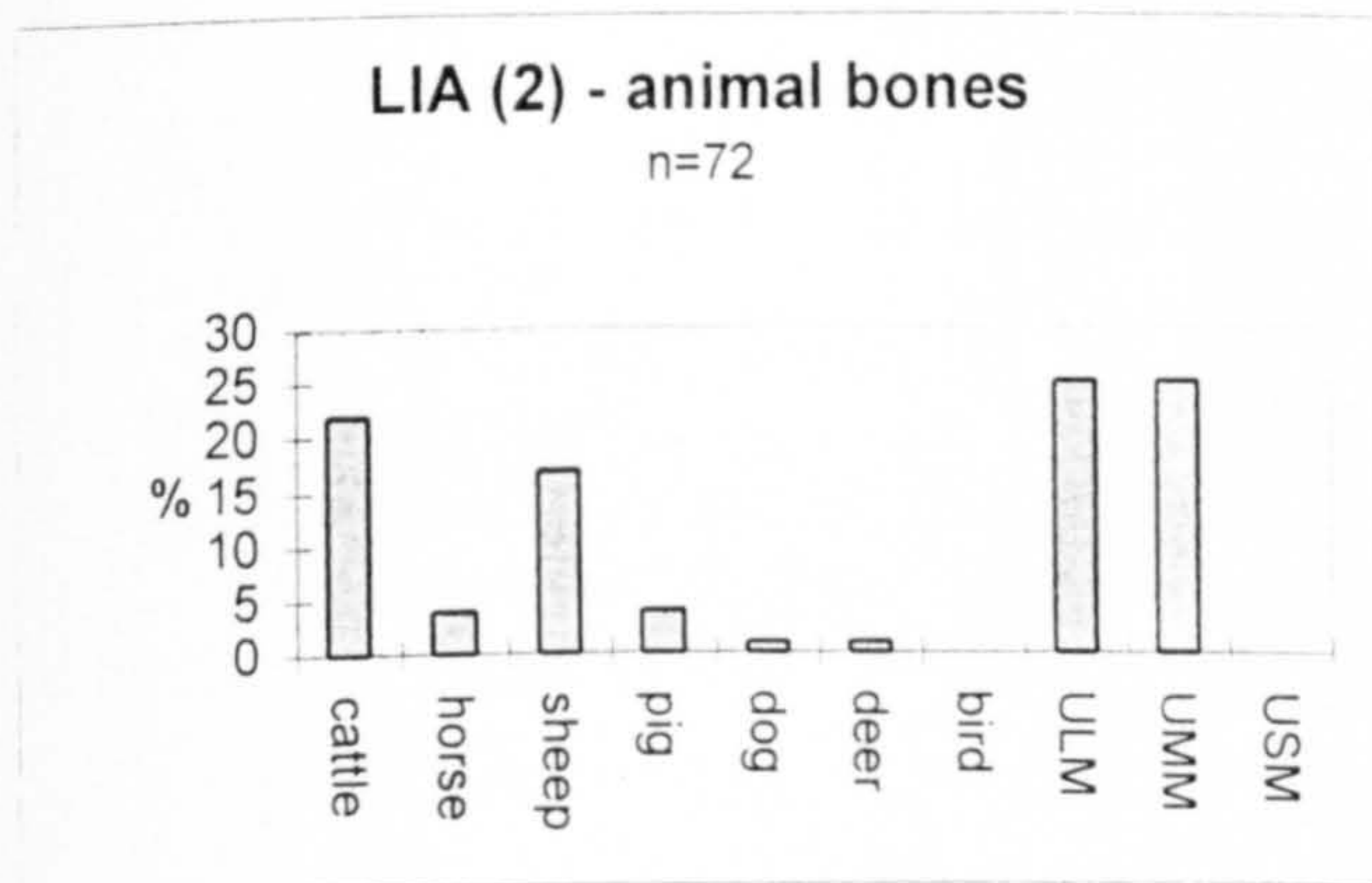


Figure 7.4 Late Iron Age – phase two – N.I.S.P.

Figure 7.5 Late Iron Age (1 and 2) animal bone groups



Old Shifford Farm early Roman period containers and ingredients

Figure 7.6 Early Roman period pottery forms

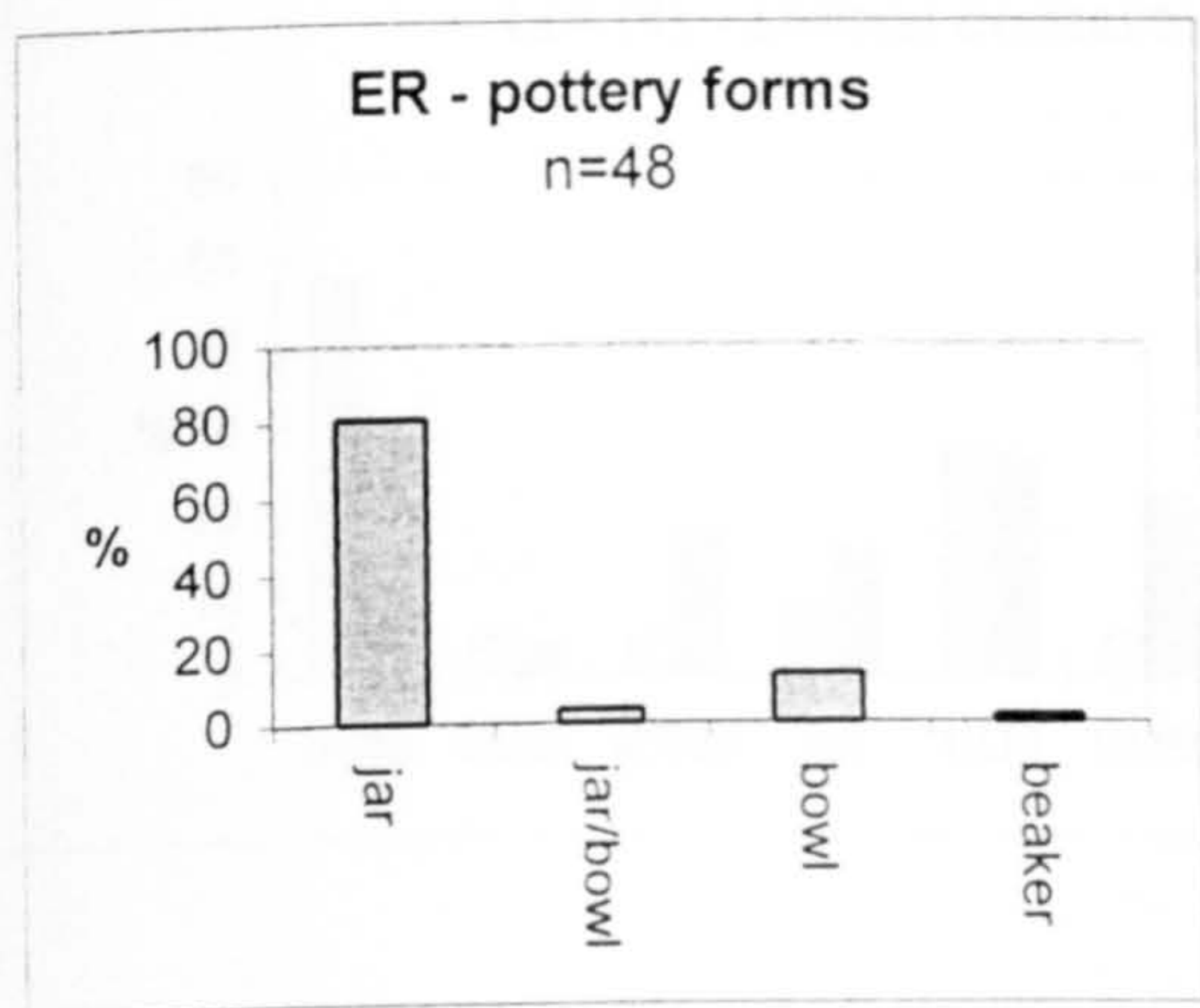


Figure 7.7 Histogram of early Roman period pottery

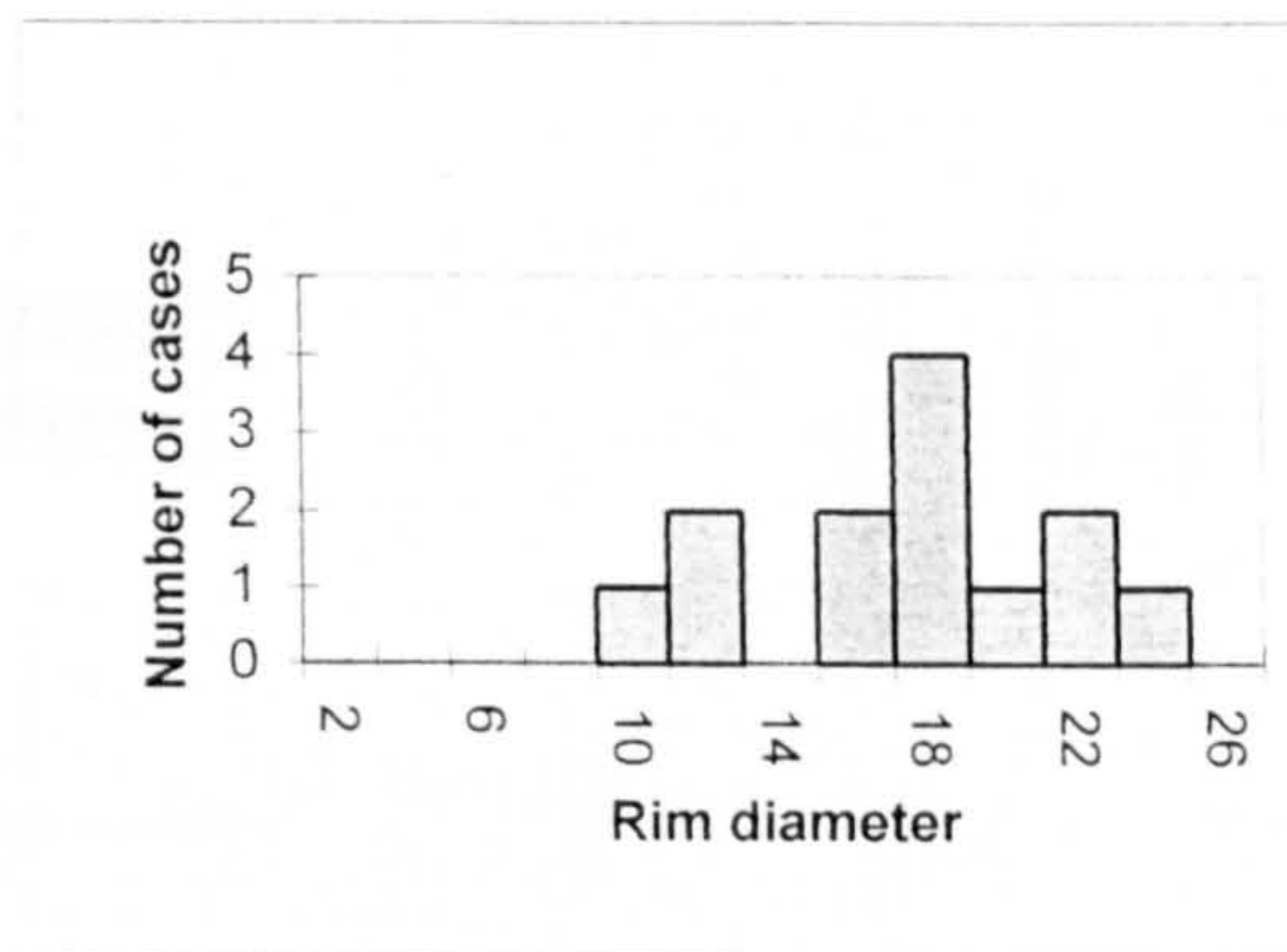


Figure 7.8 Early Roman period N.I.S.P.

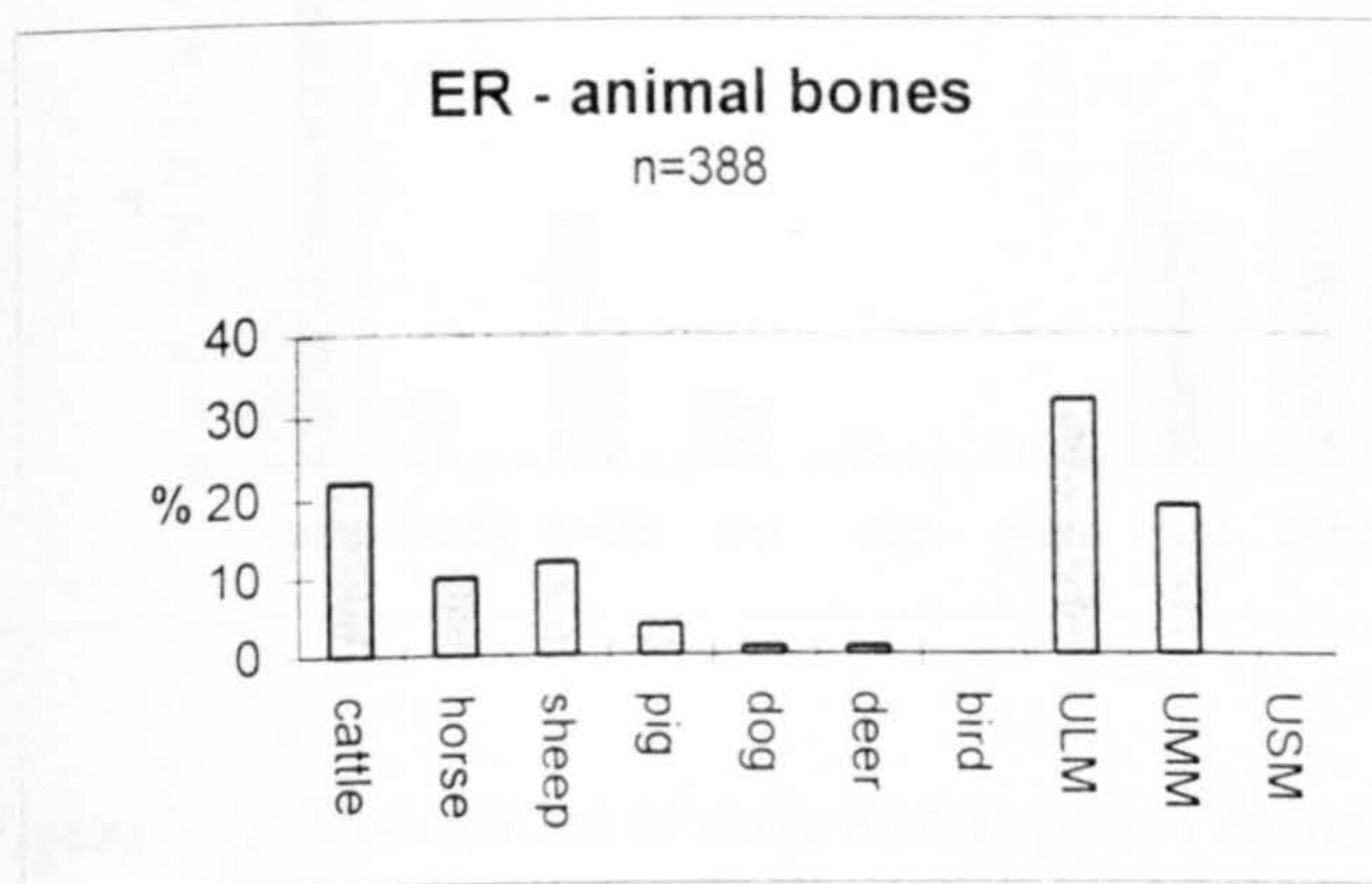
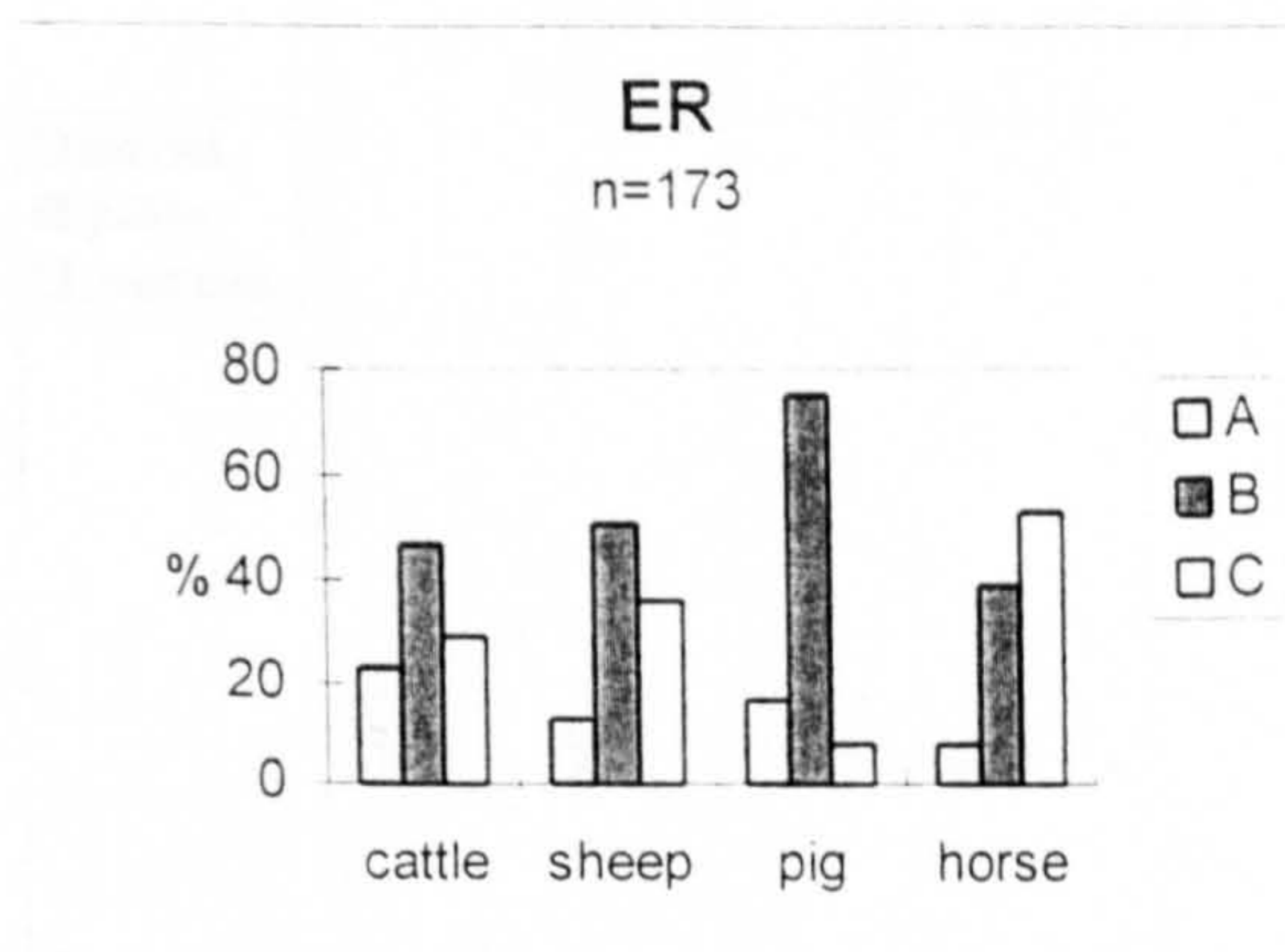


Figure 7.9 Early Roman period animal groups



Old Shifford Farm distribution of late Iron Age and early Roman period containers and ingredients

Figure 7.10 Distribution of late Iron Age – phase one – animal bones

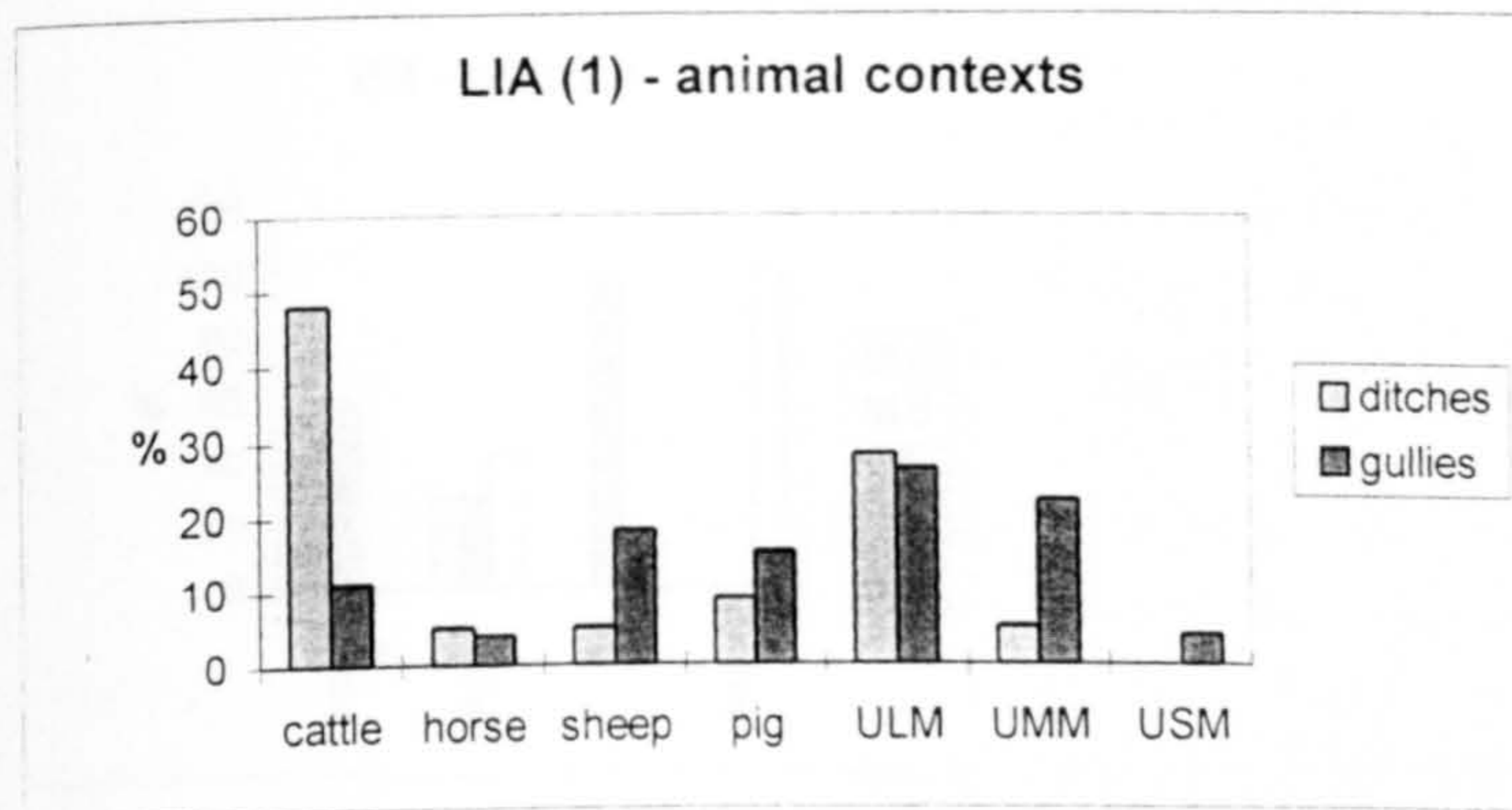


Figure 7.11 Distribution of late Iron Age – phase two – animal bones

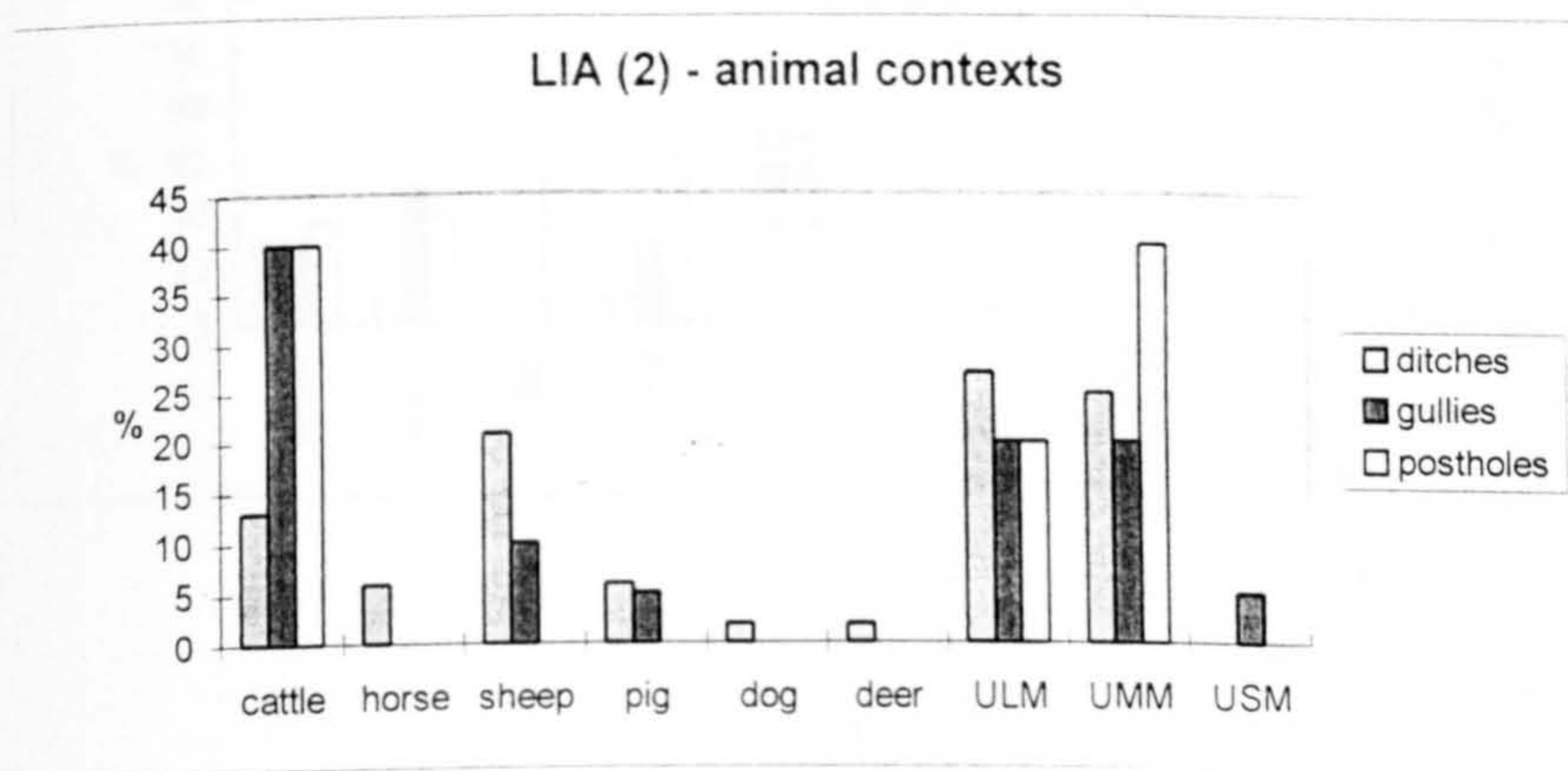
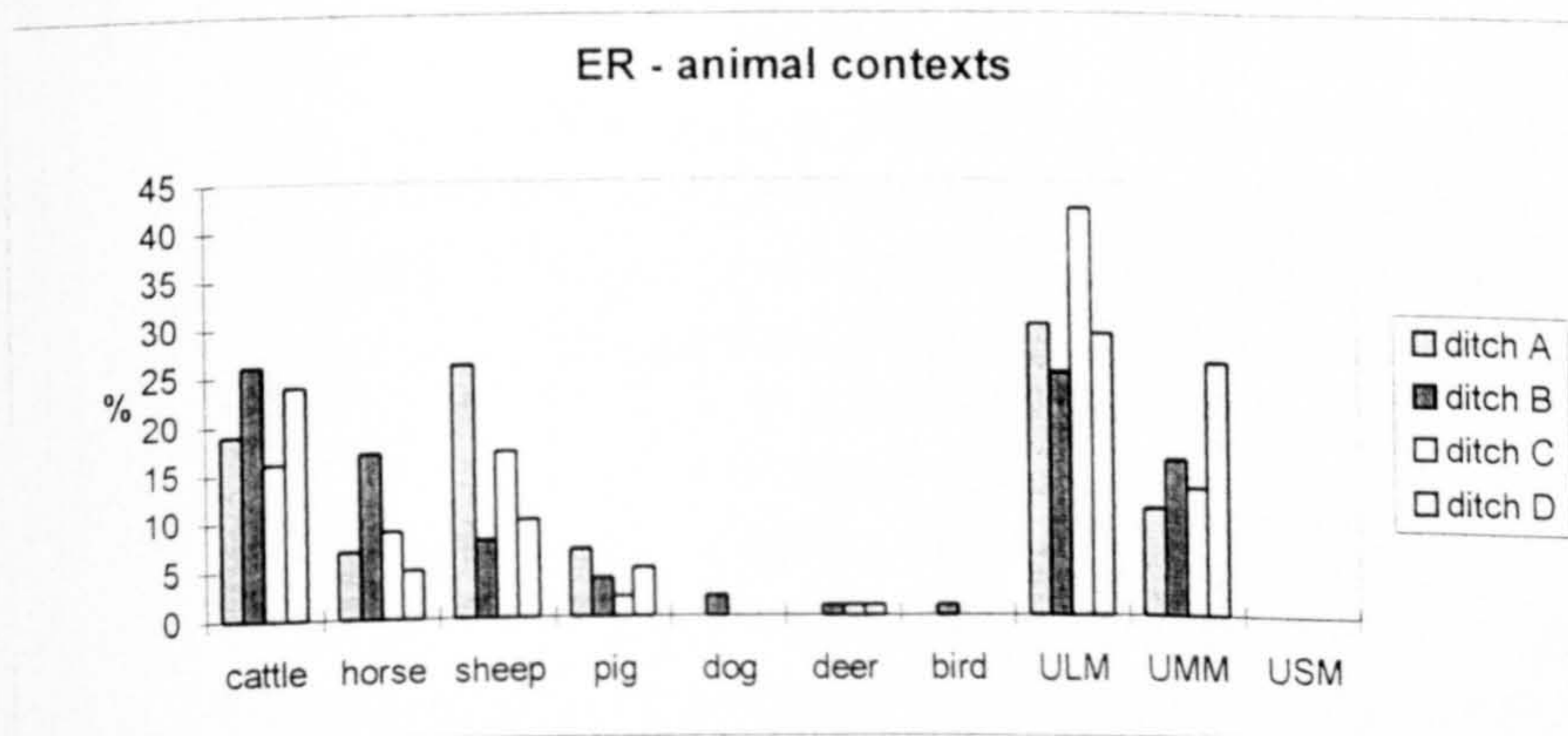
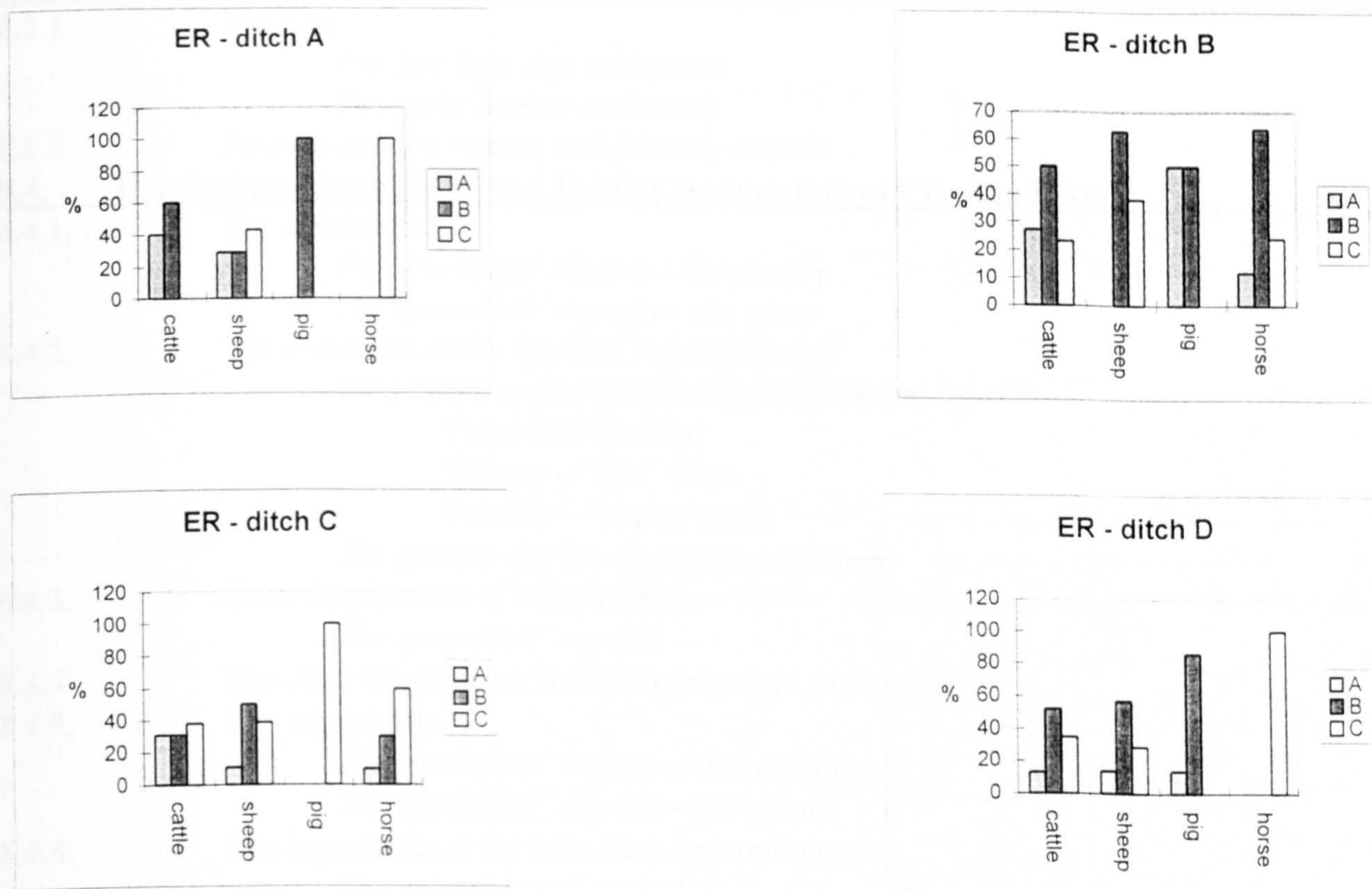


Figure 7.12 Distribution of early Roman period animal bones



Old Shifford Farm distribution of early Roman period ingredients cont.

Figure 7.13 Early Roman period animal bone groups by feature



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Chapter 8

Claydon Pike

8.1. Introduction

Claydon Pike, the final case study in this thesis, is not published. My analysis of the site consequently differs from that of the other three case studies since I am making conclusions on individual reports not yet finalized, rather than on an excavation presented as a coherent whole. The process of interpretation has been challenging, although it has inferred benefits by giving me a sense of what the integration of post-excavation reports involves. It should therefore, be borne in mind that my interpretation of Claydon Pike is based on a work in progress.

Claydon Pike was situated on the first gravel terrace on the northern bank of the River Colne just west of where it converges with the Thames. The site was initially identified by cropmarks, which hinted at a succession of overlapping settlements as well as a number of major trackways that led to the site (Jones and Miles 1979:321). The site covers an area of approximately one hundred hectares and is characterized by a series of dry gravel 'islands' or platforms that held the settlements, and by surrounding areas that were subject to periodic flooding. The longevity of settlement, which spans the middle Iron Age through to the fifth century, is attributed to the continual management of the dry and wet areas of the site. The site was well preserved as much of it was covered by pasture lands, which together with the preservation of waterlogged deposits deemed Claydon Pike an ideal site for rescue (Jones and Miles 1979:323; Miles 1983:76).

The format of this chapter is similar to that of the preceding cases studies. This chapter will commence with a brief discussion of the chronology of Claydon Pike, to be followed by an overview of the excavation, a brief description of the site and a comment on the site report

and the site archives. Following this is a discussion of the consumption practices of the inhabitants and the distribution patterns of the artefacts and remains from within the context of the settlements. The chapter will conclude with a discussion of the possible significance of my observations within the context of imperialism.

8.2. A Note on Chronology

Many of the published discussions of early Roman settlement at Claydon Pike identify a settlement made up of two occupation areas – possibly of differing status, a *Temenos*, and a series of rectangular fields and Roman roads (Miles and Palmer 1983a:91-92; Miles and Palmer 1983b; Miles 1984:208; Hingley 1989:80). However, the chronology as defined in the various excavation and specialist reports indicates that the above character of the ‘early’ Roman settlement took up to one hundred years to manifest. Initial ‘early’ Roman settlement was confined to one of the ‘island’ platforms and is referred to in the reports as ‘ER1’. A second ‘early’ Roman settlement was established in the second century and it was at this time that the *Temenos* is thought to have been constructed (although see below). The emphasis of this thesis is on the transition from the late Iron Age to the early Roman period; consequently, my analysis is largely limited to settlement on platform one where the majority of the late Iron Age and earlier ‘early’ Roman settlement occurred. For the remainder of this chapter, when I discuss the ‘early’ Roman settlement, I am referring to the ‘ER1’ phase of settlement.

As was discussed in Chapter 4 (section 4.2.), each of the sites in this thesis has had its own set of challenges. At Claydon Pike, there is some uncertainty over the chronology of the site. Rob Rippengal (1995) who has also studied Claydon Pike has questioned the chronology outlined by the O.A.U. and it is necessary to comment on some of his conclusions before we proceed with the analysis of the site.

Robert Rippengal’s thesis looks at the material culture of two Roman period sites, one of which was Claydon Pike. He conducted an analysis of the chronology of Claydon Pike and it is worth commenting on some of his conclusions here. The distinction between ‘ER1’ and ‘ER’ proper marks the point at which the early Roman settlement made a southward

expansion from platform one to other areas of the site around AD 125. Rippengal notes that "...the amount of material that can be confidently assigned to one or other of these sub-phases (and particularly ER1) is considerably reduced compared to that which falls broadly across them both" (1995). Rippengal as a result combined the two sub-phases noting that "As the alterations that took place c.125 AD do not appear to represent a fundamental change in the nature of the occupation of the site so much as an expansion, it is felt that little is lost in this way" (1995). I would maintain that a second domestic settlement of apparently lower status, a shrine, and a significant expansion in settlement are fundamental changes to the 'nature of the occupation of the site' and that the chronology of the changes in early Roman period settlement is as important.

I do not want to appear critical of Rippengal's approach to the chronology of settlement because although our work is complementary we have different objectives in our analysis. Throughout this thesis I have tended to accept the chronology outlined by the O.A.U. primarily because they are more familiar with the material but also because we share a similar concern with the development of a settlement over time. At Claydon Pike the O.A.U.'s chronology was arrived at through the combination of stratigraphic relationships and the dating of the pottery, coins and brooches. Rippengal's concern was quite different: "Here, in contrast, our primary concern is to identify more or less coherent groups of material" (1995). He looked at the date ranges of pottery in selected contexts and if there was a 75% agreement in the date range it was kept, other more mixed contexts were eliminated (when applicable, dates provided by coins and samian ware were also considered). When this method produced rather small samples for the LIA and LR phases of settlement, Rippengal noted that the sample size would be larger if some of the date brackets were combined, so for example, he increased the date range of the LIA phase to 0–100 AD (rather than 0–75 AD) in order to include the pottery in the 50–100 AD range). The phases established by Rippengal according to the date range of the pottery are as follows: LIA: 0-100; ER: 70-250; LR: 200+. Fifty-eight contexts were retained (he does not state how many were eliminated) and it was these contexts that formed the basis of his analysis of the site. That his chronology does not fit with the O.A.U.'s structural phasing was not seen as problematic because of the multifaceted nature of culture change of which structural change is viewed as the most conservative (Rippengal 1995). In contrasting the representation of fabrics using his dates and the general phases of settlement established by

the O.A.U. he was also able to (not surprisingly) define sharper trends in the pottery fabrics, which helped to reaffirm his methodology (1995).

Rippengal's chronology is not appropriate for this study for a number of reasons. As I am interested in the conquest period up to the second century, the grouping of contexts ranging from AD 70-250 as 'early' Roman was thus not appropriate for my purposes, particularly when incremental changes in settlement have been established. The elimination of contexts with small amounts of, or chronologically mixed, pottery in order to create more statistically relevant samples, although an accepted practice (Orton and Tyers 1991:79; Millet and Graham 1986; see comments in Willis 1996:210-211), was also not appropriate for this study (although see Green's methodology below re: detailed quantification) because I am looking at more than one type of artefact. Some of the features at Roughground Farm, Old Shifford Farm and Barton Court Farm, for example, are significant because of the animal bones rather than the pottery. The elimination of these contexts would have affected the interpretation of each site. For the purposes of this study, pottery fabrics that could not have been used because they did not exist yet are presented but have not been included in the discussion (for example fabric 4.1 an Oxford colour coat was not produced until the third century so it was not considered in the analysis of the fabrics).

8.3. The Excavation

Excavation of Claydon Pike began in 1979 and continued through to 1984 in advance of the extraction of gravel. David Miles and Simon Palmer directed the excavation. While still in the planning stage, the philosophy of the project was aired in a highly influential volume, *Invasion and Response: The Case of Roman Britain* edited by B.C. Burnham and H.B. Johnson (1979). It is clear that the excavation was designed to counter the perceived bias that had permeated Romano-British studies to date: "In the past the emphasis of Romano-British archaeology has been on a limited range of sites and a limited range of explanations, a one-sided Roman, military and upper-class view of Britain" (Jones and Miles 1979:324). The project was to have a number of objectives that were outlined by Jones and Miles in the volume: (a) "to investigate the structure and examine the integration between elements in the Iron Age and Romano-British landscape and their environmental setting" and (b) "to

isolate the points of major change and relate them to ecological, demographic, economic and cultural factors” (1979:323). Jones and Miles go on to state: “It is felt that the only satisfactory way to approach such questions on a site of this scale (or any scale for that matter) is through the implementation of explicit sampling strategies” (1979:323). The enforcement of a ‘probabilistic’ sampling strategy, it was argued, would “...cover all facets of the site and remove the personal bias of the excavator” (1979:323).

8.3.1. The Site (see Figure 8.1.)

The late Iron Age settlement

The late Iron Age settlement was occupied late in the first century BC into the early first century AD and is thought to have covered approximately 2.5 hectares. The settlement is characterized by a series of oval and circular enclosures and gullies of varying sizes, and ditches and pits, which together formed a complex, though nucleated occupation area. Towards the end of the settlement a boundary ditch enclosed part of the settlement. As with the other late Iron Age settlements in this study the identification of possible house sites is complicated by the lack of preserved floor plans. The density of domestic material, however, points to habitation. Daub has also been identified pointing to wattle and daub walls; interestingly window glass and tile were recovered although the numbers are too few to indicate their use in buildings (Wait and Hedges unpublished small find report) The distribution of excavated material appears to indicate the presence of domestic zones within the settlement. It was in the southern section of the site, for example, that items of personal adornment, large groups of pots, glass vessels, large groups of animal bones, oven fragments, loom weights, rivets and plugs for repairing pots, and whetstones were found. Many of the other gullies and ditches around the settlement contained minimal small finds, and only small amounts of pot and animal bones – these features have been interpreted as possible paddocks and small field boundaries. It is possible that there was a metal working area in the northeast area as smithing slag was identified in this area. Pits also appear to have been grouped in the southwest and northeast areas of the settlement. The economy is thought to have been largely pastoral, in part because of the nature of the plant remains and lack of evidence for storage of surplus.

The early Roman settlement

Around 70 AD a new settlement was formed over the top of the earlier settlement. The layout and features of the late Iron Age settlement were completely ignored. The early Roman settlement juxtaposed a newly constructed road and contained a rectangular structure that is referred to as the 'aisled building'. It is also possible that there was a second structure at the settlement although the dating of this structure is not secure. A number of pits were associated with the aisled building and other internal features include fence lines and linear gullies. Initial thoughts as to the occupation of early Roman Claydon Pike were that it may have been a village complex, although through excavation it has been revealed that many of the crop marks represent fields and paddocks rather than domestic areas. Only one domestic area was identified. This has led to suggestions that the economic emphasis of the settlement was in the rearing of cattle and sheep.

Post-excavation reports and primary records

As was mentioned above, Claydon Pike is not yet published. Analysis of this case study is based on the post-excavation reports and their databases. The reports are not linked together by the editorials and general discussion that usually are found in a site report and thus what follows is largely my interpretation of Claydon Pike and should be viewed as such. I entered the primary bone records into a database, as they exist only in written form. I was unable to consult the primary records although the amount of information contained within the existing pottery databases is extensive and was sufficient for my purposes.

8.4. The Archaeology of Food and Drink Consumption at Claydon Pike

As with the previous two case studies, this section will commence with a discussion on the nature of the remains of eating and drinking, to include the methodologies and conclusions of the various specialists, as well as my own analysis of the data. The distinction between the work of the various specialists and my own analysis will be outlined at the beginning of the

relevant subsections. The artefacts and remains are grouped as follows: '*containers*' which include pottery and glass; '*other implements*' which includes metal, stone and clay artefacts and finally '*ingredients*' which include animal and plant remains. This section will conclude with a summary of the artefacts and remains at each settlement.

8.4.1. The Containers

The specialists' reports – the pottery

The pottery was analysed by Sarah Green. Her analysis of the pottery helped to define the limits of occupation at the site where it was determined that both late Iron Age and early, i.e. 'ER1', Roman activity appears to have been contained within Platform 1. The pottery collection is large, particularly in comparison to the other settlements in this study, and all of the pottery for each context was catalogued by total pottery weight, date range and by general fabric and form. Quantification that is more detailed was made of all contexts that contained 50 grams or more of pottery. Contexts that might help to clarify the stratigraphic relationships of particular features were also quantified in detail, as was a representation of all of the types of features. Roughly one third or 400 kilos of the pottery was analysed in detail, although all of the amphorae and the samian recovered at the site was recorded¹. The below analysis of the pottery is largely based on the detailed record of pottery, as it was not possible within the confines of this study to re-examine the pottery that was not subjected to detailed study. Where applicable, contexts which contained animal bones were cross-checked with the initial catalogue to establish the pottery record for the context.

The specialists' reports – the glass

The glass was analysed by Jennifer Price and H.E.M. Cool who identified two peaks of use: the first in the Neroian to late Flavian period, and the second in the late Roman period. 540 fragments, representing a minimum of fifty vessels, were recovered at the settlement. In the sections on glass below, I will simply summarize the specialists' findings.

8.4.2. The Containers at the late Iron Age settlement

The pottery at the late Iron Age settlement

Imported pottery

A significant deviation from the other late Iron Age settlements in this study is the early presence of imported Roman-style pottery. The prominence of amphorae is particularly noteworthy, which in terms of identified forms was equal to bowls as the second most prominent vessel type (see Figure 8.2.). The majority of the amphorae sherds were body sherds, but as they were found in a wide variety of contexts, it is probable that their apparent importance is genuine. Most of the amphorae identified were the olive oil amphorae Dressel 20, although Camulodunum 186c, which contained fish-based products, was also identified. The wine amphorae Dressel 2-4, which dates to the late first century BC and continued in use until the early second century were found in general spread contexts, which could indicate that wine was consumed at the settlement. Mortaria are also present in the late Iron Age assemblage and tankards and flagons have been identified. Some pre-Flavian samian ware has been identified, although not in context.

It appears that at some point in the mid-first century AD, prior to the shift in settlement around 70 AD, a number of the goods that were arriving at the settlement are associated with certain aspects of Roman-type consumption, particularly it appears as it pertains to the flavouring and preparation of food.

Form and function

At the late Iron Age settlement, jars dominate the pottery assemblage, which as we have seen in the previous case studies is quite typical for the period. Of the jars identified, the majority were identified simply as 'jars', about 30% were wide-mouth jars, 6% were globular or 'Belgic' jars, and a small number of narrow-neck and storage type jars were identified. Burnt residues were found on wide-mouth jars and to a lesser extent, on the more

¹ The retention and analysis of all Roman-like material is a common practice at all types of Romano-British settlements, which a number of scholars have suggested skews the material culture of the settlements (Jones

generic 'jars'. Histograms of the jars (see Figure 8.3.) show a peak of small to medium sized jars with small numbers of large jars. The bowls were primarily straight-sided and were made out of a variety of fabrics including local brown and grey wares and surprisingly, Black-burnished ware (BB1), although it is likely that much of the BB1 wares was residual (see below). Histograms of the bowls (see Figure 8.4.) indicate that the bowls peaked at 22 cm and were quite large – Green defines two bowls as 'very large' (one had a diameter of 58 cm, the other was not recorded).

	Late Iron Age		Early Roman (1)	
	n=3,670	%	n=2,429	%
mortaria	12	.33	35	1
amphorae	43	1	34	1.4
British colour-coat	41	1	61	3
Foreign colour-coat	2	.06	4	.16
Mica-dusted ware	2	.06	24	1
White ware	111	3	155	6
Parchment ware	2	.06	0	0
fine and specialist wares	213	6	313	13
black burnished wares	379	10	424	17
red/orange wares	283	8	331	14
brown wares	746	20	50	2
Calcareous ware	751	20	25	1
grey/black wares	1297	35	1278	53
misc.	1	.03	8	.33

Table 8.1. Late Iron Age and early Roman period pottery fabrics

Fabrics – coarse ware

A variety of fabrics were identified which include both specialist and fine fabrics and coarse fabrics. In Table 8.1, we can see that the grey/black wares were the most commonly identified fabrics, followed by brown wares and calcareous wares which are equally represented. As stated above, Black-burnished ware is quite prominent, although Green suggests that the prominence of this fabric is probably due to the positioning of the sherds in the upper layers of the late Iron Age features. She does add that BB1 was probably arriving at the site by the late first century AD, as was the case at Cirencester; BB1 may therefore have been at the settlement just prior to its reorganization. Burnt residues were found on a number of identified and non-identified vessels. Of the various vessel fabrics with burnt

residues, calcareous wares had the highest incidences of residues (7) followed by grey/black wares (5), brown wares (4) and red/orange wares (2). The brown and calcareous wares are both local, but the other wares are from Swindon and the Severn valley. No burnt residues were identified on the Black-burnished ware.

Fabrics – ‘fine’ and specialist fabrics

A number of the specialist fabrics have been discussed in the section on pottery forms, namely amphorae and mortaria, and together with the white wares, ‘fine’ and specialty wares make up 5% of the total late Iron Age assemblage. (One of the ‘fine’ ware fabrics, 4.1, Oxford colour coat, was not included because of its date of manufacture). As has been expressed in previous chapters, however, ‘fine ware’ is in many respects a subjective classification that does not take into account the colour of a vessel or where it was made. The tankards were, for example, all made out of a red/orange Swindon fabric and the black BB1 bowls from Dorset may also have been considered ‘fine’ tableware. What is clear is that the inhabitants of the late Iron Age settlement were using vessels that point to Mediterranean tastes not found at the other settlements in this study (see also late Iron Age glass below). A contemporary late Iron Age and early Roman period settlement at Thornhill Farm, situated 1 km west of Claydon Pike, did not have any so-called luxury specialty or ‘fine wares’ and interestingly, as with Old Shifford Farm, did not have coarse ware versions of tableware (Timby unpublished draft pottery report:15).

The glass at the late Iron Age settlement

A number of glass vessels were recovered from late Iron Age contexts and while there is likely to be a degree of residuality, some of the pieces were of appropriate date. According to Price and Cool, a Hofheim cup and other bottle and body fragments of blue/green and light green vessels, for example, may have been imported to the settlement in the late Iron Age.

8.4.3. Other implements of consumption

The specialists' reports

The small finds were summarized and computerized by Gerald Wait and John Hedges. I will primarily comment on their conclusions and the findings of the individual specialists as they pertain to the present discussion on food and consumption. In the sections below which look at the character of the settlements and the contextual associations of artefacts and remains, I will discuss the possible significance of the distribution patterns of some of the other small finds such as jewellery.

8.4.4. The other implements at the late Iron Age settlement

Metal implements and the remains of food processing and cooking equipment were recovered from late Iron Age contexts. A number of metal objects were identified that probably had a domestic function: a small iron vessel, links of an iron chain possibly used to suspend a vessel, and an attachment loop from a bucket shaped vessel. Whetstones were recovered. The remains of a significant number of clay ovens and oven plates were identified.

8.4.5. The ingredients

The specialists' reports – the animal bones

The bones were analysed by Bob Wilson and Bruce Levitan who organized the bones into three groups. The first reflects residual, all phase 'rubbish spread' and will not be considered here; the second group, on which this study is based, were stratified bones; the third group of bones which were un-stratified were not considered by Wilson and Levitan and will not be included in this study. In their report, Wilson and Levitan describe the phasing differently from that established above. Their 'phase 1' which is elsewhere 'late Iron Age' is classed as "early Romano-British native settlement" and 'phase 2a' which is 'ER1' elsewhere is

classed as “‘Romanization’ and expansion of settlement”; the primary bone records, however, record the contexts as ‘LIA’ and ‘ER1’. My analysis is based on the chronology as defined above (section 8.2.), and thus my interpretation contrasts late Iron Age and early Roman period results rather than native early Roman and Romanized early Roman.

Wilson and Levitan’s analysis is comprehensive and places particular emphasis on the spatial distribution of the animal bones. Wilson, for example, was able to identify a distribution of the animal bones for the whole site (rather than by phase) that corresponds to other observations he has made at other sites in the Upper Thames Valley: sheep and pig bones were concentrated in domestic contexts and degraded bones, and bones from the larger species were concentrated at the peripheral contexts (unpublished report and 1996:52-56). Levitan, on the other hand, looked at the distribution of species in particular contexts. He found that at the late Iron Age settlement cattle were the most common species in both ditches and gullies, but that cattle and sheep were equally represented in pits. At the early Roman ER1 settlement, the only contexts listed were ditches. The distribution of the species will be commented on below.

Wilson and Levitan also established the frequency of species, which they acknowledged is a relative account considering all of the variables that can affect fragment count and M.N.I.. Pathology, sex and butchery were also determined where possible, although the discussion of these attributes tended to refer to species over the whole site rather than by phase. Despite only a small amount of sieving – which the specialists acknowledge bias the bone sample towards the larger domesticated species – a sizable number of bird bones, some with butchery marks, were identified at Claydon Pike.

The primary bone records had not been computerized and when I entered the record into a database, there were minor discrepancies between the phasing of a few contexts. In each case, I considered the phasing outlined in the general site record as the definitive phase, although as shown below there was no major difference in results between the two methods of calculation. All of the butchery notions for cattle and sheep were not recorded on the primary recording sheets, some were depicted on illustrated bones, and the discussion of butchery patterns in this section includes both types of notations.

The specialists' reports – the plant remains

Both carbonized and waterlogged samples were taken from late Iron Age and early Roman features at Claydon Pike. The samples were analysed by Vanessa Straker following the methodology set out earlier by Martin Jones and Anne Perry who analysed the middle Iron Age plant assemblage. This strategy involved the sampling of a variety of feature types and a number of different samples were taken from each feature. I will primarily be commenting on the findings of Straker placing particular emphasis on the plants that are associated with consumption.

8.4.6. The ingredients at the Late Iron Age settlement

Animal bones at the late Iron Age settlement

In Figure 8.5. and Figure 8.6., which contrasts the percentages of species as determined by myself and Wilson and Levitan, the slight differences in phrasing of some contexts does not significantly affect the overall percentages. Cattle are the most commonly identified species followed by sheep, horse and pig. Other species are present in small numbers – dog (10 bones), cat (3 bones) donkey (1) and a single red deer antler. Thirty-three bird bones were recovered from late Iron Age contexts. The species identified include duck (3 bones), pigeon (1), quail (1), goose (1), domestic fowl (7), raven (2), blackbird (2), and a number of unidentified birds (16). It is likely that most of the species identified, including some of the wild species, e.g. blackbird, (after Parker 1988:202) were consumed at the settlement. Some of the species, such as raven, may have had special significance to the inhabitants (Wait 1985:138; Green 1992:125-127; Parker 1988:206-209) and the discussion of their distribution later in this chapter will consider this possibility. Wilson and Levitan make particular note of the small number of wild species present at the site and this is true of the other late Iron Age settlements in this study.

Butchery practices

In their discussion of the exploitation of the various domestic species, Wilson and Levitan tended to focus on each species as a whole. As one of my aims is to determine whether there was any distinction between the treatment and consumption of species over time, it was necessary to break down the butchery practices for each species by phase.

Most body parts of each of the four main species were recovered at the late Iron Age settlement, which suggests that the animals were probably butchered at the settlement. Butchery marks indicate the use of both knives and choppers. The cattle bones with the most direct evidence of butchery include the mandible, which was extensively trimmed; the metacarpals, tarsals and the phalanges were also highly butchered which is indicative of skinning; the metacarpals and tarsals also appear to have been split, possibly for the removal of bone marrow. The vertebra was also heavily butchered and most of the chop marks found on cattle bones were found here. There was minimal evidence of butchery on the more meaty bones, i.e. long bones, scapula and pelvis, unlike late Iron Age Barton Court Farm, which suggests that meat was either stripped right off the bones or cooked on the bone. Sheep bones displayed minimal direct evidence of butchery. Chop marks occur at the parietal region of the cranium possibly indicating the removal of the horn; cut marks were identified intermittently on a couple of metatarsal and phalanges. Wilson and Levitan suggest that the lack of marks on the long bones of sheep, which appears to have been consistent in all phases, may indicate that meat was left on the bone. Pig bones also displayed minimal butchery marks. Cut marks were found along a few of the long bones, suggestive of filleting, and a chop to an upper vertebra indicates that the head was occasionally removed.

Horse bones do appear to have been butchered at the late Iron Age settlement, although it is not clear whether horsemeat was consumed, as most of the marks appear to indicate skinning of non-meaty bones. The only long bone with butchery marks was the tibia, which shows evidence of cutting mid-shaft – no other meaty bones show evidence of butchery. Dogs do not appear to have been butchered and the single deer bone identified at the settlement was a sawn off antler; deer antlers may have been worked at the settlement as a

number of bone pins were identified in late Iron Age contexts. The radius of an unidentified bird had cut marks.

Meat yields

As with the other case studies in this thesis, I organized the bones into groups according to their meat yield (after Uerpmann 1973; Lange 1996). Figure 8.7. shows cattle bones from each of the groups ('A' representing the bones with the most meat and 'C' representing minimal meat) are pretty evenly distributed. Bones from group 'C' are slightly higher than was the case for Groups 'A' and 'B'. Moderate meat-yielding bones are most prevalent for sheep bones, with an even distribution of high meat yielding and non-meat yielding bones. Pigs, on the other hand, have a higher presence of group 'A' and particularly 'B' bones with lower representation of bones from group 'C'. Horse bones are distinguished again in that group 'A' and group 'C' bones are the most prominent.

The differences in body part representation suggest different types of consumption practices for the various species. The prevalence of both non-meat bearing and meat bearing cattle bones supports Wilson and Levitan's conclusions that cattle were used for other purposes as well as for their meat; the prominence of meat yielding bones of both sheep and pigs suggests that they were primarily consumed. The predominance of high meat yielding and non-meat yielding horse bones could point to the specialized consumption and treatment of horses at the settlement. The analysis of the distribution of body parts later in this chapter will help to clarify the consumption practices of the various species.

The plant remains at the late Iron Age settlement

At the late Iron Age settlement, thirty-six contexts were sampled for their edible contents and environmental significance; five of the contexts were waterlogged. A variety of features were sampled including gullies, ditches and pits. Of the carbonized samples the most commonly identified cereal grain was barley at 45% of identified taxa, followed by spelt wheat at 35% and oats were minimally present at 2% of identified grains. There was a higher ratio of grain and weeds to chaff. Straker considers the species assemblages quite small as only one sample had more than five items per litre of soil (compare for example the

numbers of identified items at Barton Court Farm (5,717) from just two contexts). Although there was an increase in identified grain in the late Iron Age settlement from that of the middle Iron Age settlement, it is thought that the latter site was similarly a 'consumer' site with possibly limited plant production (although see animal section below). The numbers of edible weeds identified were also very small, and include fat hen, watercress and sorrel; their contribution to the diet is unknown.

8.5. Food and Drink Consumption at the Early Roman Period Settlement

8.5.1. Containers at the early Roman period settlement

The pottery at the early Roman period settlement

Figure 8.8. shows that jars dominate the early Roman assemblage although slightly less so than at the late Iron Age settlement (67% as compared to 77%). The assemblage is also slightly more varied, with pottery clearly identified with serving having a slightly higher presence. Platters are identified for the first time and higher incidences of flagons and beakers are recorded; 7% of identified forms are linked to drinking as compared to 4% at the late Iron Age settlement. Mortaria, are also present in higher numbers and amphorae and bowls are again almost equally represented; this suggests that there was a continued emphasis on preparing and serving foods in particular ways. Interestingly, no samian ware was found in early Roman (ER1) contexts, this despite the presence of a sizeable amount of south Gaulish samian recovered in the general spread from the site.

Form, function and rim diameters

The generic 'jar' is the most commonly identified jar recovered at the settlement. Wide-mouth jars follow at 35% of the jar assemblage with globular jars at 6% and Belgic jars in very small amounts at 2%; there is a slight increase in the percentage of narrow-necked jars 6% at the early Roman period settlement (as compared to 4% at the earlier settlement). Only four vessels were identified with residues, two of which were not identified to form: a brown fabric tankard was burnt, as was a small wide-mouth BB1 jar. Histograms of the rim

diameter of the jars (see Figure 8.9.) indicate a similar range in size as was determined at the late Iron Age settlement, namely, small to medium sized jars with a peak of 18cm, and a slight increase in the numbers of large jars. It is of note that lids make up 3% of identified forms whereas only one lid was recovered in late Iron Age contexts. Bowls are found in a variety of fabrics and shapes; BB1 and imitation BB1 are the most common fabric. The sample size of bowls with definable rim diameters is quite small; histograms of the bowls indicate a peak of diameters at 18-20 cm (see Figure 8.10.), which is slightly smaller than the peak in diameters recorded at the late Iron Age settlement. A small number of smaller bowls were identified and no very large bowls were defined.

A note on samian ware recovered at the site

The majority of the early samian ware was recovered in the general spread on Platform 1, which would appear to suggest that in the early Roman period (if not earlier see above) at least some of the south Gaulish samian was being used at the settlement. The extent that the samian ware was being re-used or curated during the second century and beyond, however, is un-determinable. The most prevalent forms identified were plates at 38%, followed by cups (36%), bowls (19%) dishes (5%) and plate/dishes (2%). Peter Webster, who analysed the samian ware notes that the majority of the samian ware (96%) found on the site was plain (according to my calculations 10% of the south Gaulish samian ware recovered from Platform 1 – all bowls – was decorated); he adds that “Given the chronological range of the material the dearth of decorated forms is unusual and must, one presumes, reflect some unusual characteristic of the usage of the site” (un-published samian report). He suggests that there may have been a form of religious austerity amongst the inhabitants, or possibly that plain samian ware was cheaper and that the inhabitants of the settlements over time could not afford decorated samian ware. The prevalence of glass vessels, (see below) which are presumably not a cheap item, suggests that price may not necessarily have been an issue in the choice of plain over decorated vessels. Observations presented by Willis on the predominance of decorated forms over plain forms at rural sites in Yorkshire (1997) together with the observations made in previous case studies in this thesis, which indicate the opposite pattern, suggests that the pattern identified at Claydon Pike is not so unusual and requires comparative regional study to determine its significance.

Fabrics

A variety of fine, specialist and coarse fabrics were identified in early Roman period contexts. Although a number of the fabrics identified at the late Iron Age settlement appear to continue in use, there are quite significant changes in the types of coarse wares (see Table 8.1., section 8.4.2.). The grey/black ware remains the most prevalent fabric and its presence has increased by the early Roman period. Almost absent, however, are the brown and calcareous wares that were prevalent at the late Iron Age settlement. Black-burnished wares are more prominent at the early Roman settlement as are the red/orange wares.

There appears to have been an increase in the fine and specialist fabrics by the early Roman period (see Table 8.1., section 8.4.2.). The increase would be even more acute if the inhabitants of this settlement used the samian ware dated to the first century. The 'fine ware' fabrics identified at the late Iron Age settlement are present at the early Roman period settlement, with slightly higher representation. The main difference is the increase in white wares. Again, some of the wares are probably residual although the possibility of their use towards the end of this sub-phase of the early Roman period is more of a possibility than for the Iron Age settlement. Similar cautions, which were applied to the classification of 'fine ware' at the late Iron Age settlement, are applicable to the fabrics defined at the early Roman period settlement. Many of the beakers, flagons and tankards, for instance, were made of an orange/red fabric, which could indicate that this fabric, possibly its colour, was significant to drinking. If we recall, at the late Iron Age settlement all of the identified tankards were made from an orange/red fabric.

The glass at the early Roman period settlement

A variety of glass vessels were identified in early Roman contexts. These comprise various blue/green bottles, blue/green jugs and light green body fragments, possibly cups. As was mentioned above Price and Cool identified a peak of early Roman glass use (22% of the identified glass was early Roman), which sets this settlement apart from the other early Roman period settlements in this study; 14% of the vessels identified were of first century

date and 8% were of mid-first century to mid-second century. Cool and Price suggest that the high percentage of glass recovered from such early contexts supports the notion that Claydon Pike may have had official or military status (see below for further comment).

8.5.2 Other implements at the early Roman settlement

Other implements recovered at the settlement that may have had a culinary association include a single 'general purpose' iron knife, only ten of thirty-six knives identified were stratified, and it is possible that some of the unstratified knives were used at both the late Iron Age and early Roman settlements. A large iron hook may have been used to suspend a pot as a number of pots had perforated rims. Some of the lead weights recovered from early Roman contexts may have been used for fishing. Rivets were found in a variety of pottery fragments and Wait and Hedges note that it is particularly interesting that kitchen ware, i.e. local grey ware, storage ware and mortaria, was repaired as well as imported ware, such as samian. Two querns were recovered at the settlement, a rotary quern from Derbyshire and a saddle quern from Germany.

8.5.3. Ingredients at the early Roman period settlement

The animal bones at the early Roman period settlement

Species representation

The slight difference in the phasing of some contexts between myself and Wilson and Levitan has not generally affected the frequency of the bones of particular species (see Figures 8.11. and 8.12.). Figure 8.11. and Figure 8.6. shows that the representation of early Roman period cattle and sheep bones parallels those species in the late Iron Age. Where horse bones were slightly more numerous than pig bones in the late Iron Age, in the early Roman period pig bones are slightly more common. These subtle differences reflect the differing sample sizes of the animal bones at the two settlements: 392 bones (excluding teeth) at the early Roman period settlement compared to 1,648 bones at the late Iron Age settlement. Study of the butchery practices below, and following that, the distribution

patterns, will help to clarify whether there was a difference in the treatment of the various species. As with the late Iron Age settlement, few wild species were identified at the early Roman period settlement. There were a slightly higher proportion of dogs identified at the later settlement, which may indicate that they had a stronger presence at the settlement. A single deer bone was identified; and three cat bones were recorded, interestingly butchery marks were found on two of the cat bones. Eleven bird bones were recovered from early Roman contexts; the species identified include goose, duck and a number of unidentified fowl.

Butchery practices

The small sample of animal bones affects the determination of the butchery practices of the early Roman period settlement. Many of the marks are only found on single bones and do not therefore represent a butchery pattern as such. The present discussions will emphasize those bones where the location of the butchery marks is duplicated. Both cut marks and chop marks were detected on the bones of the various species. Butchery marks on cattle bones are primarily found on the lower limbs, i.e. metacarpal, tarsal and phalanges, similar to that found on the late Iron Age cattle bones. Chop marks were also found along the vertebrae, which was also the case for the late Iron Age cattle bones; chop marks, however, also occur on the pelvis suggesting that choppers were used in both these areas of the body to separate the bones. As with the earlier settlement there was minimal evidence of the butchery of the long bones, which suggests that either meat was cooked on the bone or, more likely, stripped right off the bone. Evidence of the butchery of sheep was minimal and was found on the more meaty bones, i.e. femur, vertebrae and the pelvis. Chop marks were only found on the pelvis and the indication is as with the late Iron Age settlement, that meat of sheep was cooked and consumed largely on the bone. The only butchery mark found on pigs was where a mandible had split, the result of a ventral blow.

The butchery of species less typically associated with consumption is difficult to access. The few recovered horse bones did not display any obvious butchery marks. A single tibia from a dog had evidence of some cutting on the shaft the purpose of which is unknown. The presence of butchery marks on the articulated radius and ulna of a cat is interesting, as cat bones were not butchered when present at the other sites in this study (Maltby 1979:64 also

comments on rarity of butchered cat bones in Roman period). Green has stated that domestic cats were first identified in the Iron Age and that they may have primarily been used to deter mice and rats or possibly as pets. She also notes that cat bones have been recovered from ritual contexts at Danebury (1992:25-6, 102).

Meat yields

The grouping of the bones of the domestic species according to their meat yield reveals some deviation from the late Iron Age assemblage. As Figure 8.13. indicates, cattle bones were quite evenly distributed between the three groupings, although bones with moderate meat yield were slightly more dominant whereas in the late Iron Age non-meat bearing bones were slightly more common. This could indicate that cattle were increasingly consumed at the settlement. The distribution of sheep bones was virtually identical to that of the late Iron Age with group 'B' bones the most prevalent and high meat yielding and non-meat yielding bones evenly represented. The distribution of pig bones is similar to the late Iron Age bone assemblage except that bones with moderate amounts of meat (group 'B') are more dominant. The main difference in the representation of body parts at the early Roman period settlement was found in the horse bone assemblage. At the late Iron Age settlement horse bones from group 'A' and group 'C' were dominant; at the early Roman period settlement group we see that while 'C' bones are still prevalent, group 'B' bones are now dominant. The different distributions of horse bones could very well be caused by the smaller sample size. However, it could also reflect a change in the use of horses, which is further suggested by the smaller percentage of horse bones found on the settlement and the lack of butchery marks on the bones.

The early Roman plant remains

At the early Roman settlement thirty-eight contexts were sampled for their carbonized remains. The types of features sampled include ditches, pits and gullies. The carbonized samples differ from that of the late Iron Age settlement, with wheat accounting for 51% of identified grains, followed by barley at 21% and oats at 1%, while the remaining cereal grains were not identifiable to species. Grains and weeds with small amounts of chaff similarly dominate the sample and it is thought that the settlement was also a 'consumer',

although the higher numbers of grain may indicate that crops were grown at the site. The numbers of identified items is still very small, as compared to the late Iron Age settlement at Barton Court Farm, which is considered to have produced its own crops. The range of weed taxa is low at the early Roman settlement. The types of weeds identified – for example, sheep's sorrel, cleavers, knotgrass and bromus – are those associated with cultivated or disturbed land. The small number of querns recovered from the settlement (two) is also thought to indicate that the cereals were imported to the settlement (Miles and Palmer 1983a:89). Other edible species identified are the celtic bean and legumes, and although their numbers were minimal, it is presumed that they made a more important contribution to the diet than their numbers suggest (Straker, draft report:2).

8.6. Summary of the Artefacts and Remains of consumption at each Settlement

Before we consider the distribution of the artefacts and the remains at the two settlements, it is necessary to summarize some of more salient points made thus far on the containers, the other implements and the ingredients for each phase.

8.6.1. Late Iron Age settlement

Containers

Pottery

- Imported wares found at settlement including mortaria, amphorae and possibly samian ware.
- Equal numbers of bowls and amphorae were recovered.
- BB1 present at settlement in upper layers.
- Histograms of jars indicate a series of small and medium sized jars.
- Histograms of bowls indicate that bowls were quite large.
- 'Fine' and specialist wares make up 6% of assemblage.
- I have suggested that non-local coarse ware may have been important and that red/orange wares may also have been considered as 'fine' as tankards were made only from this fabric.

Glass

- Small amounts of early glass present at settlement.
- A Hofheim cup and other blue/green bottles and body fragments are of appropriate date.

Other implements

- A small iron vessel and links of an iron chain used possibly to suspend a container were identified in late Iron Age contexts
- A number of whetstones were recovered – no querns were identified at the settlement.
- Significant numbers of pieces of clay oven and oven plates were recovered.

Ingredients

Animal bones

- Cattle were the most commonly identified species followed by sheep, horse and pigs
- Small numbers of dog, cat, and bird, including the raven, were identified. A single deer antler was recovered.
- Butchery marks indicate that meat from the more meaty bones of cattle, sheep and pigs was either stripped off or cooked on the bone.
- Minimal indications of the butchery of horse, the types of marks identified appear to indicate the skinning of non-meaty bones.
- Cattle have slightly higher numbers of bones from group 'C' and horse have higher numbers of group 'A' and group 'C' bones.
- Sheep and pig bone assemblages are both dominated by meat yielding bones.

Plant Remains

- Barley was the most commonly identified grain, followed by spelt wheat and very small numbers of oats.
- Higher ratio of grain and weeds to chaff, small numbers suggest that grains present were for consumption.

8.6.2. The early Roman period settlement

Containers

Pottery

- Increase percentage of imported ware including mortaria and amphorae.
- Significant numbers of primarily plain south Gaulish samian ware was identified in general spread contexts on Platform 1, it is quite likely that at least some of vessels were used at the settlement.
- There are a slightly lower percentage of jars identified at the settlement, and an increase in drinking vessels.
- Again, amphorae and bowls are equally represented.
- Increase in numbers of narrow-necked jars and lids at settlement.
- Histograms of jars indicate small to medium sized jars with a slight increase in the numbers of large jars.
- Histograms of bowls indicate bowls are still large but small bowls are now evident.
- BB1 and imitation BB1 are common at the settlement

- Increase in percentage of 'fine' and specialty ware to 13% (does not include samian ware or the red/orange fabric out of which many of the beakers, flagons and tankards are formed).

Glass

- A variety of blue/green bottles and jugs, and light green body fragments were identified at the settlement.
- Price and Cool have identified a peak in early glass use at the site, 22% of the glass identified at the settlement was from the early Roman period (14% of identified vessels are from the first century AD and 8% are of mid-first to mid-second centuries AD date).

Other implements

- Iron knife recovered at settlement
- Large iron hook – possibly used to suspend a container was identified.
- Lead weights of the type typically used for fishing were found.
- Two querns were identified, one from Derbyshire the other from Germany.

Ingredients

Animal bones

- Cattle were the most commonly identified species followed by sheep, pig and horse.
- Higher numbers of dog bones were identified; small numbers of cat bones and bird bones were identified. A single deer bone was recovered at the settlement.
- The butchery of cattle is similar to the type of butchery practice identified at the late Iron Age settlement except that the pelvis was also butchered. There was minimal evidence of the butchery of sheep and pig, which suggests that meat was consumed off the bone. No obvious butchery marks were found on the horse.
- A single dog bone was butchered, and two cat bones were butchered.
- There are fewer numbers of cattle bones from group 'C' which may indicate an increase in the consumption of beef.
- Sheep and pig bones display similar distribution of body parts to those species at the late Iron Age settlement, i.e. higher percentage of meat-bearing bones.
- Horse bones from group 'B' are now dominant.
- It is possible that the significance of horses may have changed at the settlement as seen by the drop in the percentage of species, the lack of butchery marks identified and different distribution of body parts.

Plant Remains

- Cereals are dominated by wheat, followed by barley and very small numbers of oats.
- Increase in percentages of grains may indicate that crops were grown at settlement but small numbers are still associated with a 'consumer' settlement.

8.7. The Distribution of the Remains of Eating and Drinking at Claydon Pike

The following section will consider the significance of the distribution patterns of the artefacts and remains at the late Iron Age and early Roman period settlements. So-called

'special deposits' will be highlighted for each settlement and a brief summary of the findings will be presented.

8.7.1. The distribution of artefacts and remains at the late Iron Age settlement

Early in this chapter, it was suggested that different zones of activity might be reflected in the dispersal of the various artefacts and remains at the late Iron Age settlement. Distribution patterns appear to indicate a density of occupation in the southern area of the settlement. To determine whether there were distinctions in the types of deposits in the two areas I organized the features according to their southern or northern position.

A contrast between the two geographical areas was found in the apparent concentration of items of personal adornment and dress-fittings – copper brooches, bracelets and bone pins – in the southern section of the settlement, particularly in and around enclosures six and seven. The majority of the glassware fragments were also recovered from the two enclosures. Two pre-conquest copper coins were found in this area. Artefacts that reflect day-to-day activities, such as rivets and plugs for repairing pots, balance weights, loom weights, a whetstone, and oven fragments, were concentrated in the southern area of the settlement. Large groups of pots and animal remains, which will be commented on below, were also recovered in this area. In contrast, although the northern area was not devoid of personal and domestic debris, many contexts had such small concentrations of artefacts and remains as to suggest different uses of the area. The excavation report, for instance, indicates that a number of the gullies may have functioned as paddocks. There is a concentration of slag, in the northeast section of the settlement which points to a possible industrial use of this part of the settlement. However, in quantifying the distribution of the pottery and animal remains in the two areas it appears that domestic activity may have taken place beyond the southern area of the settlement

	Southern area		Northern area	
	n=1873	%	n=1754	%
colour-coats	21	1	20	1
white ware	88	5	23	1
black burnished wares	158	9	221	13
red/orange wares	183	10	100	6
Shell/limestone temper	245	13	506	29
brown wares	299	16	447	25
grey/black wares	866	46	431	25
misc.	13	1	6	.34

Table 8.2. Late Iron Age pottery fabrics – southern and northern areas

The types of pottery and animal remains recovered from the two areas are nevertheless distinct from each other. Table 8.2., which plots the distribution of the pottery fabrics at the settlement, illustrates that the northern area has a higher proportion of the brown wares and the early calcareous wares common in the late Iron Age whereas the southern area of the settlement has fewer examples of these types and a higher proportion of the precursors of the sandy grey ware, which go on to dominate the early Roman period. The southern area also has higher proportions of the local red/orange and white wares, which add much to the colour palate of represented wares in the southern area of the settlement. In terms of the distribution of identified pottery forms it is particularly interesting that no significant distinctions between the two areas were found in terms of suggested kitchen and tableware, with two notable exceptions, a higher percentage of amphorae were deposited in the northern area of the settlement and early mortaria were dominant in the southern area (see Figure 8.14). If indeed a number of households lived at the settlement it is quite possible that different traditions of consumption as well as of personal display – the majority of small finds associated with adornment were found in the southern area – have been identified at the settlement.

The distinction between the animal bones found in the two areas of the settlement are slight but are potentially significant. Figure 8.15 shows that a slightly higher proportion of animal bones were situated in the southern area of the settlement. Cattle, followed by sheep, are the most prominent species in both areas, although clearly the distinction between the two species is most overt in the southern area of the settlement. Pig bones are slightly more prominent in the southern area than horse whereas horse is more prominent than pig in the overall number of bones represented at the settlement. It is of note that a higher proportion

of cattle bones was identified around enclosures 6 and 7. The distribution of high and moderate meat yielding cattle bones is also slightly higher than in the northern area, whereas the distribution of these types of sheep bones in the two areas is comparable (see Figure 8.16. and Figure 8.17.). Seventy-seven percent of the cattle bones with clear evidence of butchery were also found in the southern area of the settlement. This may indicate that the people living in the southern area had a predilection for the consumption of beef.

Figure 8.18., which lists the distribution of body parts according to their meat yield, reveals no obvious patterning of the bones of large or small species or meat yielding and non-meat yielding bones for the settlement as a whole, except perhaps horses. This suggests that a consistent and identifiable disposal regime for the whole settlement does not present itself. Analysis of specific features in the southern area does, however, suggest that there were distinctions in the deposition of animal bones among the features in this area. Table 8.3. (below), indicates that bones from group 'C' (non-meat-yielding bones) were prevalent in both the boundary ditches and the enclosures and that meat-yielding bones were prominent in the gullies and pits. Table 8.3. also highlights the scarcity of some species in certain contexts; for example, small number of bones from pig and horse were recovered from pits, gullies and boundary ditches; it is possible that the deposition of these species had particular significance (see below). Seventy-nine percent of the bird bones identified at the settlement were recovered from features in the southern area of the settlement and sixty-eight percent of all butchered bones were found in this area.

As has been discussed in previous chapters conclusions on the contextual associations of plant remains are tenuous at best because of the limits of the sampling strategy. When contrasting the samples found in the northern and southern area of settlement, it was found that 75 % of the plant remains were recovered from the northern area; however, more samples were actually taken from this area. The composition of the samples in the southern area has a higher percentage of chaff than the northern area, which may indicate that cereals were processed in this area although this is speculative considering the small amount of items recovered and the lack of supporting artefactual evidence. Two whetstones were recovered in late Iron Age contexts, one in each area of the settlement.

	Group A		Group B		Group C	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Cow						
ditch	21	16	36	24	28	18
gully	21	16	21	14	10	6
pit	8	6	5	3	4	3
enclosure	80	62	89	59	117	74
Total	130	30	151	34	159	36
Sheep						
ditch	4	8	10	7	9	17
gully	9	18	20	15	12	22
pit	4	8	10	7	6	11
enclosure	34	67	94	70	27	50
Total	51	21	134	56	54	23
Pig						
ditch	2	8	6	21	1	8
gully	6	23	7	25	0	0
pit	1	4	1	4	0	0
enclosure	17	65	14	50	12	92
Total	26	39	28	42	13	19
Horse						
ditch	3	15	2	15	5	20
gully	2	10	2	15	0	0
pit	1	5	0	0	3	12
enclosure	14	70	9	69	17	68
Total	20	34	13	22	25	43

Table 8.3. Distribution of late Iron Age animal bone groups by feature in the southern area

'Special deposits' at the late Iron Age settlement

The identification of so-called 'special deposits' is not obvious at late Iron Age Claydon Pike. When you consider the distribution of identified pottery forms according to their feature type (see Figure 8.14.) we can see that for both areas of the settlement pits and to a lesser extent gullies are devoid of pottery associated with the serving of food and drink. These types of wares are primarily found in the ditched enclosures. On the other hand, it has been established that in the southern area the types of animal bones recovered from pits were generally meat yielding. This could indicate that pits were the receptacles for particular meals that emphasized meat consumption. It is also possible that the deposition of certain species followed particular mores, bird bones, for instance, were not recovered from pits and pig and horse bone were not found together in the pits in the southern area. This presents a possible distinction between the preparation, if not consumption, of types of meat and the consumption of liquids and the use of vessels typically associated with display. This is in

contrast to late Iron Age Barton Court Farm where pits that were identified as possibly representing special meals by their bones included specialized ware such as beakers and bowls.

Summary of the re-contextualized material at the late Iron Age settlement

It has been established that the remnants of household activities associated with food preparation and consumption were especially dense in the southern area of the settlement, particularly in the southwest section. Whereas in the northern area there is evidence of smithing, ring stacks as well as a variety of enclosures and sub-enclosures with minimal domestic debris, which may have held livestock. The types of artefacts recovered from the southern area of the settlement include personal items, especially jewellery, and small finds associated with household production, such as loom weights, and rivets and plugs for repairing pottery. Artefacts linked to food preparation, including early mortaria and oven fragments and large groups of kitchen and tableware, including glass vessels, as well as butchered animals, particularly cattle, and bird bones were situated in enclosures and boundary ditches in this area of the settlement. Together with the configuration of the area with its internal divisions and rounded enclosures, it is quite likely that houses were situated in this section of the settlement.

It has also been suggested that a number of the enclosures situated in the northern area of the settlement may have contained houses. The co-prominence of sheep and cattle, and the minimal presence of glassware, mortaria, and articles of personal adornment in the northern area are notable. The possibility of a south/north distinction is reminiscent of late Iron Age Barton Court Farm where there was a strong case for the existence of two domestic areas of differing status (although in the case of Barton Court Farm the northern domestic area appears to have been of higher status) (see also Rippengal 1995 who similarly identified a north/south distinction in status at the early Roman site at Bancroft). As was theorized for Barton Court Farm, it is possible that some of the distinctions may reflect different uses of the settlement over time, although a number of the features in the northern area are contemporary with the features in the south – for example, enclosures 1, 2, 6 and 7 are stratigraphically similar – and northern contexts contained chronologically comparable

pottery. Whether we are seeing two households with different consumption practices and possibly of different status or the change in consumption and expressions of personal status of a single group over time, it is clear that a variety of wares that are Roman-like were present at the settlement prior to its reorganization in the early Roman period.

8.7.2. The distribution of artefacts and remains at the Early Roman settlement

The distribution of artefacts and remains at the early Roman settlement are distinguished from the late Iron Age settlement by the change in the structure of the settlement. A rectangular boundary ditch that encloses the domestic area defines the early Roman period settlement. Rectangular structures are evident and pits are found in direct association with the main structure. The main entrance to the settlement was positioned alongside a road. The organization of the settlement is directly comparable to early Roman Barton Court Farm and in both cases, the layout of the late Iron Age settlements was ignored. It will be suggested here that some of the other distinctions between the late Iron Age and early Roman phases at Claydon Pike represent changes in practices directly involved with consumption of food and drink.

The distribution of containers around the early Roman settlement reveals some particularly interesting patterns. Glass vessels were recovered primarily from the boundary ditches that flank either side of the road. That the majority of glass vessels found in context were bottles, rather than say cups or bowls, suggests that glass was important for containing and pouring liquids. The majority of the beakers, flagons and tankards recovered from the settlement were also found in these boundary ditches (see Figure 8.19.) (drinking vessels were also found in pits which will be commented on below). It is quite possible that deposits of vessels associated with drinking singled out the main access to the settlement. Distinctions between the ditches that flank the road were also found in the deposition of the animal remains.

The vast majority of animal bones at the early Roman settlement were recovered from ditches (see Figure 8.20.) these findings are slightly different from that of Levitan as his analysis did not list the distribution of bones in pits in the early Roman period. Figure 8.21.,

which looks at the distribution of bones according to their meat yield, shows that both meat bearing and non-meat bearing bones of each species were well represented in the ditches, with the exception of pig where few non-meat bearing bones were recovered. The majority of bones with actual butchery marks were also recovered from the ditches. There are a number of distinctions, however, between the bones found in the ditches that flank the two sides of the road. Almost equal numbers of cattle and sheep bones were recovered from the ditches on the south side of the road, which is in contrast to other areas of the settlement, where cattle dominate most assemblages; higher proportions of the sheep bones recovered from the south side of the road were from groups 'A' and 'B' – the edible portions – whereas 42% of the cattle bones were from group 'C'. A large (relative to the numbers recovered at the settlement) group of dog bones, some of which were articulated, and burnt bones were also recovered from the south side of the road as were a sizable number of horse and pig bones. In contrast, only small numbers of animal bones were recovered from the ditches that flank the northern side of the road and they were dominated by meat bearing sheep and particularly cattle bones, with very small numbers of pig and horse bones. Only eleven bird bones were identified at the early Roman period settlement, nine of which were deposited in the ditches that flank the road. The prominence of sheep bones in the ditches leading up to entrance of the settlement together with containers associated with drinking may reflect contrasting consumption practices in and around the structure and at the boundary of the settlement. The incidences of dress-fitting items recovered primarily in the ditch that flanks the south side of the road further conjures up images of people congregating in this area of the settlement.

Unlike the late Iron Age settlement, fewer artefacts and remains were recovered from the internal features of the settlement. Notable exceptions are the pits situated around the aisled building which were quite large and held sizeable deposits. The early Roman period pits contained a varied selection of both kitchen and tableware. Amphorae linked to olive oil and fish paste, mortaria, beakers and bowls were recovered in significant amounts. These pits differ from the late Iron Age pits, which contained primarily jars and small amounts of amphorae associated with olive oil. The contents of some of the pits may reflect the consumption of meals associated with the house. The animals bones recovered from pits indicate different types of deposits from those identified in the ditches (see Figure 8.22. and Figure 8.21.). Cattle bones are still the most common bone identified, although 59% of the

bones are non-meat bearing. In contrast, sheep bones are primarily meat bearing. Only small numbers of horse and pig bones were identified in pits, the majority of horse bones were from group 'C' (mostly cranial bones found in a single pit – see below) whereas all the pig bones are meat bearing. Butchery marks are rare on the bones recovered from pits (a sheep tibia and a dog tibia each had cut marks).

It is possible that the sheep and pig bones recovered from the pits represent the remains of particular meals and that they were roasted whole or that bones were separated at the ligaments. There is some similarity between the deposits of animal bones in late Iron Age and early Roman period pits. Bird bones, for instance, are virtually absent (only one bone was identified) from the pits for both phases and pig and horse bones are few in these contexts. It is feasible that some of the mores towards particular species of animals held at the late Iron Age settlement were still held at the early Roman period settlement, although clearly the presence of tableware in the early Roman period pits points to a possible distinction in consumption practices.

Only a couple of early Roman (ER1) plant samples contained more than ten items, the consideration of the plant remains in this discussion on distribution patterns is consequently quite limited. As we saw above (section 8.5.2.) the ratios of grains, chaff and weeds indicate a more processed product at the early Roman settlement. Most of the contexts sampled indicate very small numbers of items except in the case of samples recovered from a section of boundary ditch (context 547) on the north side of the road (this context had very few animal bones). The sample contained 72% of all items recovered at the settlement; it was made up of 66% grains, 1% chaff and 23% weeds. The only other sample with ten items or more was taken from the ditch (context 620), on the south side of the road (this context had large number of bones, particularly sheep bones). This sample contained 16% of the total items recovered at the settlement; it was made up of 20% grain, 31% chaff and 48% weeds. A rotary quern was also recovered from this context. The plant samples should not be taken at face value, although it is interesting that once again deposits from the two sides of the road are distinguished from each other.

'Special deposits' at the early Roman period settlement

At the late Iron Age settlement, it was the accumulation of particular types of species and bones, small finds and containers in particular areas that was distinctive (rather than single isolated deposits) – evidence it seems, of the everyday ritualized deposition of material. This appears to have been the case at the early Roman period settlement also. The types of deposits recovered from the ditches that flank either side of the road leading to the entrance of the settlement and from the pits associated with the house appear specialized by what they signify in comparison to other areas of the settlement.

Similarly with the late Iron Age settlement the isolation of 'special deposits' is not obvious. A number of the pits associated directly with the structure contained large dumps of pottery including table and specialty wares although no glassware. The presence of these types of wares in and of themselves does not make the deposits special *per se* except when one considers the nature of some of the animal deposits. Butchery marks were rarely found on the bones deposited in pits; pig and particularly horse bones were not commonly recovered from pits; pit 2519 stands out because it contained a deposit of horse cranial bones, where only one other horse bone – a metacarpal – was recovered from the other pits. This pit also contained a selection of mortaria, amphorae and a series of large jars – the types of vessels that are associated with food preparation – as well as a beaker and a variety of cattle, sheep and pig bones. This deposit could represent the remains of a special or ritualized event that took place in or around the structure, as could the varied deposits in the other pits associated with the structure.

One final comment on special deposits is the presence of the antithesis of a special deposit. None of the south Gaulish samian ware recovered from Platform 1 was recovered from phased contexts. I find this rather unusual, and it may point to the very special-ness of samian ware or at least to a process of deposition unlike the other artefacts and remains recovered at the settlement.

Summary of the re-contextualized material at the early Roman period settlement

The change in the structure of the early Roman period settlement is exemplified by the way the artefacts and remains associated with eating and drinking were deposited. The majority of the artefacts and remains recovered from the settlement were found in boundary ditches. Two particular stretches of the ditches – those that flank either side of a road off which lies the main entrance to the domestic area of the settlement – stand out from the other ditches. These ditches together contain most of the drinking paraphernalia found at the site, although beyond this point the northern and southern stretches of ditch are distinct from each other; one of the ditches contained a number of dress-fittings and items of personal adornment as well. The pits associated with the house reveal similar types of deposits as those found at the entrance to the settlement, drinking vessels – although interestingly no glassware – specialty wares linked to a Mediterranean diet, olive oil, fish paste and mortaria for the grinding of spices and making of sauces. Sheep were also important to the diet as evidenced by the prominence of meat-bearing sheep bones in these quite visible features. The prevalence of non-meat yielding cattle bones in both these areas may signal specialized deposits of the head and feet bones. At the early Roman period settlement the specialized deposits appear divided between the house itself and entrance to the settlement.

8.8. Discussion of the Distribution of Artefacts and Remains at Claydon Pike

The structure and restructure of late Iron Age and early Roman period settlement at Claydon Pike echo what occurred at Barton Court Farm. At both late Iron Age settlements, the possibility of two resident households of different status, or one main household with different expressions of eating and drinking was presented. The reconfiguration of both early Roman period settlements each saw the establishment of single rectangular structures and linking of the entrance to the settlements to roadways. The artefacts and remains associated with eating and drinking recovered from the two sites, however, point to very different consumption practices and these will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter. At Claydon Pike even though the consumption practices at the late Iron Age and early Roman period settlement were quite distinct, unlike at Barton Court Farm, the late Iron

Age settlement appears to have adopted a taste for preparing and flavouring their food in particular ways prior to the change in settlement.

8.8.1. The late Iron Age settlement

A number of potential scenarios have been presented for the late Iron Age settlement at Claydon Pike. Initial analysis of the distribution patterns of the artefacts and remains pointed to a single area of habitation in the southern area of the settlement with animal paddocks, ring stacks and metal working areas north of the living space. However, in addition to these features are a number of contemporary enclosures similar in form to the two southern enclosures that likely contained structures. This puts the artefacts and remains recovered in the northern areas, which are numerically comparable to the south, in a new light. The types of artefacts and remains that singled out the southern area, such as personal items, early glass vessels, early mortaria, meat bearing, butchered cattle bones are in contrast to the types of artefacts and remains recovered from the northern area. These artefacts and remains do not typify waste products or the storage of goods, but rather have their own distinct repertoire of table and specialty wares and an emphasis on meat-bearing sheep bones. It is quite possible that the habitation area of the settlement shifted over time, a number of features in the northern area are earlier and a distinction between the fabrics of the pottery does show that the northern area had a higher proportion of the calcareous wares. However, as has also been established, a number of the enclosures are contemporary and the chronological range of the pottery in the two areas is similar. There lies the possibility of two households with different expressions of consumption living together at the settlement. Although there are suggestions that the southern area may have been of higher status or had a continental taste for some consumables, the high/low status distinction between the two groups is not clear cut because tableware, mortaria and particularly amphorae, plus a greater percentage of the horse bones are found in the northern area as well.

If two households of differing status *or social identities* did live at late Iron Age Claydon Pike, this is particularly interesting, as it has been proposed by Miles (1984) and argued by Rippingal (1995) that in the later early Roman period, when the early Roman (ER1) settlement expanded beyond Platform 1, there were two separated occupation areas of

differing status. Towards the end of the occupation of the late Iron Age settlement, a boundary ditch was erected around the whole settlement, which suggests that the two groups were possibly allied with each other.

8.8.2. The early Roman period settlement

The early Roman period settlement appears for the most part to have been occupied by a single household residing in a single rectangular structure. A second rectangular building, which is described as a 'barn' in the excavation report, is situated in the northeast section of the settlement; there is a lack of secure dateable evidence and it is not clear whether the building dates to the ER1 or ER phase of settlement; a sheep burial, also undated, was found within the second structure. One could speculate that the two structures represent the homes of two households residing at the settlement, although the lack of finds associated with the second structure makes further speculation highly circumstantial. In any event, structure one appears to have been the main house at the settlement and it was enlarged when the early Roman settlement expanded beyond Platform 1.

For the purposes of this discussion, we will assume that there was one household living at the settlement. It has been established that the contents of particular features in the settlement appear to represent specialized deposits that point to some form of commemoration as well as a predilection for preparing food in a Mediterranean way (I refer here to the pits associated with the structure and the two stretches of ditches that flank a road and the main entrance to the settlement). There is a distinct suggestion that the entrance to the domestic area of the settlement was marked or distinguished in some way. That the structure is situated close to the road and the entrance to the settlement indicates that the domestic area, though enclosed, was in the public domain. A similar complement of drinking vessels, table and specialty wares and specialized animal deposits were found in the pits directly associated with the house, suggesting that the acts of consumption associated with the structure and the entrance to the settlement were not a contradiction of public and private consumption practices.

8.9. The Social Contexts of Imperialism at Claydon Pike

The presence of sizeable amounts of imported ware, particularly at the late Iron Age settlement but also at the early Roman period settlement sets Claydon Pike apart from the other case studies in this thesis. In the published accounts of Claydon Pike, Miles and Palmer have indicated that the site may have had a military connection because of the numbers of imported goods and the recovery of artefacts associated with the military (Miles and Palmer 1983a:91-2; Miles and Palmer 1983b:387-8; Miles 1984:199, 202, 208). Miles and Palmer have pointed to the possibility that Claydon Pike may have been requisitioned by the Second Legion Augusta as a legionary *prata* (an amphora sherd with the inscription 'LEG II A.' was recovered at the site); in the late AD 60's and 70's the Second Legion was garrisoned at Gloucester. They have also speculated that the settlement may have been occupied by veterans or even that the settlement was an imperial estate for the collection of produce taxes from surrounding areas and administered by soldiers (Miles and Palmer 1983a:92; Miles 1984:208).

The military equipment found at Claydon Pike was analysed by Francis Grew. It was unstratified but has been dated to the late first century. The equipment in question includes: the fragment of a harness clip, a stud used on helmets or armour, a rivet possibly used to mount the military apron of leather straps and a copper alloy vine leaf similar to a military pendant – Grew notes that the copper vine may have functioned as a reflector at the back of an oil lamp as there are differences between the example found at Claydon Pike and other military pendants (unpublished small finds report: appendix 4.2). Other finds found at the site have also been linked to a military presence and include, BB1, a Hofheim type flagon and a cup, narrow-necked 'honey jars', and sizeable amounts of amphorae and mortaria. The very small amounts of pre-Flavian samian ware, however, indicated to Green that based on the ceramic evidence a pre-Flavian military presence is 'very dubious' (unpublished pottery report). Two glass intaglios were recovered, one with an eagle, thunderbolt and globe device and the other with clasped hands and a lighted altar, both of the signet gems have been dated to the first century AD; both are thought to be of the type that were worn by soldiers (Henig unpublished small find report: appendix 4.3)

Hingley (1989) and Black (1994) have offered alternative explanations of the presence of significant numbers of imported ware and military equipment. Hingley cites examples of civilian sites at which military items were recovered (1989:181 note 15) and argues that the recovery of military objects does not mean that there was necessarily an official presence at the settlement. Bishop (1989), for instance, has emphasized the variety of ways that military equipment may have entered the archaeological record in the first century AD, including as booty. Francis Grew who conducted the analysis of the military equipment recovered at Claydon Pike cautions that “Many of the items found can be paralleled on known military sites but that is not to say that they were only used in such a context”; he adds “The number of objects with undoubted military associations are actually few, though they are obviously of importance” (small finds appendix 4.2:4). Hingley (1989), for instance, suggests that Claydon Pike is an example of a high status native settlement (1989:160). Black (1994), on the other hand, argues that rural sites with military equipment may have been occupied by native people who served in the Roman army in some capacity (1994:108-9). He concludes that “...it seems to be almost indecent to see Britons engaged in anything but farming; instead new owners, immigrants, are introduced to explain what are regarded as unacceptable finds from the homes of men devoted to productive agriculture” (Black 1994:109).

At the beginning of this chapter, I stated that most of the published discussions on the ‘early’ Roman period settlement refer to the settlement once it had expanded from Platform 1 onto Platform 2 by the late second century. This study is based on the initial early Roman settlement (ER1) from within the context of the late Iron Age settlement. Early imports of Roman-style material culture were present at the late Iron Age settlement; glassware, amphorae, and mortaria have been identified at the settlement prior to the reconfiguration of the early Roman period settlement. The dating of these artefacts as pre or post the arrival of the army in the area is not absolute, although a number of the artefacts are definitely early first century AD (e.g. mortaria). The contextual associations of these goods were not, however, isolated finds but appear integrated into the daily rituals of the inhabitants. Suggestions of continental tastes were also evident at the re-structured early Roman period settlement. The configuration of the newly constructed settlement with its direct links to the road and complementary consumption practices associated with the house and entrance to the settlement allude to a public adoption of certain aspects of a Roman lifestyle. Yet, there

are drinking traditions and patterns of meat consumption that suggest that the consumption practices are neither wholly emulative nor necessarily the habits of 'Romans'. These observations point to the inhabitants of both the late Iron Age and early Roman period settlements as being native people of some wealth as suggested by Hingley (*ibid*). I would further suggest that the people, who resided at the early Roman period settlement, as at the late Iron Age settlement, had both the means and desire to display particular acts of consumption to the public. Some form of military presence at the settlement cannot be ruled out, and Miles and Palmer (1983b:388) have also speculated that a Dobunnic tribesman of some importance may have resided at Claydon Pike; the occurrence of military objects in this context could indicate a line of communication with the military be it of a collaborative, combative, or even social nature.

8.10. Conclusion

Claydon Pike is the fourth and final case study in this thesis. It, along with the other case studies, illustrates the diversity of native settlements in the Upper Thames Valley. Similarly to Barton Court Farm, there are suggestions of different households with different consumption practices, possibly of different status, residing at the late Iron Age settlement. There is also evidence, as with Barton Court Farm, of the possible consolidation of the households within one structure; although the possibility of a second structure in the northern section of the settlement and the positioning of the main structure alongside the entrance to the settlement goes against the idea of public and private actions that was put forward for Barton Court Farm. Instead, at Claydon Pike we have the possibility of a wealthy late Iron Age settlement that chose to express that wealth in part through the use of Roman-style consumables that refer to the preparing and flavouring of food. At the early Roman settlement we see the up front and communal use of the same types of Roman style goods within a decidedly native context. The large expansion of the settlement in the second century (neighbouring Thornhill Farm was abandoned around this time) and its links with other settlements attests to the importance of the settlement.

A number of recurring themes have pervaded the analysis of consumption practices at the four sites in this study. These include the possibility of alternate criteria for what constitutes

the status of a settlement and the apparent importance of deposits at the boundaries of settlements. In the following chapter, I will explore these themes in a discussion that summarizes the social contexts of eating and drinking at Barton Court Farm, Roughground Farm, Old Shifford and Claydon Pike.

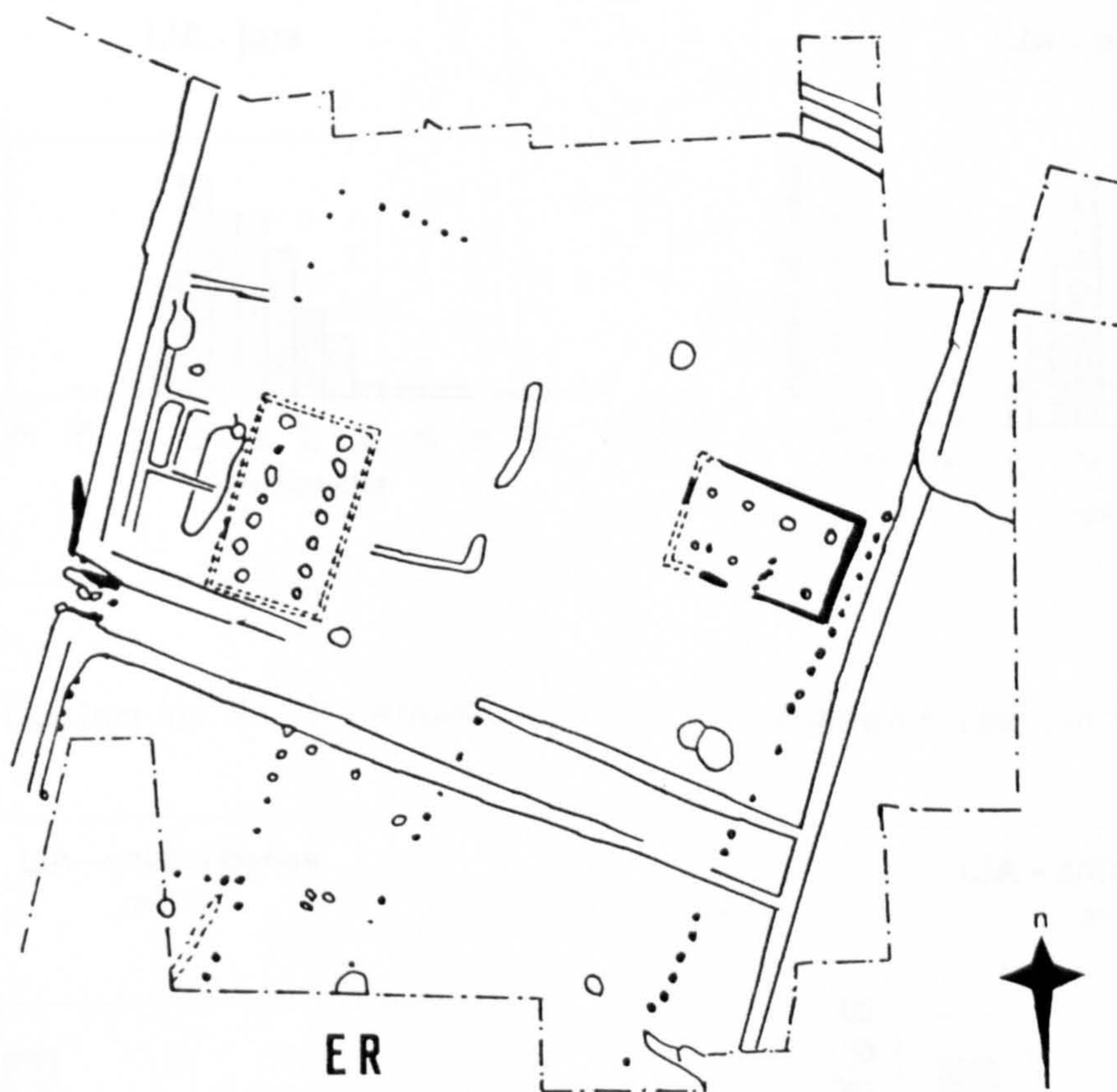
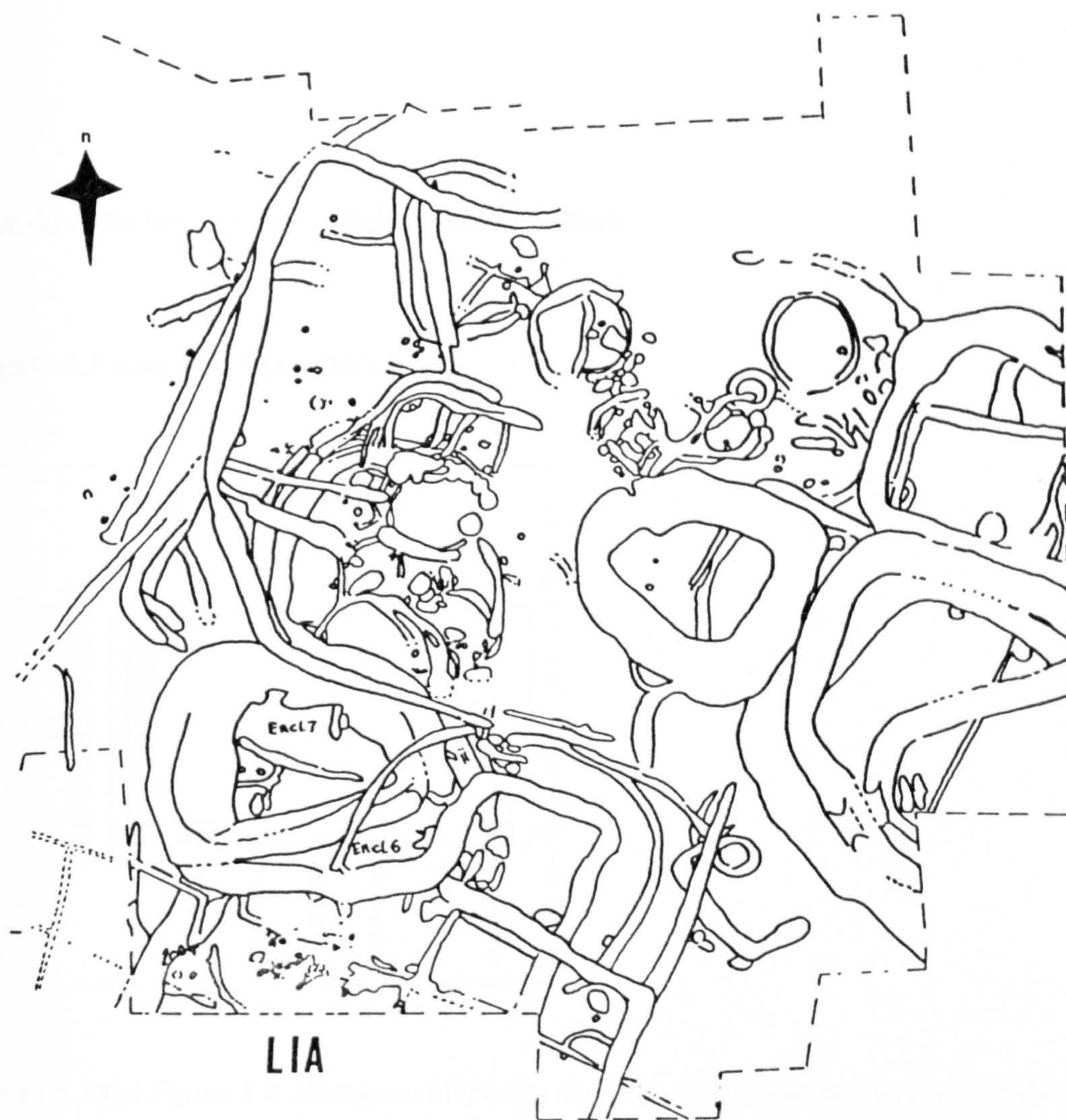


Figure 8.1 The late Iron Age and early Roman period (ER1) settlement at Claydon Pike (after unpublished O.A.U. drawings, drawn by M. Seymour)

Claydon Pike late Iron Age containers and ingredients

Figure 8.2 Late Iron Age pottery forms

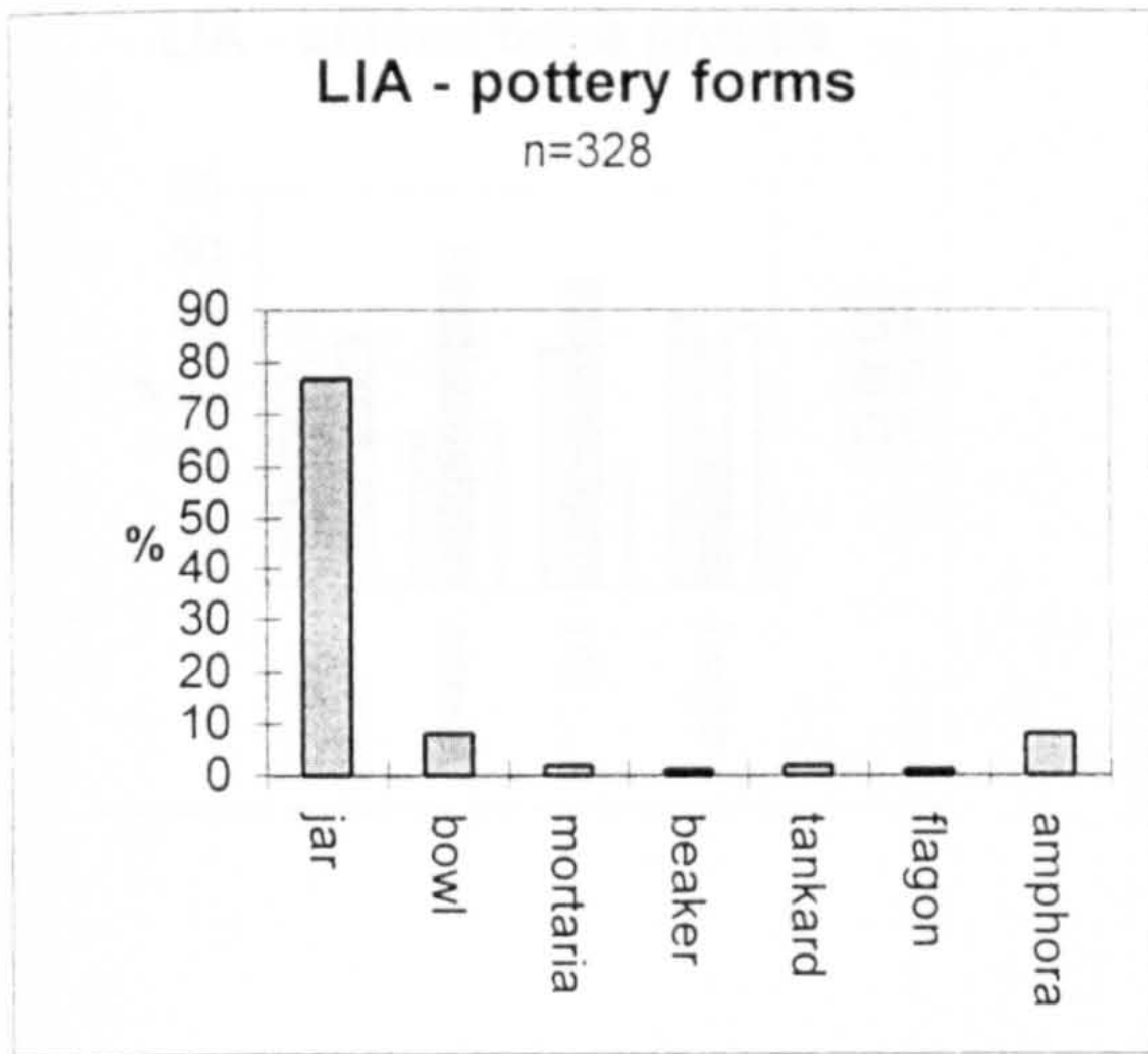


Figure 8.3 and Figure 8.4 Histogram of the rim diameter of late Iron Age jars and bowls

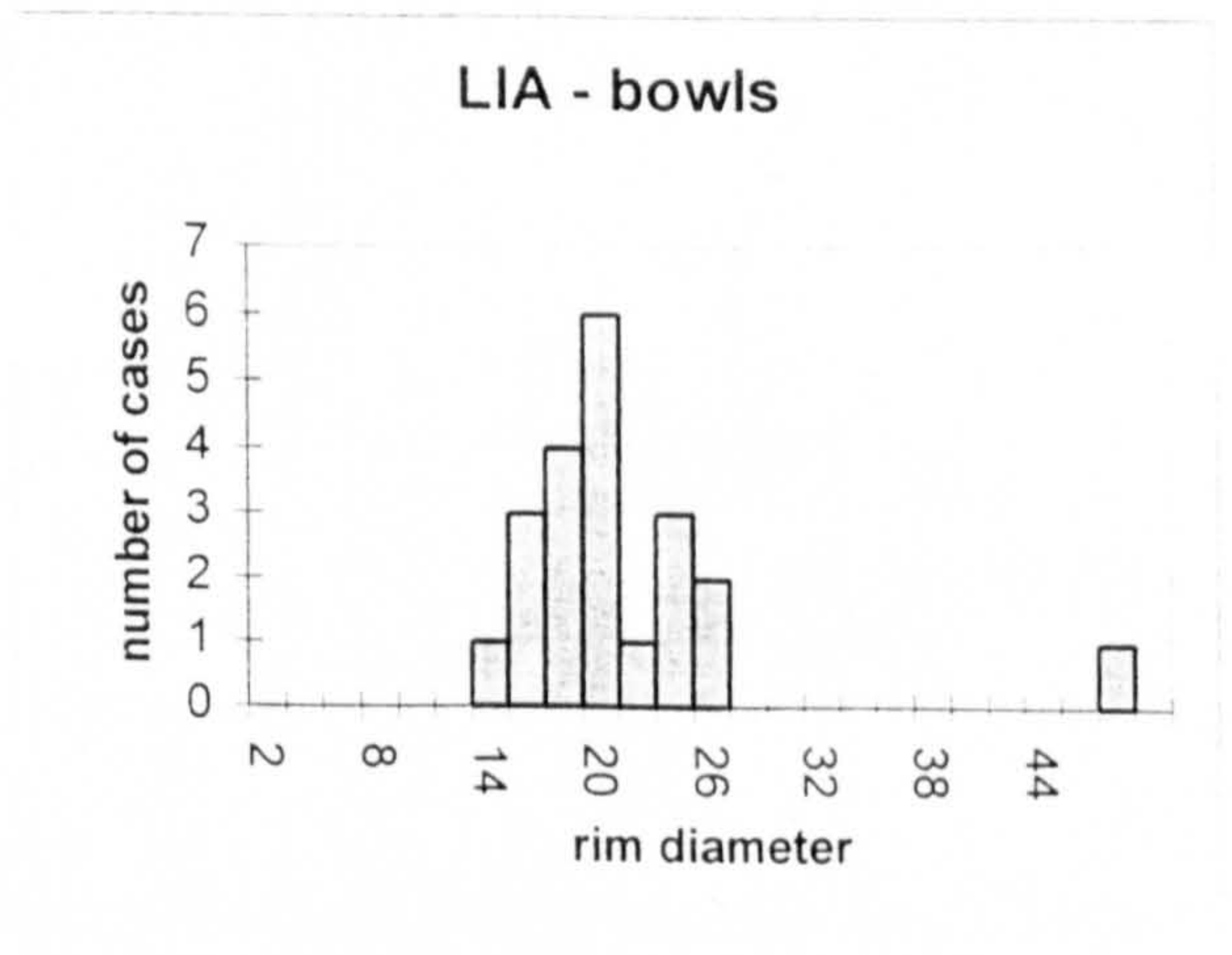
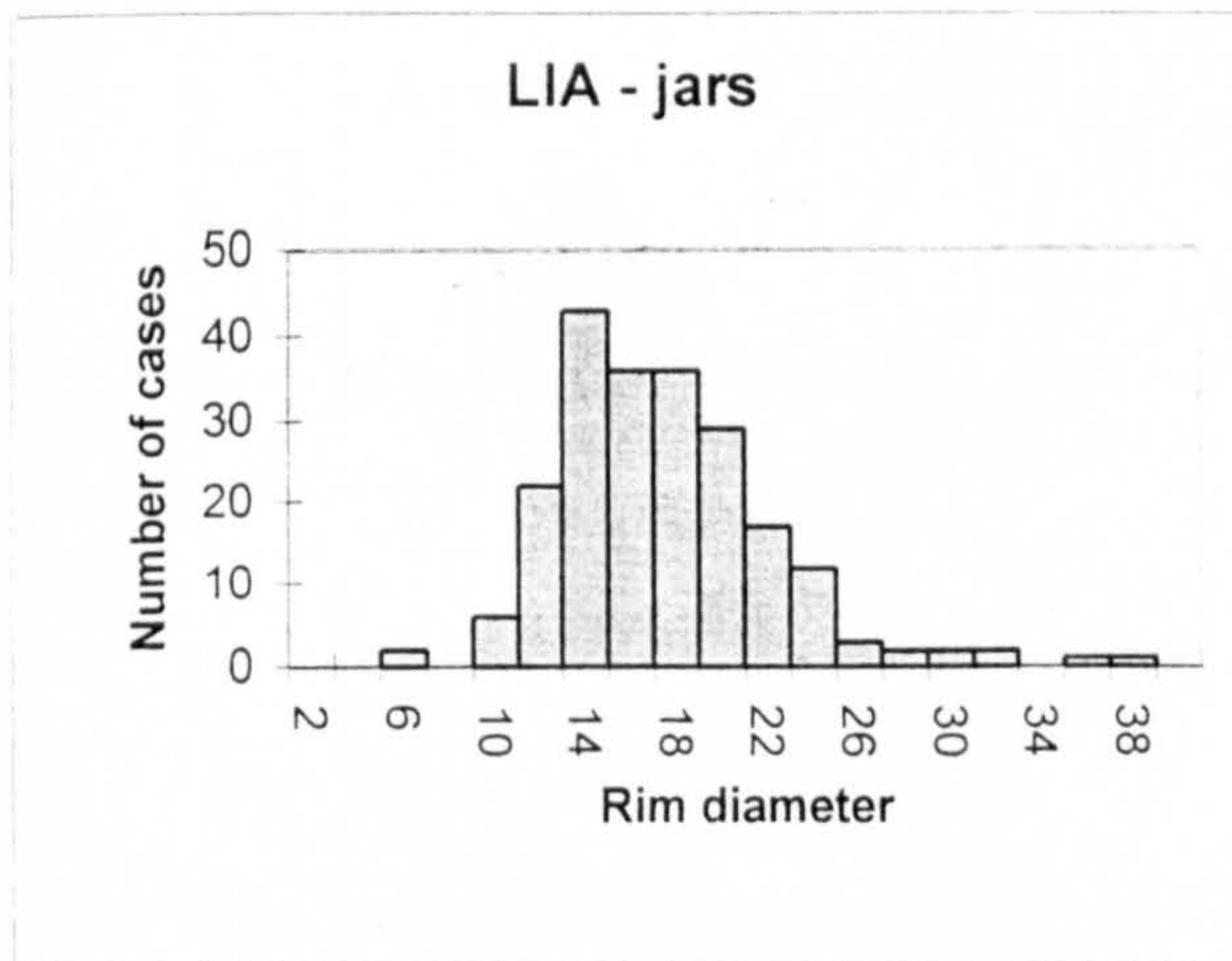


Figure 8.5 Late Iron Age N.I.S.P. (Wilson)

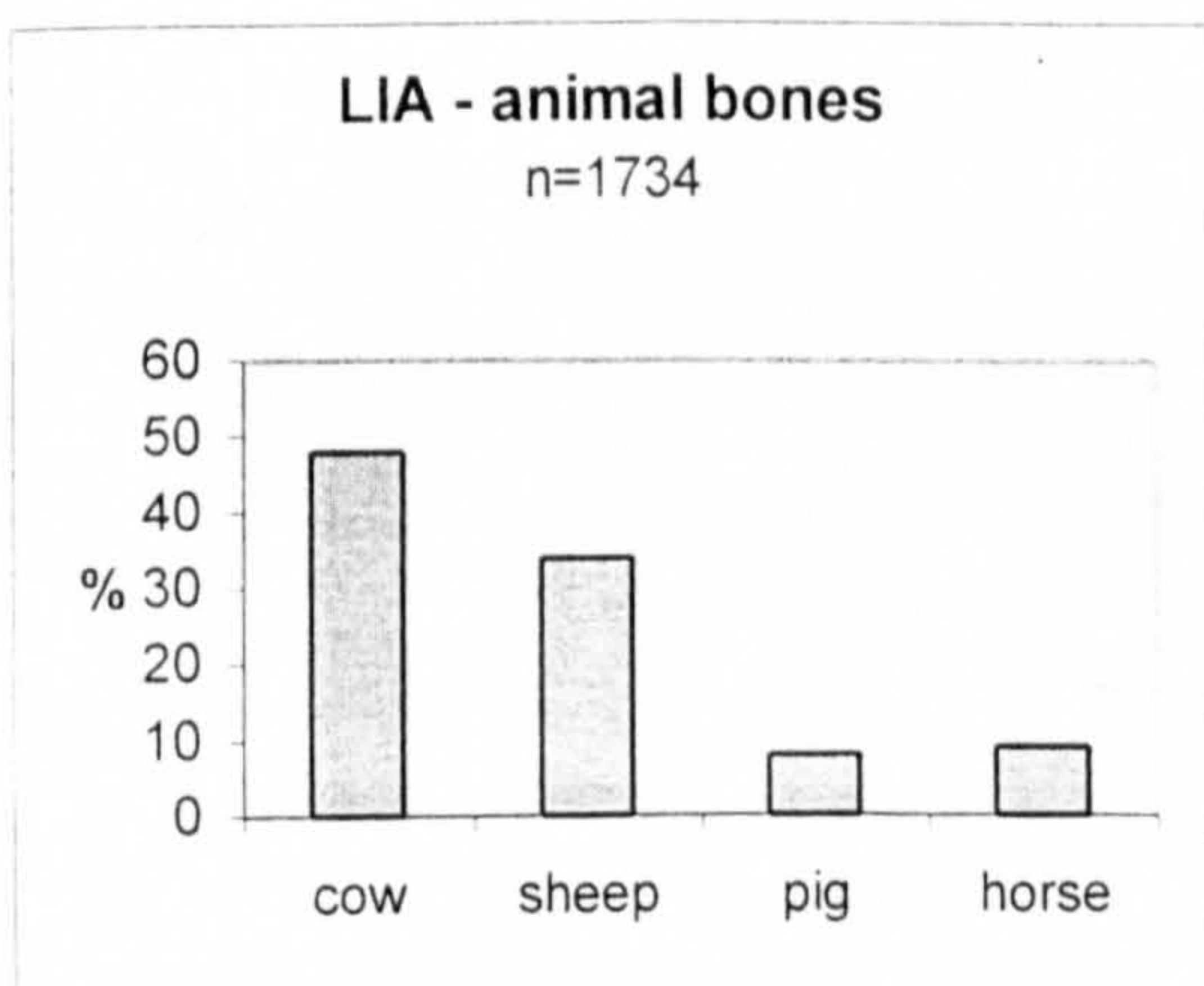
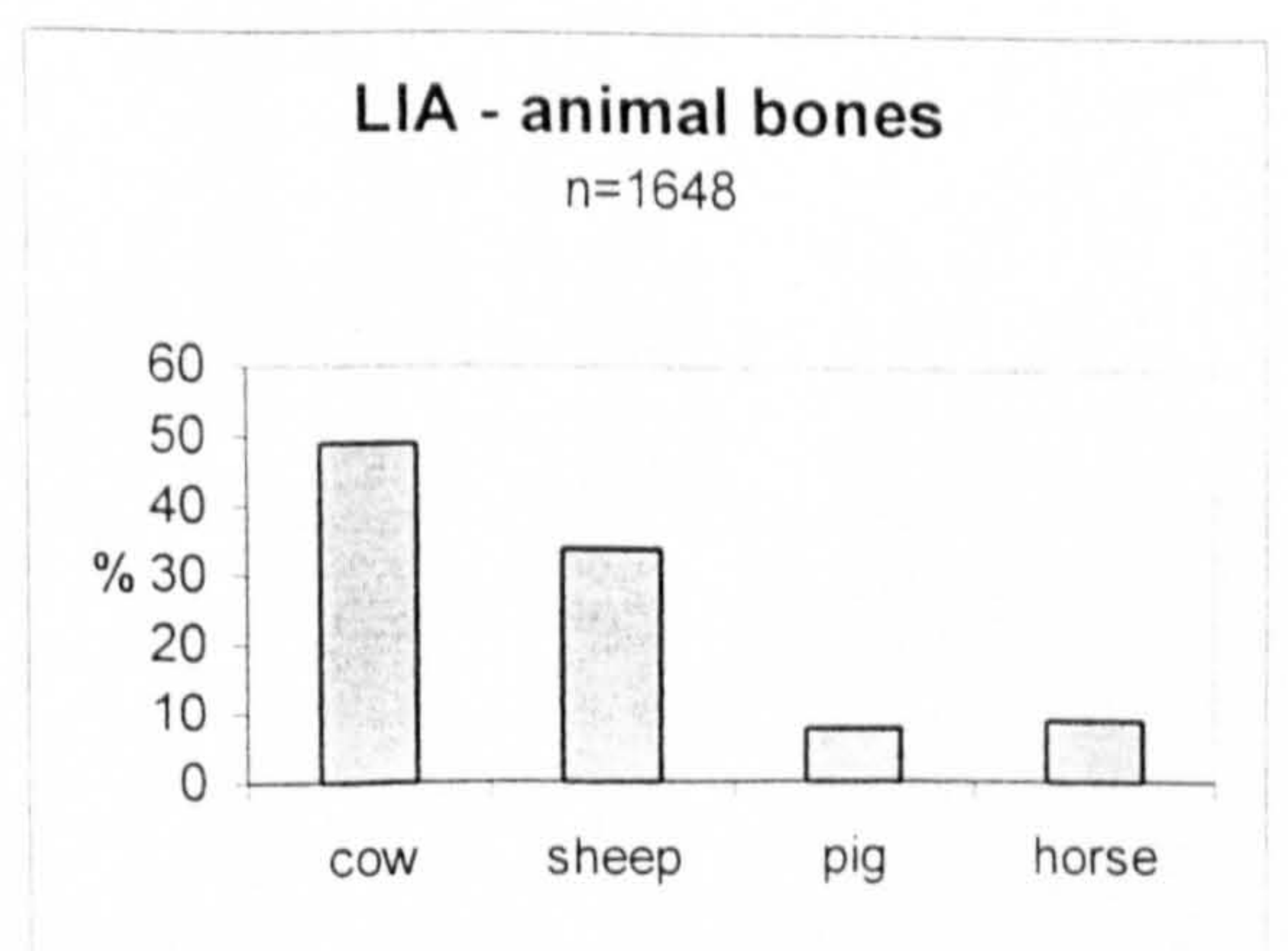
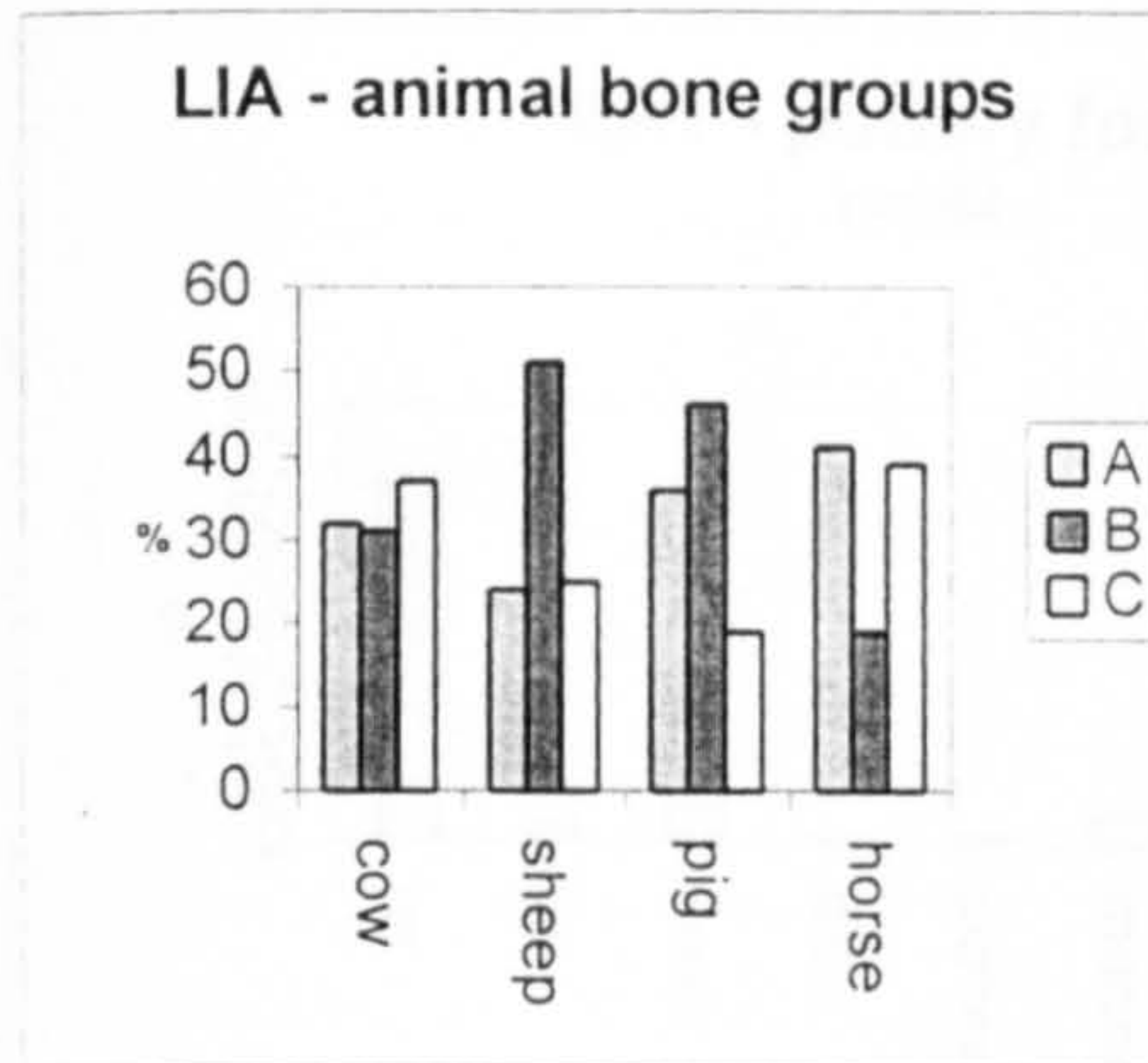


Figure 8.6 Late Iron Age N.I.S.P. (Meadows)



Claydon Pike late Iron Age ingredients cont.

Figure 8.7 Late Iron Age animal bone groups according to meat yield



Claydon Pike early Roman period containers and ingredients

Figure 8.8 Early Roman period pottery forms

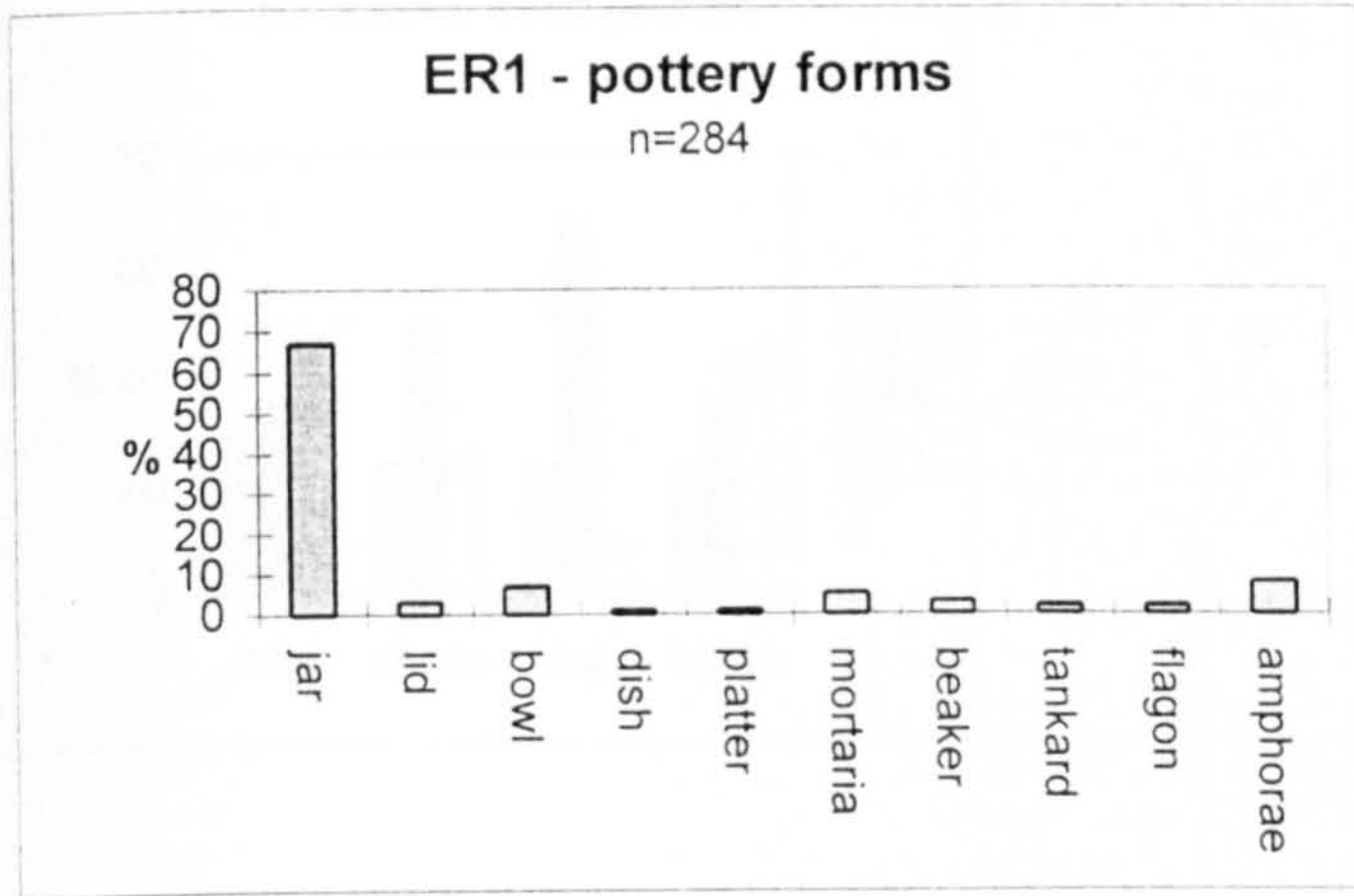


Figure 8.9 and Figure 8.10 Histograms of the rim diameter of early Roman period jars and bowls

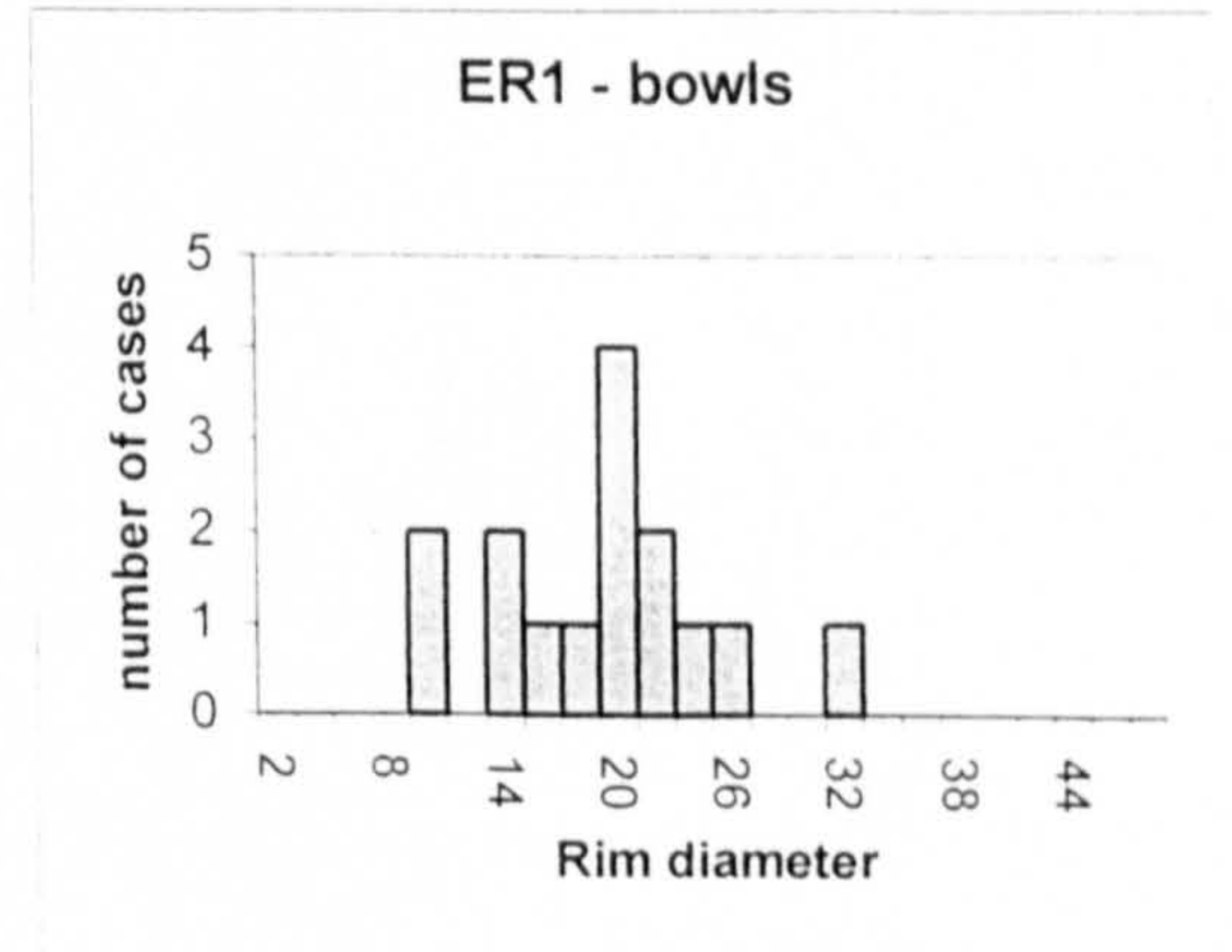
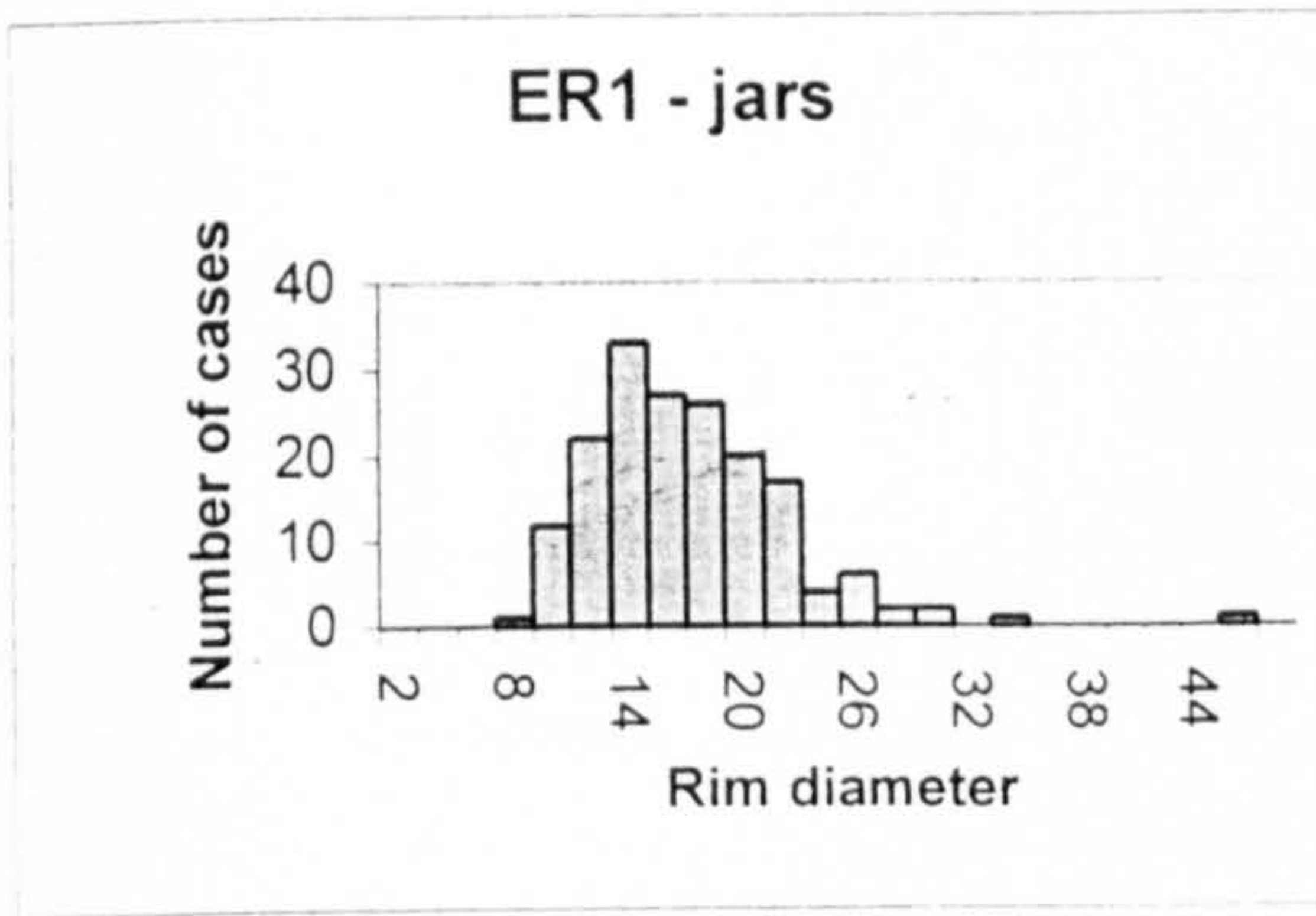
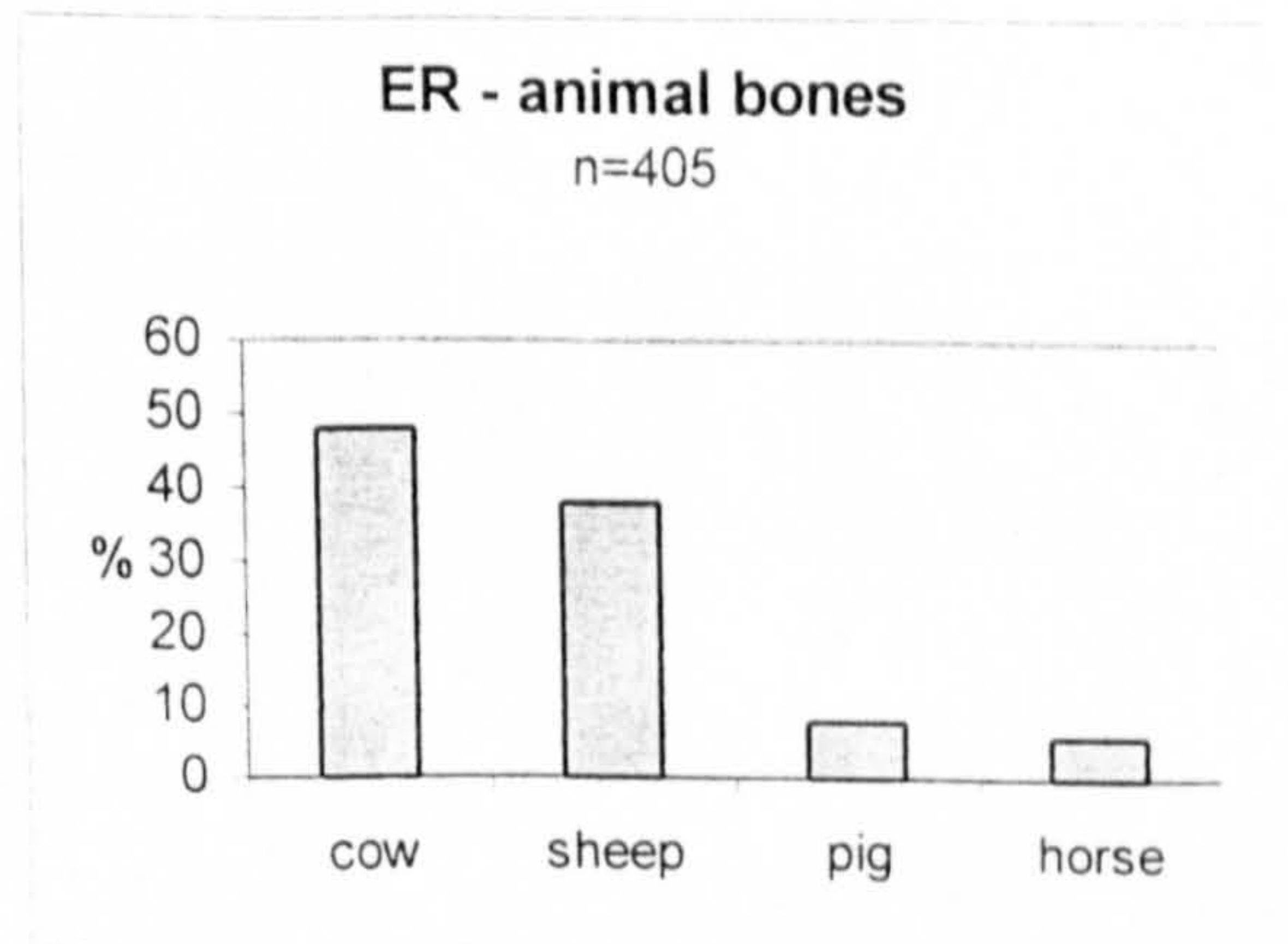
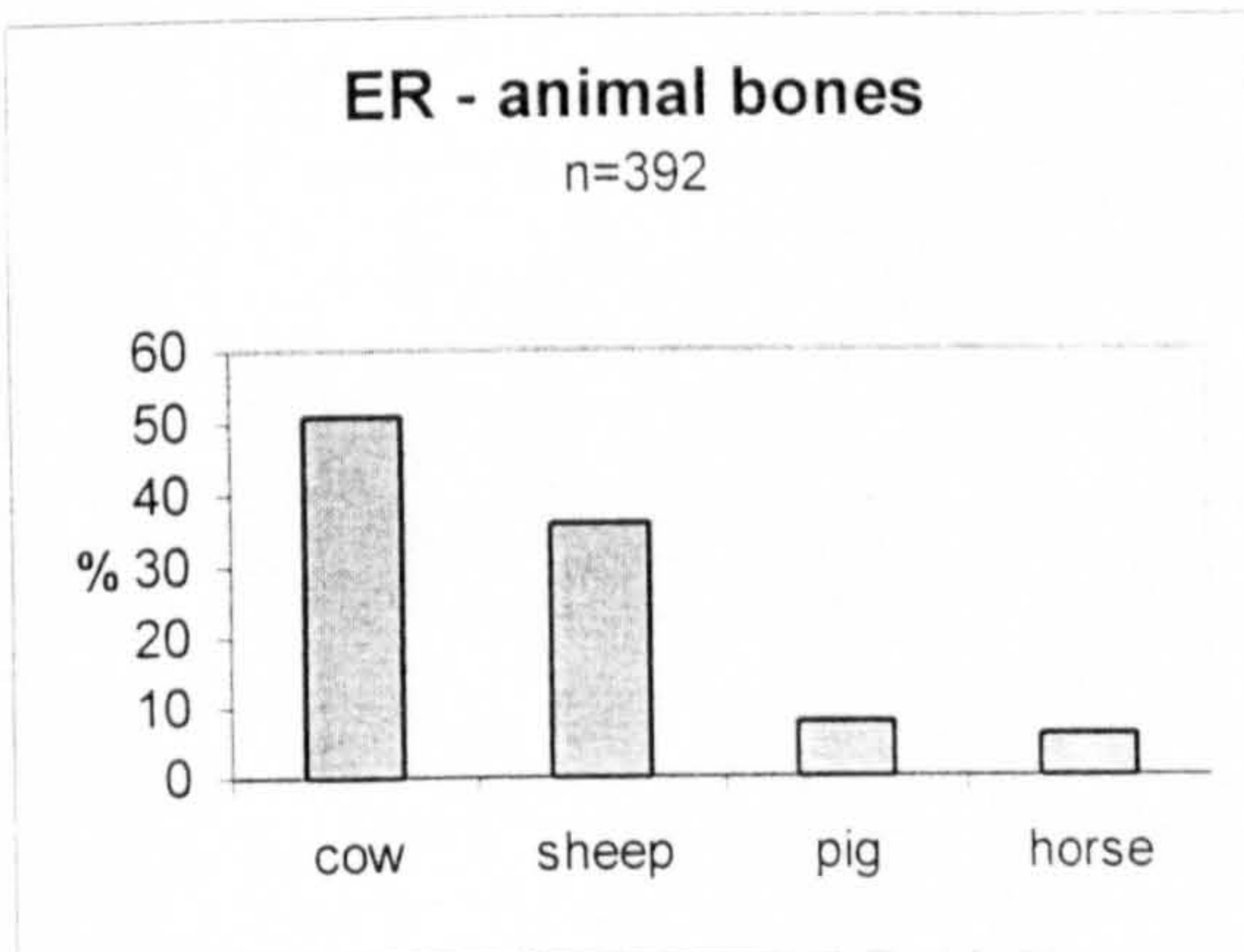


Figure 8.11 Early Roman period N.I.S.P. (Meadows)

Figure 8.12 Early Roman period N.I.S.P. (Wilson)



Claydon Pike early Roman period ingredients cont.

Figure 8.13 Early Roman period animal bone groups according to meat yield

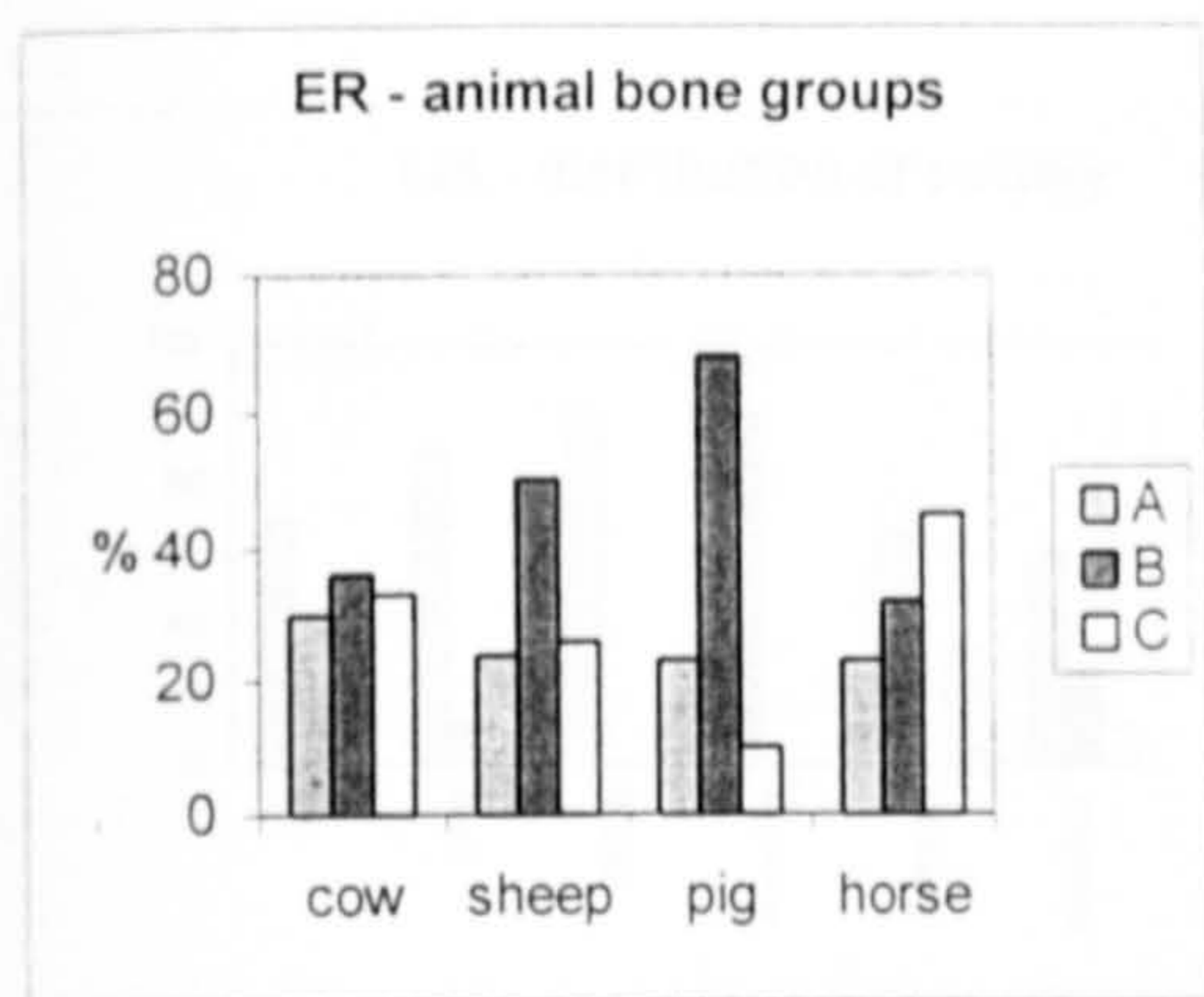


Figure 8.14 Distribution of 1st to 4th Age animal bone groups - 1st century AD



Figure 8.15 Distribution of 1st to 4th Age animal bone groups - 2nd century AD



Claydon Pike: distribution of late Iron Age containers and ingredients

Figure 8.14 Distribution of late Iron Age pottery

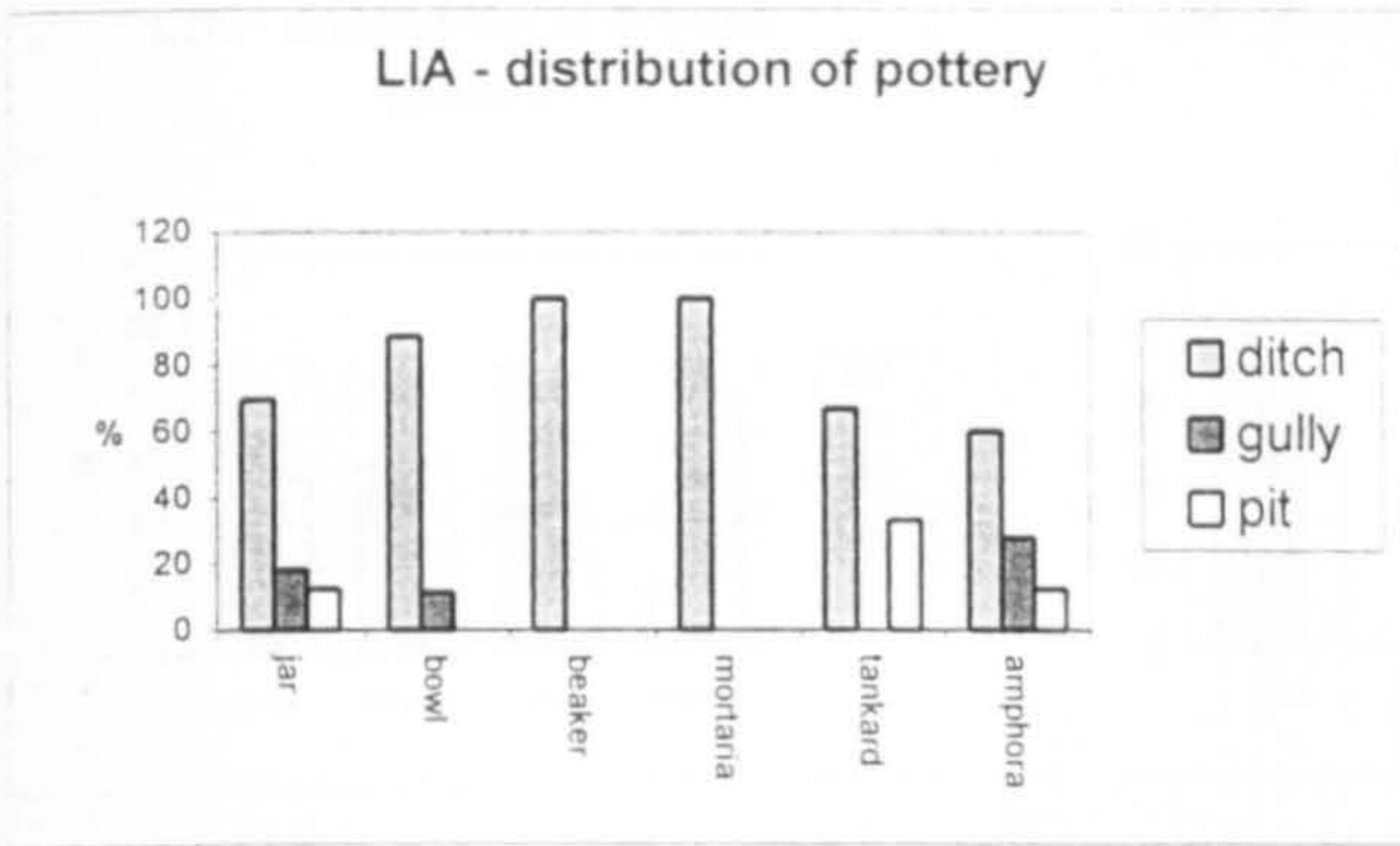


Figure 8.15 Distribution of late Iron Age animal bones – south/north

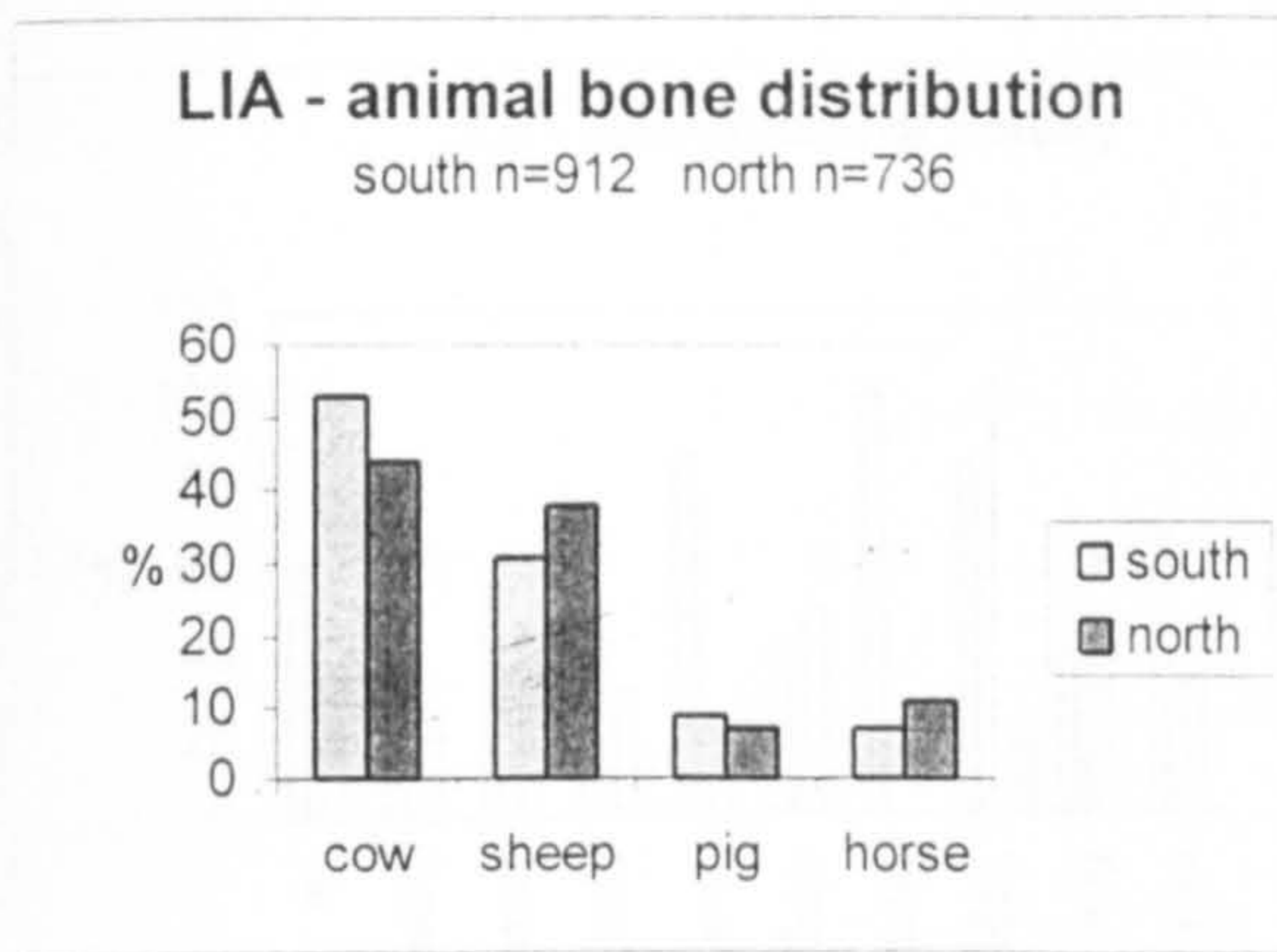
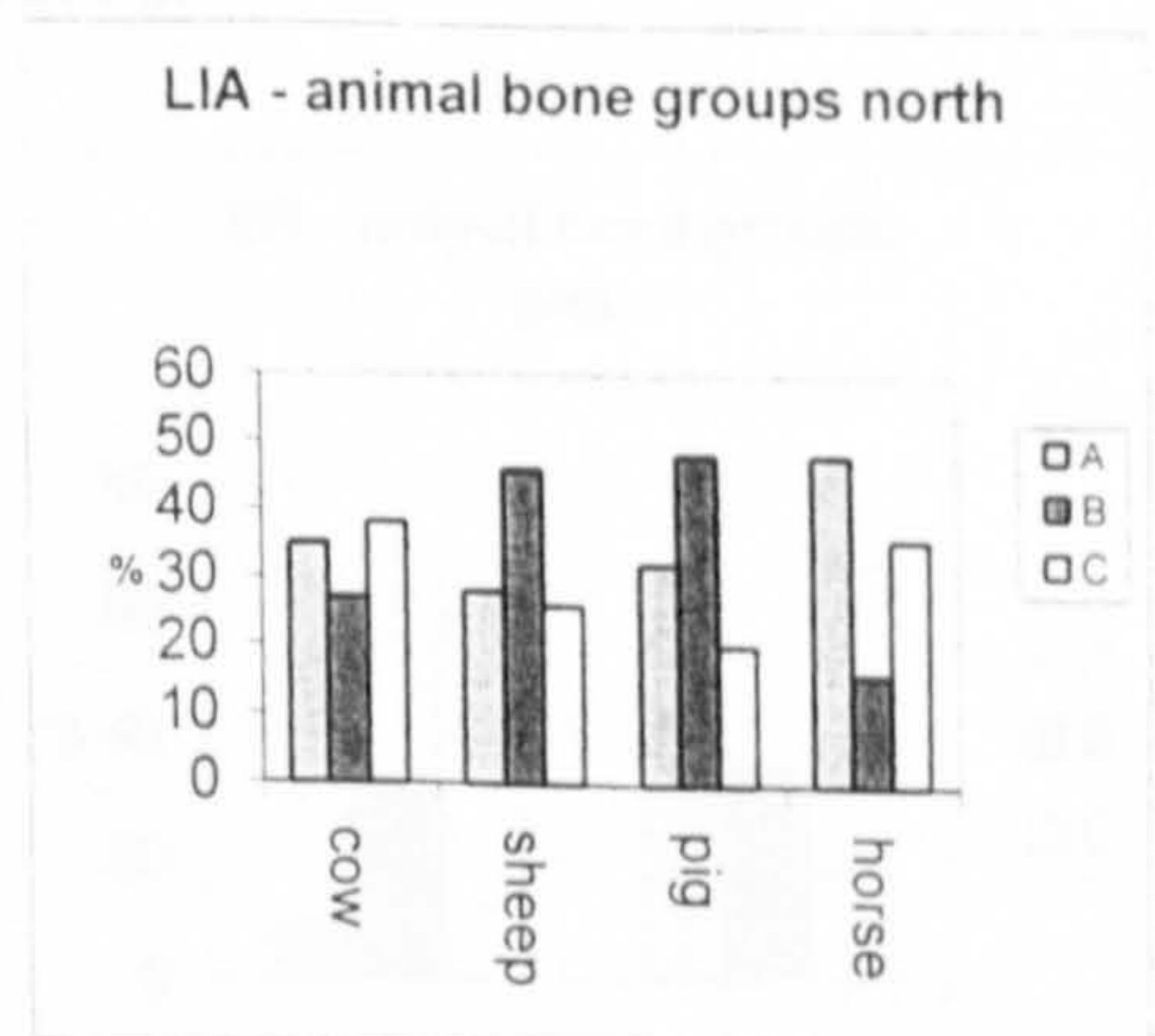
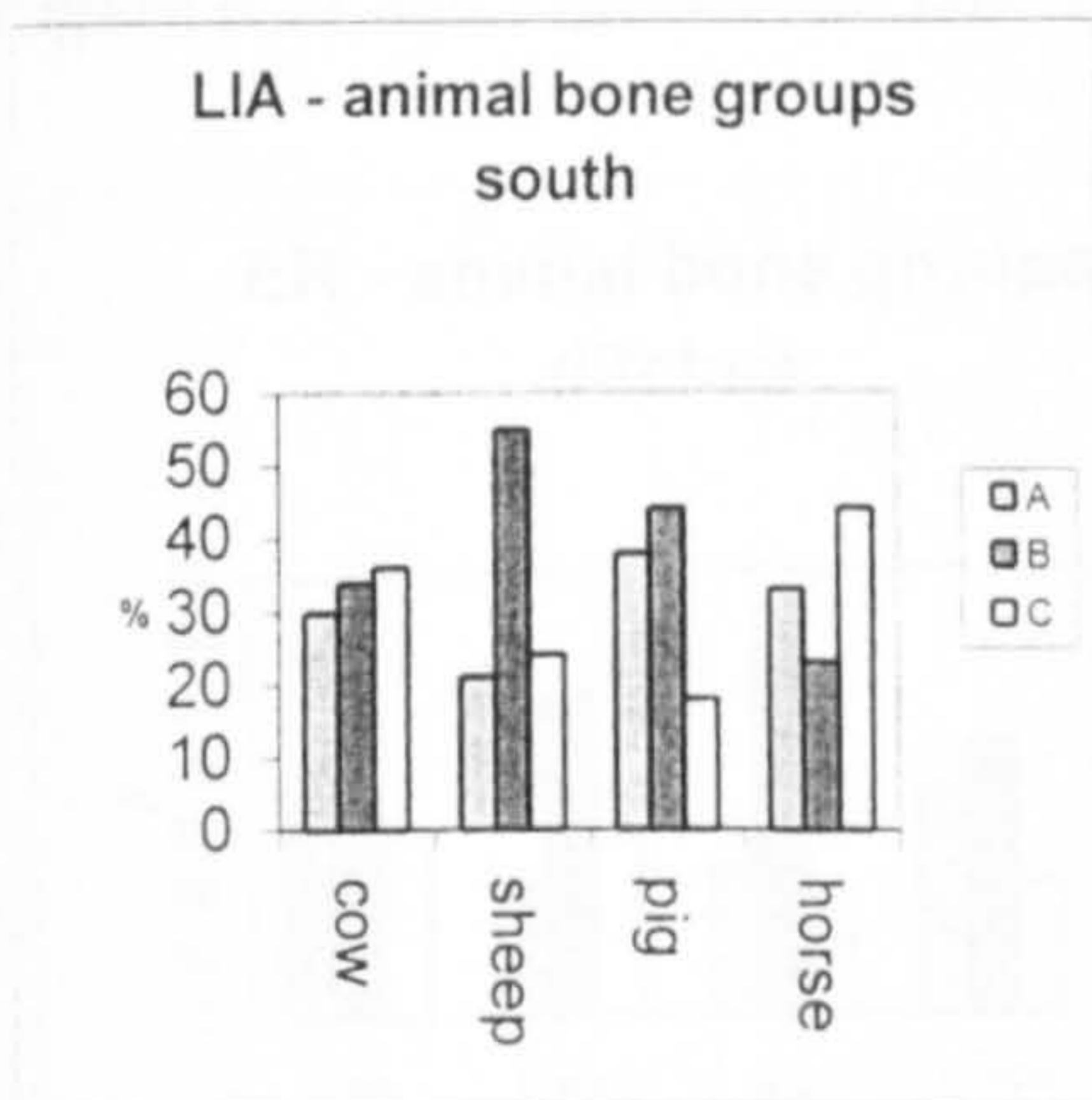


Figure 8.16 and Figure 8.17 Distribution of late Iron Age animal bone groups – south/north



Claydon Pike: distribution of late Iron Age ingredients and early Roman period containers and ingredients

Figure 8.18 Distribution of late Iron Age animal bone groups by feature

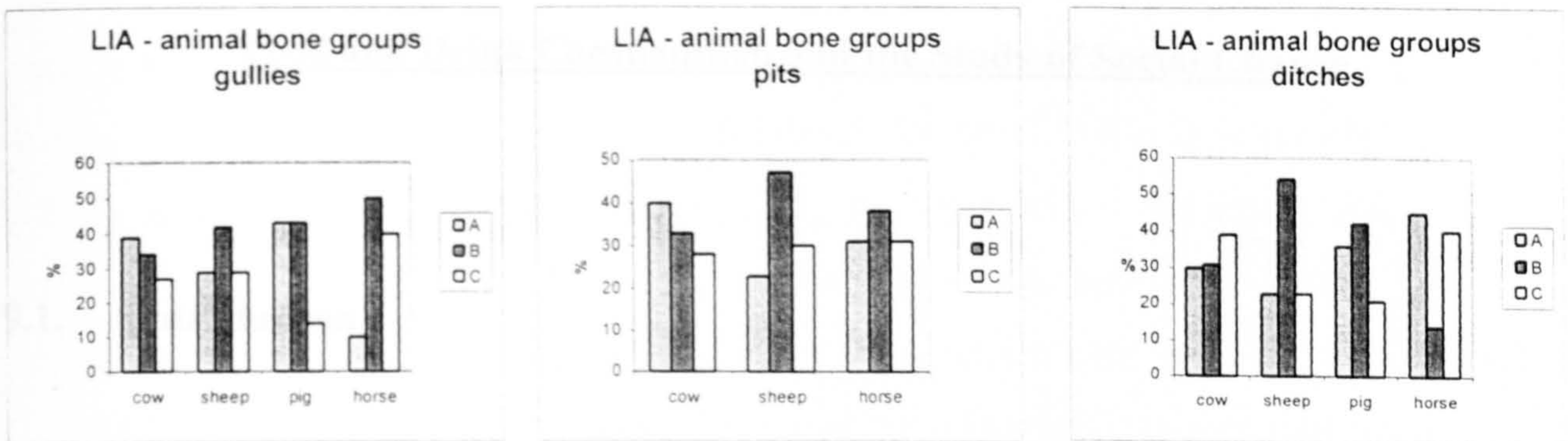


Figure 8.19 and Figure 8.20 Distribution of early Roman period pottery and animal bones

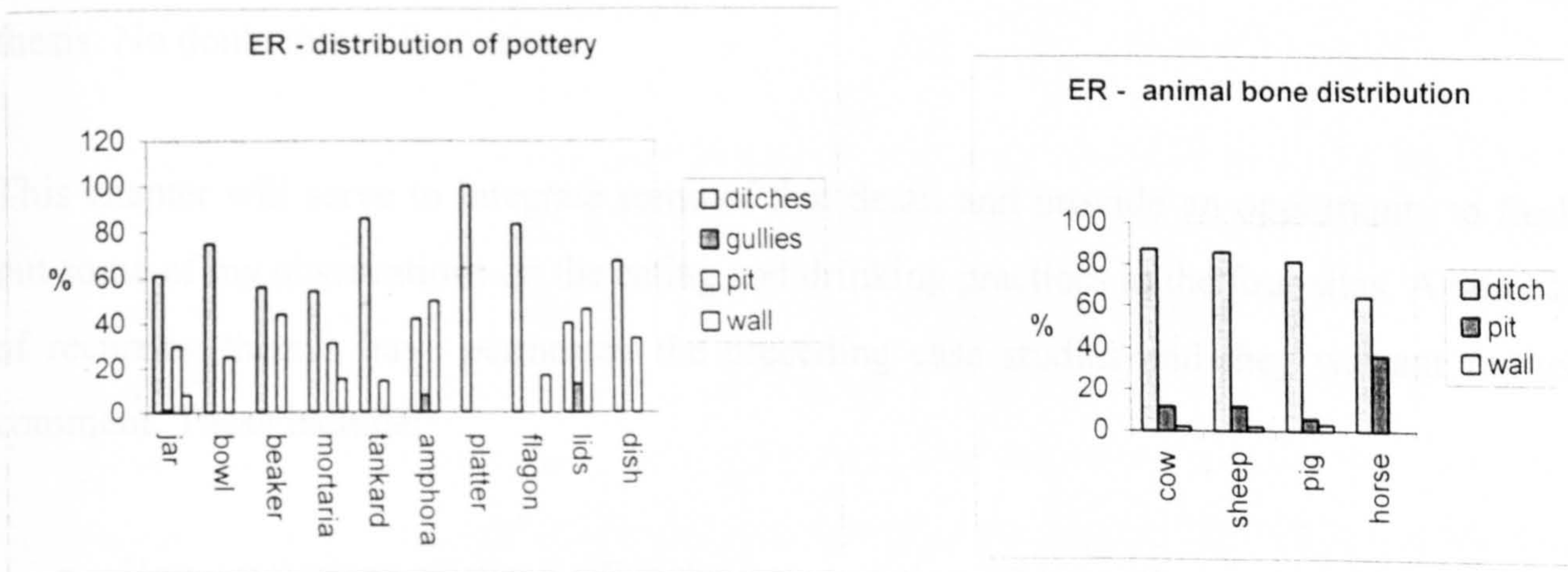
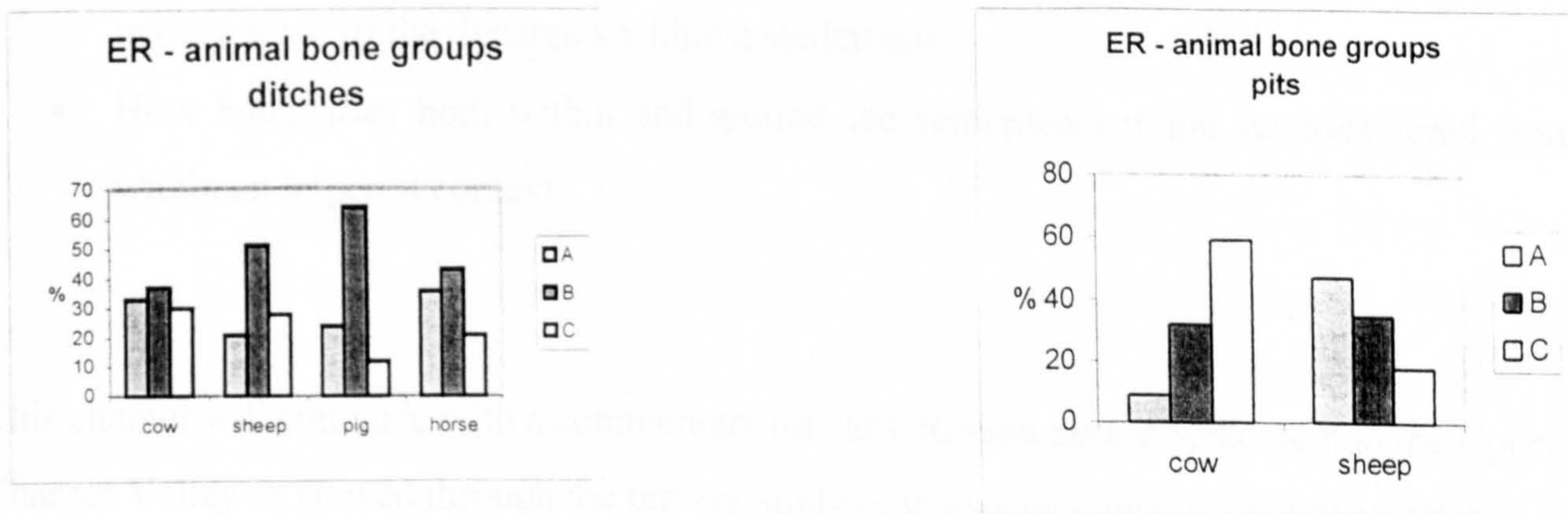


Figure 8.21 and Figure 8.22 Distribution of animal bone groups – ditches/pits



Chapter 9

Food and Drink Consumption and the Study of Social Change

9.1. Introduction

Behind the permutations of pottery forms and fabrics, meat-yields, butchery patterns, plant ratios and the like, are the social contexts of the minutiae of eating and drinking. The challenge of presenting so much detail in a digestible, informative and interesting way is considerable and has been subject to a good deal of review throughout the working of this thesis. No doubt this will continue.

This chapter will serve to integrate some of that detail and provide an opportunity to flesh out some of my observations on the eating and drinking practices at the four sites. A number of recurring themes have permeated the preceding case studies and they warrant further comment. These include:

- How set notions of status affect the interpretation of the settlements in this and other studies of native settlement in the Upper Thames Valley.
- How the identification of two or more groups with differing consumption practices reveals some of the dynamics within a settlement.
- How boundaries both within and around the settlements might be considered from within an imperial context.

This chapter will conclude with a commentary on early Roman period settlement in the Upper Thames Valley as viewed through the present study of the social contexts of consumption.

9.2. Food and Drink Consumption at the Late Iron Age Settlements

The background for the consideration of diet and culinary practices at early Roman period 'native' settlements in this study has been the consumption habits at the late Iron Age settlements that preceded them. In the process of considering the early Roman period from within the context of the late Iron Age, rather than *vice versa* I believe that some sense of the effects of imperialism at the household level has been realized. I would also suggest that this study will contribute to our understanding of late Iron Age consumption in and of itself (see comments by Willis who points to the lack of study of the late Iron Age in its own right 1994:142). What follows is a review of some of the more salient aspects of the eating and drinking habits of the peoples who resided at the three¹, late Iron Age settlements in this study.

9.2.1. Late Iron Age Barton Court Farm

At Barton Court Farm, there were few examples of pottery imported from outside the local area with the exception of beakers, which were from southeast England. Most of the pottery was made out of coarse ware fabrics. This together with the lack of imported ware would mean that the settlement would be situated quite low on a site hierarchy – *if the use of imported containers was the vehicle by which the inhabitants expressed their status*. For some consumers the point of origin of a vessel may be irrelevant (Brown 1997:100) and this could have been the case at Barton Court Farm. It is possible that the surprisingly high proportion of bowl-like vessels and other types of vessels associated with serving, particularly beakers, indicates that the giving of feasts was one means by which the inhabitants gained status (and created obligations) either within the settlement or in the community. Particular types of food are associated with the settlement. These include unusually high quantities of bread wheat, acknowledged for its good baking qualities and its flavour but also as being labour intensive (Allen *et al.* 1993:176; Garnsey 1999:120-122), and possibly dairy products as seen through the kill-rates of the animal population and the high proportion of cheese-making vessels. Both the cheese-making vessels and the grains were recovered from ritualized contexts. I have also suggested that the presence of young animals and vessels with perforated bases could instead be an indicator of heightened ritual activity and the production of alcohol (rather than cheese).

¹ Please note that Roughground Farm will not be discussed in this section because it did not have late Iron Age settlement.

In either case, the settlement could have had a reputation for producing and serving particular types of foods and drink to the community (see Hastorf 1998:777 re: food and drink as gifts to the community rather than non-local goods; Hayden 1996:137 re: feasts and special foods).

In addition to questioning the parameters for status, I am also interested in how the traditions and mores of the inhabitants were expressed in day-to-day life within the settlement. For example, it was also observed that many of the long bones of both cattle and sheep at the late Iron Age settlement were chopped into sizes appropriate for cooking pots. I have suggested that the high number of bowls and cooking type pots found on the site could indicate the preparation and serving of stews. There were occasions, however, when bones were separated at the ligaments and that meat was stripped off the bone; was meat prepared in this way served in different types of vessels? In studying the distribution of the animal remains and the different types of pottery around the settlement, I have identified specialized areas of consumption at the settlement. The remains of particular meals – hearthstones, decorated bowls, beakers and unbutchered articulated animal remains – for example, were found in pits in and around one particular house site. These and other specialized deposits recovered from this area of the settlement may or may not be directly linked to the status of the group in the wider community but certainly suggest that the residents singled out particular areas of the settlement.

There are a number of possible explanations for the apparent patterning at the settlement. For instance, we might be observing areas in the settlement that are defined according to the types of food preparation and consumption. Specialized deposits in one area of the settlement in this light would suggest that this particular area was a focal point for special events (Hayden 1996:140 re: the identification of feasting locations on archaeological sites). It is also possible that the people who engaged in the ritualized activity were given status according to their age, gender or by relationship to the head of a family (see discussions in Hingley 1989:6-8; Parker Pearson 1996). In this light, the association between chopped up bones and large bowls and jars with ditches and small bowls and jars and trimmed meat with house gullies points to the possibility that the preparation and consumption of one-pot meals was a communal practice that involved all members of the group.

9.2.2. Late Iron Age Old Shifford Farm

At Old Shifford Farm, the number of identified vessels was quite small, no obvious specialized vessels were identified and in particular no dishes, beakers, cups and very few bowls (none if you use the typology of Sarah Green) were recovered. All the pottery identified at the settlement was locally made and handmade vessels predominate even though wheel-turned vessels were reaching the settlement. The settlement as a result is viewed as particularly low status (Hey 1996:169). It is quite likely that there was variability in the significance of the pots at the settlement. Some of the handmade vessels could, for example, have been renowned for their cooking ability or for consumption practices identified with the past (see below, and for examples Barley 1994:73) and thus were considered by the inhabitants (if not the outside community) of special status (Pluciennik 1997:48; Willis 1994:145). It is also possible that the lack of obvious serving-type ware signifies that the inhabitants were less concerned with serving individuals (Barrett 1989b:311) and more concerned with ingredients and with the preparation of food to be consumed by the group. In this case, the inhabitants of Old Shifford Farm as with Barton Court Farm may have enhanced their status within the local community through the giving of feasts.

The fragmented nature of the bones in each phase of settlement and the prominence of chopping up body parts rather than trimming meat off the bone coupled with the prevalence of jars points to an emphasis on one-pot cooking. However, the placement of specific types of bones and species around the settlement and the occasional cutting of meat appears to suggest that animals were at times treated in special ways before they were consumed. At Old Shifford Farm with the absence of obvious serving wares, it is possible that we are seeing a distinction between the ways animals were eaten rather than the way they were served. Barley is the most commonly identified grain (albeit in small amounts), which could emphasize the use of alcohol at the settlement even though we cannot identify the vessels that held the liquid (perhaps wooden vessels were used); ovens have also been identified at the settlement which could have been used in the malting process. The inhabitants of the settlement may have consumed and/or shared their wealth – the settlement economy was probably based on the rearing of animals – with others both from within the group and the outside community.

Different types of pots and animal and plant remains have also been identified in and around the house sites in both phases of late Iron Age settlement. Distinctions between the house sites

appear to relate directly to cooking and food preparation on the one hand and consumption on the other. These differences may, as was suggested for Barton Court Farm, reflect on the status of one house site over the other – *if there was a value placed on food consumption over its preparation or vice versa*. At Old Shifford Farm with the apparent emphasis on ingredients and their preparation for consumption the different distribution patterns could just as well be an indication of the different labour roles of the residents and possibly their gender and/or age (see Barrett 1989b:312).

9.2.3. Late Iron Age Claydon Pike

At Claydon Pike, by comparison to the other late Iron Age case studies, the settlement was almost inundated with non-local and imported goods, including Roman-style wares, namely mortaria, amphorae and glass vessels, but also a wide variety of non-local coarse ware pots. Numerous items of personal adornment and dress fittings were also identified in late Iron Age contexts. An argument for the conspicuous consumption of imported goods as a communicator of the settlement's status sits more comfortably at Claydon Pike than it does for any of the other late Iron Age settlements in this study, although such an observation in and of itself does not consider the possible significance of the *use* of the imported vessels.

The Roman-style vessels that were reaching the settlement do not appear to centre on serving *per se* but rather emphasize food preparation and the flavouring of food. Food preparation appears to have been quite important to the inhabitants as mortaria were more commonly identified than the numbers of dishes, beakers and cups combined. Similarly, equal numbers of bowls and olive oil amphorae were identified. Food prepared with elaboration has been associated with the more wealthy members of society (Garnsey 1999:127) and it is possible that the residents of the settlement were identified partly by the way they prepared and flavoured their food (Bakels *et al.* 1997:209; Hastorf 1998:780; Dietler 1996:98). Serving-type ware was nonetheless quite evident at the settlement, *particularly non-local bowls and tankards*, suggesting that the way food and drink were served was of importance but was possibly subservient to the preparation and tastes of the ingredients. Similar to the late Iron Age settlement at Old Shifford Farm, barley was the most commonly identified grain and the presence of beakers, tankards, cups and even glass vessels suggests that partaking of alcohol was quite significant to the residents. Butchery marks (or the lack of) on the various species

indicate that meat was commonly cooked on the bone or stripped off the bone. The deposition of particular species and body parts, the emphasis on ingredients (see also Rippengal 1995) and the recovery of particular types of serving type vessels in select areas around the settlement suggest that the inhabitants were engaged in the preparation and consumption of specialized meals (Hill 1995:62).

As at the other two late Iron Age settlements in this study, differing areas of consumption were identified at Claydon Pike. Two occupation areas have been suggested, one in the northern part of the settlement, and the other in the south. Distinctions between the two areas were striking and, although they may relate to variations in the rank of the people who lived at the settlement, there are a number of anomalies that suggest that arrangement of the settlement was more complex. It has been established that there was an especially dense accumulation of artefacts and remains in the southern zone of the settlement. Large deposits of pottery and butchered animal remains, in particular cattle bones, pig and bird bones, items of personal adornment, dress fittings, coins, oven fragments, mortaria, glass vessels, rivets for repairing pots, loom weights and so on were recovered from features in and around two enclosures thought to have contained houses. By contrast the northern area of the settlement contains ring stacks and features almost devoid of domestic material that were probably for containing animals, a possible metal working area and a number of enclosures similar in shape to the suggested house sites in the southern area. At first it was thought that the two areas represent different zones of activity at the settlement; however the density of pottery and animal remains recovered from the area suggests that more than one household may have lived at the settlement – households with dramatically different consumption habits. The northern area contained few personal items, glass vessels or mortaria but a comparable proportion of vessels associated with serving and higher numbers of amphorae than the southern area. A distinction between the fabrics of the pottery was also established, particularly in terms of their colour – the colour palette of the vessels in the southern area was particularly vivid. The plant samples recovered from the northern area had higher densities of cereals and they were more processed than the cereals recovered from the southern area. Cattle and sheep bones were equally prominent in the northern area (the distinction between the two species was more overt in the southern area) but there was less evidence of butchered animal bones and bird bones.

Consumption in the southern area appears more conspicuous both in terms of personal appearance (see Jundi and Hill 1998) and in the preparation and serving of food and drink in

particular ways. The southern area may have been more public or ceremonial, an area of specialized meals and feasts as was suggested for one of the house sites at Barton Court Farm. It is also possible that we are seeing some indication of the differing roles of the residents with the northern group linked to preparing and processing (managing?) of food and possibly even the economy of the settlement.

9.3. Late Iron Age Food and Drink Consumption – Final Comments

By many accounts Iron Age peoples were rather lacklustre in the culinary arts before the arrival of the Romans. This depiction extends to the types of food that they ate (see comments by Reynolds 1995a; 1995b) and to the vessels that they used to prepare and consume food and drink. Not only has this research challenged this stereotype, but it also suggests that at some settlements the status and reputation of the inhabitants may have emphasized ingredients, which would dramatically affect the repertoire of vessels at a settlement. Late Iron Age pottery is characterized as not having the specialization of the Roman period but making overtures in that direction (Millett 1979). In this regard, we have seen that the three late Iron Age settlements in this study were actually quite diverse in their use of containers, ‘specialized’ or otherwise. The specialization of pottery or apparent lack thereof is relative to our own ideas about preparing and serving up food and drink. In this study, for example, we have seen variability in the methods of cooking and preparing food for consumption as well as in the way food and drink might have been served, both publicly and privately.

The consideration of the contextual associations of all of the artefacts and remains associated with eating and drinking is laborious. However, through this type of methodology we have been able to realize different aspects of consumption that reflect on all facets of daily living and on the way the settlements were inhabited. The realization of diverse acts of food preparation and consumption within a single settlement at each of the three late Iron Age sites in this study has shown that the contextual reintegration of the artefacts and remains of consumption is worth the effort.

9.4. Food and Drink Consumption at the Early Roman Period Settlements

...the pursuit of reputation in the eyes of others is the overriding preoccupation of human life, although the means by which reputation is to be achieved are extraordinarily various (Harre 1979:3 quoted in Millar 1985:184-5).

It is important to incorporate the various ideas on status offered above into the discussion on the significance of Roman-style goods at the early Roman period settlements in this study. Native settlements are, by definition, often perceived as low status because they lack Romanization (e.g. Raven 1990:49; Allen *et al.* 1993:181). At the root of many ideas about the presence and absence of Roman style goods and buildings is the notion that if the natives could afford to they would exude Roman-ness (Webster 2001:7) and thus the degree of Romanization reflects directly on the status of the settlement (Hingley 1989; 1999:144). The prominence of cattle at each of the early Roman period settlements in this study serves to illustrate how we cannot assume a particular lifestyle based on the presence of what are considered as symbols of Romanization. Notwithstanding that in the Upper Thames Valley the prominence of particular species has generally been related to more long-standing traditions linked to the different elevations of the Valley (Wilson 1978; Robinson 1992; Lambrick 1992), I have shown by considering the contextual associations of the animal bones that the same species was treated differently at each settlement in this study. The same is true of the containers of food and drink including Roman style vessels. As Garnsey has stressed, wealth and status are not inextricable (1999:114) and it is possible to have status or reputation within one's community with or without wealth. In shifting the emphasis on to the social contexts of consumption, rather than on the presence or absence of particular types of vessels or ingredients we can consider the artefacts and remains from within an imperial context. The deposition of the artefacts and remains in settlement features, and in particular at settlement boundaries, thereby becomes paramount to the understanding of consumption and the effects of Roman imperialism on individual households.

9.4.1. Early Roman period Barton Court Farm

It has been theorized that the same 'owners' or lineage occupied both the late Iron Age and early Roman period settlements at Barton Court Farm – the two settlements were built in the

same location and occupation appears to have been more or less continuous (Miles 1986b: 49; see also Ferrell 1995:136). David Miles has noted a slight Romanizing presence at the early Roman period settlement – the increase in cattle, a few Roman-style vessels; small numbers of Roman coins and a rectangular structure with plastered walls. He suggests, however, that these are unremarkable in the context of other settlements in the Upper Thames Valley and that otherwise the social organization of the settlement was little changed; native style local pottery was prolific and the extended family identified at the late Iron Age settlement now lived under one roof (Miles 1986b:50 although see below). On the one hand, I would agree with Miles that we are quite possibly dealing with people that held many of the beliefs of their ancestors seen perhaps with the perpetuation of ritualized deposits in pits and on the continued importance of drinking rites at the settlement. On the other hand, I have suggested that the re-structure of the early Roman period settlement at Barton Court Farm marks a fundamental shift in the way the inhabitants lived and communicated with each other and with those outside the group.

As we have seen, the living area, which was once multi-featured and expansive, was in the early Roman period consolidated within one large structure. Specialized deposits that appear fully integrated into the living spaces of the late Iron Age settlement seem divided between those inside the home and those at the boundaries of settlement at the early Roman settlement. The apparent change in the movement of the inhabitants around the settlement reverberates in the changes to their consumption habits. The reduction of vessels with perforated bases and the apparent change in the structure of the animal population indicates a shift from dairying to the production of meat or a shift in the rituals of consumption, or both. Meat-yielding horse bones were now butchered. The butchery of cattle also changed; there was less chopping up of body parts and an apparent shift towards consuming meat in steaks or from the bone. Ritualized deposits of butchered animals imply that the consumption of the species, in this case of cattle and horse, played a part in ritual activity – where at the previous settlement non-butchered animal burials figured prominently. The reduction in the proportion of bowls identified at the settlement further indicates that there a movement away from one-pot cooking, although the increase in large cooking-type pots could signify that consumption of one-pot meals was still important but was now more of a group activity. The reduction in the presence of bowls could also indicate a decline or change in public consumption events. Although no plant remains were recovered from the settlement it is quite possible that cereal production or the accumulation of grains (possibly bread wheat) was still important to the inhabitants; the storage of cereals was raised above the ground and the possible granaries were positioned in

such a way that they defined access into the settlement. As for the late Iron Age settlement, there remains an emphasis on ingredients in the early Roman period, but the social contexts of consumption have changed.

It is possible that some of the changes in the treatment of ingredients reflect a change in the form of or the imposition of taxation (see comments in Miles 1986b:46). Certainly, we must be conscious that the changes identified at the settlement occurred within an imperial context. The consolidation of the settlement within quite a substantial boundary with a clearly defined and possibly gated entrance indicates a concern with the approach of outsiders not identified at the earlier settlement. As Ferrell has stated: "...the boundary first and foremost expresses the unity of what is on the inside" (1995:134). The positioning of distinctive deposits either at the periphery of the settlement *away from the entrance to the settlement* or within the structure itself also occurred within an imperial context and it appears to suggest that consumption was more judicious. Finally, the movement to a single dwelling large enough to accommodate the whole group and the possibility that doors were locked, occurred within an imperial context and suggests that distinctions between the residents or the rules that governed the segregation of tasks had become secondary to the security of the whole group. The early Roman period settlement has more recently been referred to as a relatively high status settlement (Henig and Booth 2000:106) primarily it seems because of the principal rectangular structure. I would suggest that the 'wealth' of the inhabitants that was once expressed through the giving of feasts was redirected towards the construction of a sturdy and secure house (Rippengal 1993) and a well-defined boundary around the settlement.

9.4.2. Early Roman period Roughground Farm

The early Roman period settlement at Roughground Farm can be viewed in a number of ways. In one sense, the settlement appears to epitomize a relatively low status (non-Romanized) native settlement. The enclosure that probably contained a house was initially circular and gradually became more ovoid but was certainly not rectangular (the chronology of re-cutting of the enclosure is not secure (Allen *et al.* 1993:179) so we should not necessarily view the changing shape of the enclosure as heading in a particular direction, i.e. from rounded to (sub-) rectangular). Few Romanized containers were identified and those that were recovered tend to be associated with serving food and drink rather than preparing and flavouring it. 'Fine wares'

constitute only four percent of the pottery assemblage, all of which contributes to its designation as native and of little wealth (Allen *et al.* 1993:181; Booth in press). On the other hand, I have suggested that other types of local containers, including imitation tableware, could have been prestigious although it is very apparent that at Roughground Farm, ingredients were afforded special treatment. The ritualized deposits of querns and related paraphernalia in pits could signify the importance of agriculture to the economy but they might also imply that the transformation (after Hill 1995:67) of cereals into food was significant; a large quantity of meat-bearing animal bones was deposited in these pits. The emphasis on ingredients, as was suggested for late Iron Age Old Shifford Farm, suggests that celebrations might have been more egalitarian – if we remember histograms of serving-type vessels were comparably large which I considered as an indicator of communal serving at the settlement (see Chapter 6 section 6.3.2.). The construction of the ‘villa’ in the early second century – within the same general settlement area and in respect of a number of existing boundaries – could signify that the inhabitants redirected their wealth towards the construction of a villa. (The rapid construction of the building and its Romanized structure were considered by Allen as evidence that the settlement may have had new owners – though he adds that if there were two groups at the settlement, one more Romanized than the other, that ownership may have been continuous (Allen *et al.* 1993:196).)

There were a number of distinctions in the distribution of the artefacts and remains at the settlement to suggest that the determination of settlement status based on consumption habits is more complex. Around the house site are deposits that appear to emphasize cooking (many oven fragments and burnt stones were recovered from this area) and serving (local bowls and imitation Belgic containers) as well as items that can be associated with individuals such as brooches and hunting paraphernalia. Unlike at early Roman period Barton Court Farm², the settlement does not appear to have been contained within a single boundary and a variety of consumption practices have been identified beyond the enclosures that surrounded the main occupation area. West of the main occupation area are the above-mentioned ritualized deposits of querns as well as an infant burial. In stock enclosures and in pits beneath the second century villa, sizeable amounts of Roman-style pottery have been recovered (a dump of samian cups in a stock enclosure and samian ware as well as animal cranial bones in pits). It has been argued that a second more Romanized household may have lived at the settlement (Allen *et al.*

² This observation refers specifically to habitation and does not mean that surrounding fields for example were not a part of the settlement.

1993:181). However, I have suggested that the isolated deposits of Roman-style vessels as well as other ritualized deposits (the deposits of querns and the elaborate native style burial – see below) could be linked to the structural changes that are about to occur at the settlement. The specialized deposits found around the settlement might also reflect different types of deposits for different seasons or rites of passage – food preparation and consumption associated perhaps with the harvest, and drinking with the birth or death of people or even animals. In either case, the determination of status based on limited criteria tends to gloss over the variety of life at a settlement and the various events that may have brought people from the wider community to the settlement.

Certainly, the early Roman period settlement at Roughground Farm must be viewed from within an imperial context. However, it appears that socio-political circumstances at Roughground Farm were rather different to what has been suggested for Barton Court Farm. As was mentioned above, the early Roman period settlement does not appear to have been contained within a single boundary. Features are spread around the settlement and a number of features at the settlement appear to celebrate or at least bring attention to a particular type of native identity – rounded structures, the proliferation of specialized pit deposits, communal consumption and in particular an elaborate burial the style of which has been linked to burials in Gaul. Several of these features have been related chronologically to the reorganization of the settlement and the construction of a ‘villa’. Thus there is, at least towards the end of the occupation of the settlement, a strong presence of both native and Roman-like identities at the settlement that do not fit in with traditional notions of native or Roman. The persistence of native symbols can be viewed as evidence of the resistance to a lifestyle associated with the Romans, although when considered within the context of some of the changes that are about to occur at the settlement it is possible that the co-presence of Roman and native material culture is more ambiguous. Jane Webster, for instance, has recently argued that “Romanized material culture could be used in ambiguous ways, simultaneously creating new identities and maintaining key aspects of pre-Roman belief and practice” (Webster 2001:9). I concluded the case study of Roughground Farm with a query about whether the transformation of the settlement in the early second century was done with trepidation or in celebration. It could have been neither of these; we might be seeing a negotiated social identity that was necessary in order to live a particular lifestyle in what was now a Roman controlled Britain.

9.4.3. Early Roman period Old Shifford Farm

The early Roman period settlement at Old Shifford Farm was constructed on the same alignment as the late Iron Age settlements and late Iron Age features and boundaries were incorporated into the re-structuring of the settlement. The re-use and expansion of existing boundaries indicates continuity in the relationship between inhabitants and descendants not apparent at either Barton Court Farm or Claydon Pike (see below) – though possibly evident in a different form at Roughground Farm. At Old Shifford Farm, there is little direct evidence of a Roman presence at the settlement. This was taken by the excavators to indicate that the settlement (as for the late Iron Age settlements) was of particularly low status. I suggested above that the lack of obvious serving ware could imply that there was less emphasis on individuals and more emphasis on ingredients and the giving of feasts at the late Iron Age settlements. The same could be true at the early Roman period settlement, where a few bowls (only one according to Sarah Green's typology) were identified. Furthermore, no samian ware, no mortaria and no amphorae were recovered from the settlement. As was stated in the case study (Chapter 7 section 7.4.1.) this is quite unusual because at other similarly 'low status' settlements in the Upper Thames Valley at least a few of these Roman-style pots have been recovered. In fact, the only non-local pottery identified at the settlement was Malverian handmade jars that appear to have been used in cooking. Their presence, however, adds credence to the possibility that handmade cooking containers may have been important to the inhabitants, either for the cooking of particular ingredients or because the vessels themselves were held in particular esteem.

This is not to say that the early Roman period settlement was somehow suspended in time. For the first time items of personal adornment were recovered at the settlement, albeit only two brooches. The relatively high proportion of horse bones identified at the early Roman period settlement could indicate that horses, which appear to have been held in high esteem in the Upper Thames Valley and elsewhere, were reared at the settlement. In this regard, the settlement may have gained a reputation for horse rearing with the outside community, maybe even with the Roman army. (Interestingly, Thornhill Farm, which appears to have raised horses, had few examples of Roman-style pottery, but sizeable numbers of brooches and toiletry items – see below.) There is also the possibility that cereals may have been produced at the settlement, as there was a slight increase in the densities of cereals in the plant samples. This suggests that the settlement was quite possibly self-sufficient. Furthermore, the two

suggested house sites at the settlement show distinctions in the acts of specialized preparation *and* consumption, rather than preparation *or* consumption as was suggested at the late Iron Age settlements. The square-shaped enclosure contained the only deposits of Malverian cooking pots, the only beaker identified at the settlement, cereals with no chaff and deposits of human bones in the outside boundary of the enclosure. The second suggested house site featured cereals with lots of chaff, a quern stone and butchered meat-bearing horse bones and burnt horse bones – the first evidence that horses were possibly consumed at the settlement. A brooch was recovered from each house site and the status of the inhabitants appears almost equalized by the preparation and consumption of specific foods that were important to the group. Although there are vestiges of the individual at the settlement, ingredients and the social contexts of their consumption remain at the fore.

Evidence of some form of direct or indirect imperial presence at Old Shifford Farm lies quite possibly in the erection of a substantial boundary with a controlled entrance. This entrance, which is thought to have directed the passage of animals, would also have served to control the approach of outsiders. The organization of the settlement is different, however, from that of Barton Court Farm, which similarly erected a substantial boundary, as the two suggested house sites are quite public and straddle the entrance to the settlement. On the one hand, the placement of the houses and erection of a substantial boundary could have served to protect what was a valuable commodity at the settlement, namely horses. On the other hand, we must also acknowledge that the reaffirmation of the boundaries of their descendants, together with the apparent absence of Roman cultural influence, occurred within an imperial context. Some of the earlier beliefs and traditions on preparing and consuming food, for example, could have been retained because they were a familiar feature in an increasingly unfamiliar world (see Harbottle 1997:176 on the persistence of familiar tastes). Jane Timby suggested that the lack of Romanized pottery at Old Shifford Farm could signify that there was “a lack of desire for items clearly related to Roman eating and drinking habits” (1996:129). If this was indeed the case and the social contexts of eating and drinking, which accentuate ingredients and the giving of feasts, appears to suggest this, the inhabitants were making a bold statement to all those who entered the settlement. This could very well have enhanced their reputation (and status) with some members of the local community.

9.4.4. Early Roman period Claydon Pike

The proliferation of Roman-style goods at Claydon Pike is in contrast to many contemporary native settlements in the Upper Thames Valley and as a consequence outside explanations including the presence of the Roman army have been invoked to explain the presence of these goods. At the late Iron Age settlement there appears to have been a similar thirst for non-local goods, including items associated with Roman eating habits and with personal appearance. It was suggested there that consumption using imported goods was conspicuous and was one means by which the inhabitants expressed and maintained their status; another way was through the preparation and consumption of ingredients in particular ways.

At the early Roman settlement, the proportion of containers imported to the settlement increased. As with the late Iron Age settlement there appears to have been an emphasis on the use of Roman style vessels in the preparation of foods – mortaria fragments are quite common (and show signs of repair) as are olive oil and fish paste amphorae; once again amphorae and bowls appear to be equally represented. This is in direct contrast to the types of Roman-style vessels identified at Roughground Farm, which emphasized serving. There was, however, an increase in the proportion of serving-type wares at the early Roman period settlement, particularly of vessels associated with drinking: beakers, flagons, tankards, glass bottles and cups, narrow-necked jars, and if the unstratified south Gaulish samian cups were used at the settlement then there is the possibility of a new drinking rite involving individualized drinking. Barley was no longer the most commonly identified grain, which could indicate an alternate source of alcohol, although other types of grains could have been used (Green 1981:139-40). Serving type vessels appear to have been primarily indigenous, and were both non-local and locally produced; the use of indigenous forms may have been quite deliberate, although it is difficult to access the significance of these types of vessels because of the presence of sizeable amounts of un-stratified south Gaulish samian ware. There does appear to have been an association with vessel type and colour: flagons, beakers, and tankards were typically brown or red/orange and bowls and dishes were typically black or grey/black. If colour was a factor in public consumption events then 'red' samian ware may have been used in feasts and for other ceremonial occasions, but it was disposed of in a completely different way (almost casually) to other types of vessels associated with serving.

Animals were treated differently at the early Roman period settlement. Horse bones are less represented than at the late Iron Age settlement and they do not exhibit butchery marks; however, their contextual associations suggest that they were at times a ritualized deposit. Dogs and cats were both butchered (the butchery of cat is quite unusual in the Roman period (Maltby 1978:64)) in the early Roman period. Many of the deposits of these species and particular types of vessels were deposited at the boundary of the settlement, particularly around the entrance to the settlement.

The boundaries at Claydon Pike do not convey the same sense of settlement consolidation and security that was identified at Barton Court Farm. Edmonds has commented (in reference to Neolithic enclosures) that ditched enclosures serve as both boundaries and thresholds (1993:111; see comments by Ardener 1993:13; Hingley 1990b), and this certainly appears to have been the case at Claydon Pike. Entrance to the settlement was directly off a Roman road and the principal residential structure was situated alongside the entrance. Many of the deposits associated with specialized consumption were deposited in the ditches that flank the road and the entrance to the settlement and these may reflect what Edmonds refers to as 'important episodes of consumption' (1993:112; see also Hingley 1990b:100). The majority of the vessels associated with drinking, including glass vessels, were deposited in this part of the settlement – interestingly no glass vessels were identified in the pits associated with the structure. Items of personal adornment were also found in this area, as were most of the deposits of dog, cat, bird, pig and horse bones, and burnt bones. Clearly, the entrance to the settlement was in the public domain; it was an area where the remains of (if not specific acts of) conspicuous consumption and personal display were situated. This suggests that the relationships the inhabitants of the settlement had with the outside community – perhaps including those with official connections – were intimate and were marked through one's personal appearance and through particular acts of food consumption and especially drinking.

Jane Webster has recently argued that in our preoccupation with establishing 'Roman' or 'native' life ways we have ignored the possibility of, what she terms, the 'creolization' of material culture. She explains: "...creole material culture represents not the gradual replacement of one way of life by another, but the blending of both, in a clearly nonegalitarian social context", and that "The result is a highly ambiguous material culture, in the sense that it is imbued with different meanings in different contexts" (2001:10). Roman-style material

culture that highlights particular ways of preparing and flavouring food and serving alcohol was incorporated into the consumption event at Claydon Pike. These acts of consumption also included drinking from beakers, the use of indigenous serving vessels and the ritualized consumption and/or killing of particular animals (sheep, dogs, cats, and horses). The contexts of some of these 'episodes of consumption' appear tied to social identities that were established in the earlier settlement. The emphasis of the consumption events at the early Roman period settlement was, however, very much in the public domain and appears to be linked to the way the inhabitants of the settlement perceived themselves and were perceived by the outside community (Dietler 1996:98). If, as has been suggested, the inhabitants of Claydon Pike had a public, possibly controlling relationship with the local community, they expressed their power and wealth in a way of their own choosing.

One kilometre away at contemporary Thornhill Farm, Roman style vessels were few, but a comparatively large group of personal adornment articles and toiletry items were recovered from the settlement. Here the inhabitants obviously had different concerns with the use of Roman material culture, one that was possibly linked to specific individuals (Hill 1997) rather than with the outside community at large. Jundi and Hill (1998:126) have suggested that concern with personal appearance is characteristic of times of anxiety and stress; the fact that in contrast to Claydon Pike, Thornhill Farm was abandoned in the early second century could be quite significant in this instance.

9.5. Early Roman Period Settlement in the Upper Thames Valley

I do not intend to suggest that the history of the Upper Thames Valley in the early Roman period should be re-written, based on my interpretation of four sites. I do believe, however, that this study has shown that we need to re-think our criteria for defining status at native settlements in the valley, as well as consider settlement structure and boundaries from within an imperial context. Certain characteristics of the four sites in this study have played a part in the formulation of current interpretations of the political and social changes that have been observed in the valley; I would like to add my own observations on the nature of settlement.

As was discussed in Chapter 4 (section 4.3.3.), a number of commentators have noted two significant changes in settlement patterns in the Upper Thames Valley. The first occurred in

the late Iron Age with the abandonment of many settlements and the establishment of new settlements, including two defensive settlements; the second period of settlement change occurred in the early to mid-second century, where many settlements were similarly abandoned or expanded (Lambrick 1992:83-4; Fulford 1992:27-9; Allen *et al.* 1993:196). These changes in settlement are represented in the four sites in this study. Barton Court Farm was established in the late Iron Age, reorganized in the early Roman period, and abandoned early in the second century. Old Shifford Farm was established in the late Iron Age, reorganized using some existing boundaries in the early Roman period and abandoned in the early second century. Roughground Farm differs slightly in that there was settlement in the early Iron Age and a hiatus in habitation until the early Roman period; in the early to mid-second century the settlement was reorganized, expanded and the site was occupied throughout the Roman period. The site of Claydon Pike was occupied throughout the Iron Age although a new settlement was established in a different part of the site in the late Iron Age and was reorganized again in the early Roman period; in the early second century the settlement was greatly expanded and was occupied throughout the Roman period. It would appear that for the sites in this study a third episode of settlement change occurred in the second half of the first century AD, which may or may not be related to the Roman conquest (*contra* Henig and Booth 2000:106). Examples of other settlements that were reorganized or established late in the first century AD include: Watkins Farm, Abingdon Vineyards, and Appleford.

Many of the settlements that were abandoned early in the second century were the ones that were established in the late Iron Age (Allen 2000; Henig and Booth 2000:106-7). This is counter to Fulford's (1992:27) suggestion that settlements established in the late Iron Age were occupied throughout the Roman period and that settlements established earlier in the Iron Age were abandoned in the second century (see discussion in Chapter 4 section 4.3.4.) (although certainly some settlements fit this model, for example Gravelly Guy and Ashville Trading Estate). Both Barton Court Farm and Old Shifford Farm were established in the late Iron Age and abandoned in the early second century. It would also appear that for the settlements in this study there was no single characteristic that determined whether occupation continued throughout the Roman period (see also Henig and Booth 2000:106-74). Fulford also suggested that the settlements established in the late Iron Age are also the sites with more Romanized structural evidence, while sites established earlier often have Romanized material but no structural evidence (Fulford 1992:27-9). Barton Court Farm and

Old Shifford Farm, which were both abandoned in the early second century, were very different settlements structurally and in terms of their use (or non use) of Roman style material culture. It is noteworthy that both settlements were re-established in the third centuries along similar lines as their predecessors: in the third century Old Shifford Farm had only slight evidence of Roman material culture and in the third century at Barton Court Farm a villa was established. Claydon Pike and Roughground Farm, which were also very different settlements structurally and in terms of the use of Roman style material culture, continued to be occupied throughout the Roman period. Interestingly, both settlements appear to have residential areas that have been associated with workers in the second century (Allen *et al.* 1993:191; Miles 1984:199). If continual occupation were related to the degree of Roman-style structures, i.e. based on emulation (Fulford 1992:27), one would have expected Barton Court Farm and not Roughground Farm to have been occupied continuously.

Possible causes of the dislocation of settlement in the early second century are varied. I think most would agree, as Lambrick has suggested, that the changes in settlement pattern are probably linked to socio-political factors rather than increases in the population or internal pressures on the land (1992:84). Fulford (1992) has suggested that people (particularly poorer people) may have been 'drawn off the land' in response to the growth of towns or possibly that there was a movement of people to work on the more 'successful' agricultural estates (1992:32). Others have linked the changes in settlement to the continuing break-up of Iron Age structures in the face of "a much more complex social, economic and administrative infrastructure" (Lambrick 1992:105). There have also been suggestions that the dislocation of settlement was tied to the appearance of imperial estates in the Valley (Miles 1984:208-9).

It is difficult to see where the early Roman period settlements in this study fit in with the various explanations because the settlements were so different. One thing that does not appear to have been a contributing factor is the presence or absence of Roman-style structures. The economies of the settlements that were abandoned were also quite different (pastoralism and mixed farming). Barton Court Farm and Old Shifford Farm may have shared a strong aversion to the Roman presence. Both settlements erected substantial boundaries around the main occupation area and appear to have particular attitudes towards the use of Roman-style material culture. At Claydon Pike and Roughground Farm, the

inhabitants seem to have negotiated (although in different ways) a place for themselves in the Roman world. It is quite possible that what these settlements had in common were varying alliances (local and/or imperial) that resulted in either the dislocation of the cooperation that once existed between the various regional zones or its enhancement.

This is not a new model on which to base an analysis of an apparently widespread phenomenon in the Valley; this is simply an observation on four settlements and perhaps a challenge to examine the social contexts of consumption and its relationship to native settlement in the Upper Thames Valley over time. The shared characteristics of Barton Court Farm and Old Shifford Farm on the one hand, and Roughground Farm and Claydon Pike on the other, may or may not have influenced whether the inhabitants moved or stayed; but in considering the social contexts of eating and drinking practices we place some of the decisions behind the relocation or continuation of settlement in the hands of inhabitants.

9.6. Conclusion

This chapter has served to consolidate and integrate some of the ideas presented in this thesis on the importance of studying the social contexts of consumption. By formulating a methodology to explore the social contexts of food preparation and consumption, I have been able to provide hints of the multiplicity of daily life at the late Iron Age and early Roman period settlements. It has been suggested that food preparation, consumption and drinking were often associated with specific areas of the settlement. Various possibilities have been offered to explain the division of space at the late Iron Age and early Roman period settlements. These include the observance of private and public consumption habits; the presence of groups of differing status residing within the same settlement; the possibility of different roles and responsibilities within the settlement according to the age or gender of the inhabitants; the presence of different types of eating and drinking customs based on events at the settlement that might pertain to rites of passage, the harvest, the maintenance of power relations or major changes within the settlement itself. The importance of boundaries both within and around the settlement was emphasized and incorporated into ideas on the significance of specific consumption practices in the late Iron Age and early Roman periods.

Resonating throughout these discussions are questions on what constituted status in both periods. I have suggested that some settlements may have gained a reputation through their association with particular foods and in the sharing of those foods with the community. The status of a settlement may also have varied among different groups in the community. It is possible that a settlement may have simultaneously been perceived as low status by the wider community which may include the local elites and the Roman military, but have been held in particular esteem by the local community – possibly through the giving of feasts or through acts of resisting Roman material culture. The negotiated consumption of imported goods was one means by which people in the Upper Thames Valley chose to express their identity within the community – but what this thesis has shown is that status and reputation could have been sought through different types of consumption practices and in different social contexts.

Chapter 10

Concluding Remarks

Acting on the knowledge that 'native' settlements in Roman Britain have been characterized *a priori*, this study has provided new and diverse perspectives on the lives of the inhabitants of non-Roman type settlements through the consideration of the social contexts of eating and drinking. The main aim of this thesis has been to explore elements of social change that are not contained within the theories of 'Romanization' or its alternative, 'native continuity'. However, it is difficult when considering material culture from within the context of imperialism, not to be caught up in the Roman/native dichotomy of which I have been critical. In our attempts to explore outside the constructs of 'Roman' and 'native' through considering ambiguity in the use of material culture, we must not remove politics from the equation by denying that some people *did* conceive of a 'Roman' and/or 'native' cultural package and did use that knowledge to communicate certain attitudes and beliefs to the outside world. Perhaps, one of the main problems with the study of social change in Roman Britain has been not so much the concept of Roman and native, but rather, the view that the people of Roman Britain saw their political lot in the same two-dimensional way that it is often described. In this regard, I hope that I have added some depth to the study of social change by considering different ways that 'native' people might have interpreted their 'Roman' world.

Having worked through some of the minutiae of eating and drinking practices, I have seen in practice what I knew to be the case in theory, that the dichotomy of Romanization and native continuity, do not adequately describe the types of changes that did and did not occur at some of the native settlements in the Upper Thames Valley. As detailed as this analysis was, my use of the artefacts and remains of eating and drinking is nonetheless rudimentary, and it is possible to do many more things with the data recovered from the four sites in this study. In this regard, I have barely begun to study the effects of imperialism without the

encumbrances of the theories of Romanization; but as I stated in Chapter 2, we must deconstruct the concept in order to move beyond it. Knowing what I know now, if I were to start anew, I would take a more liberated approach to the analysis of the artefacts and remains of eating and drinking. I would, for instance, consider the many other uses for weed species, besides their edibility, to suggest their place in the ritual process, rather than focusing primarily on the composition of the animal remains. I would consider more fully the decoration and colour of the containers and what this might say about the aesthetic perceptions of the inhabitants and how this might have in turn influenced the types of pots they used. Willis' (1997) approach to the study of decorated and plain samian ware would combine well with a similar type of study of indigenous wares, for example.

One of the tenets of this study has been to consider the four sites in their own right, rather than as simply 'native settlements' and here too I have only just begun to process some of the social dynamics of settlement. For example, I would now go beyond suggesting that status or gender roles were influential factors in the patterning that I have detected and consider more fully the implications of the spatial segregation of acts of preparing and consuming food and drink and possibly of households on the lives of the inhabitants.

This study has, however, served to blur many of the categories that continue to define Romano-British studies. This was done in part through challenging the notion that the use of particular 'Roman' signifiers was a direct measure of the wealth and status of those who incorporated them into their lives. I have instead suggested that people may have consumed their wealth and given it away through feasting and thereby established status within the community for doing so. I have also shown that people might use a number of different signifiers, depending on the occasion, to negotiate their place in the community. We have also seen that there was variability in the use of Roman-style goods that appear to emphasize serving and particular ways of drinking, on the one hand, and the use of indigenous eating and drinking containers but Roman-style methods of preparing and flavouring food, on the other. The social contexts of the eating and drinking customs, particularly in the use of Roman-style containers, appears to have been similarly variable, used only on particular occasions in one instance and integrated into daily consumption practices in another. This study has further shown that we cannot assume to know what was going on inside settlements based on the shape of their houses.

These observations have enabled me to reflect on some of the wider issues of imperialism. The various changes in food and drink consumption that have been identified occurred at settlements that were either reorganized, extended or established in the early Roman period. This study has identified a connection between the structure of settlements and food and drink consumption which reflects directly on the inhabitant's experiences of imperialism. At Barton Court Farm, it was suggested that the consolidation of the activities of one or more households into a single rectangular structure within an enclosed settlement, together with the identification of very different public and private consumption practices, was in direct response to the Roman presence in the Valley. I suggested that the use of 'Roman' signifiers was, in that case, part of a strategy to reinforce the settlement. The sense of 'native' identity at Roughground Farm was particularly strong around the time that the settlement was restructured into a villa-like estate. The isolated deposits of Roman-style drinking vessels, and deposits that appear to emphasize ingredients, suggested that social-politics determined the type of consumption event and that the inhabitants negotiated a place for themselves in their now Roman controlled world. At Old Shifford Farm, a link was made between the re-use of existing boundaries, the maintenance of communal consumption and feasting, and the absence of any Roman-style containers, to suggest a strong association with ancestral traditions and an almost defiant attitude to the Romans. Finally, at Claydon Pike, we saw that the settlement, the house in which the people lived, and the social contexts of eating and drinking, were each in the public sphere through their association with a Roman road. It was also quite apparent that the inhabitants were engaged in a form of conspicuous consumption that was neither 'Roman' nor 'native' but a reflection of their own standing and power in the community that was present in the late Iron Age.

As with most studies of this duration, this work has identified a number of areas that might benefit from further study. These refer specifically to the study of the Upper Thames Valley, the late Iron Age and to the study of households in Roman Britain.

Upper Thames Valley studies

- We might consider how the apparent similarities between certain settlements – for example, Old Shifford Farm and Thornhill Farm, which both raised horses and did not appear to use Roman-style pots – reflect on the attitudes of the inhabitants towards the Romans. This is particularly relevant, keeping in mind that Barton Court

Farm and Claydon Pike appear quite similar structurally but had dramatically different reactions to the Romans.

- It could be interesting to examine the abandonment, expansion or reorganisation of particular settlements in the Valley from within the context of possible alliances with neighbouring settlements in the different regional zones.

Late Iron Age studies

- There is much room to explore the relationship between feasting and social power at the late Iron Age settlements, both in terms of gender and labour relations within settlements and in the creation of obligations and the maintenance of power relations with the outside community.
- We might consider further the notion of households (or particular people) with different consumption practices, statuses or roles existing at the same settlement, as has been suggested for some of the late Iron Age settlements in this study.

Household studies in Roman Britain

- Without the dichotomy of Romanization and native continuity, we are free to go beyond Roman and native and study people. This thesis has concentrated on households within settlements; however, through the study of food and drink consumption we can also consider the negotiation of male and females identities within households (along the lines of Counihan and Kaplan 1998).

On a different level, this thesis has been a methodological exploration of how one would go about studying the effects of imperialism at 'non-Roman' settlements. And on this level, as I mentioned above, I have only just begun to consider the possibilities provided by integrating the artefacts and remains of eating and drinking. What is still very apparent to me, and this is true for any study of Roman Britain, is that we need to continue to deconstruct the categories that we use to define social practices, not only in terms of 'Roman' and 'non-Roman', but even in the way we label and interpret our artefacts. We have seen, for example, that the fabric descriptions 'fine ware' and 'coarse ware' are used to determine wealth and status on the one hand, and have an implied function on the other. Both

interpretations need to be considered from within the context of other types of remains and from within their social context before such assumptions are made.

This brings us full circle, emphasizing why the theories of Romanization can not be used to describe the social changes that occurred at settlements in the Upper Thames Valley (and elsewhere): we need to explore the social contexts of consumption *before* we presume to know the significance of what was consumed.

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