Chickens in the Archaeological Material Culture of Roman Britain, France, and Belgium

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Abstract

Chickens first arrived in northwest Europe in the Iron Age, but it was during the Roman period that they became a prominent part of life. Previous research on the domestication and spread of chickens has focused on the birds themselves, with little discussion of their impact on the beliefs and symbolism of the affected cultures. However, an animal that people interact with so regularly influences more than simply their diet, and begins to creep into their cultural lexicon. What did chickens mean to the people of Roman Britain, France, and Belgium?

The physical remains of these birds are the clearest sign that people were keeping them, and fragments of eggshell suggest they were being used for their secondary products as well as for their meat. By expanding zooarchaeological research beyond the physical remains to encompass the material culture these people left behind, it is possible to explore answers to this question of the social and cultural roles of chickens and their meaning and importance to people in the Roman world.

Other species, most notably horses, have received some attention in this area, but little has been done with chickens. Studies of depictions on various types of artefacts have touched on chickens alongside other species, but they rarely play a central role. Rather than starting with a single type of object and exploring all of the concepts it embraces, this study starts with a concept, namely the social perception of chickens, and draws from objects regardless of typology.

A database of artefacts depicting or relating to chickens was compiled from Late Iron Age and Roman sites in the project area. A total of 508 artefacts, including metal-detected finds, were identified from approximately 270 sites in England, Scotland, and Wales, and 1368 artefacts were identified from approximately 200 sites in France and Belgium. These objects include jewellery, fine pottery, sculpture, and standalone figurines from sites across the region. The majority represented single birds, but some accompanied human figures, often representations of Mercury, and others included additional images with potential symbolic synergy.

This collection of chicken-related artefacts shows that the chicken had a role that extended beyond the next meal, linking them with deities, such as Mercury, and ideals, such as virility and abundance, which people may have tried to connect with by owning such items. Through careful contextual and iconographic analysis of these objects, this thesis places chickens into the cultural landscape of Roman Britain, France, and

Belgium, and allows their role and meaning within peoples' social consciousness to be better understood.

Chickens were depicted throughout the Roman period, appearing across both of these provinces in a variety of styles and materials that suggested that they a wide appeal across social classes. That they appear so often on personal objects and less on monumental, institutionalised artwork suggests that the symbolism they embodied arose from within those cultures in a bottom-up fashion rather than being pushed down from above. They are not as strongly linked with the underworld or the sun as they are often claimed to be, but rather show an association with wealth and prosperity and likely acted as a symbol of luck and good fortune.

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1 Introduction

Zooarchaeology is the study of the relationship between humans and animals in the past. This field is traditionally dominated by the remains of those animals, with the occasional use of historical documents to interpret them. Zooarchaeological research into the expression of this relationship in the material culture of those people, although not unheard of, has been quite limited. By looking not at the living animals represented by the faunal remains and attempting to understand them as occupants of the physical landscape, but rather exploring the form these creatures took in the mental landscape, this nearly untapped line of investigation has great potential for studying human-animal interaction.

The focus of the research embodied in this document is on the place of the chicken, *Gallus domesticus*, in the mental landscape of the people who lived in Britain, France, and Belgium during the Late Iron Age and Roman periods. This research is associated with the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) funded Cultural and Scientific Perception of Human-Chicken Interactions Project (www.scicultchickens.org). The Human-Chicken Interactions Project aims to investigate the spread of the chicken across Europe and the cultural and environmental changes that accompanied it. By focusing on the interactions between humans and chickens rather than on the animals themselves, the project aims to highlight the importance of this relationship in the cultural evolution of both ancient and modern Europe. This species, only domesticated for a maximum of 6,000 years, is now spread across the globe, serving as major source of food and meaning in the cultures that adopted it.

To help identify these interactions and what they reveal about this relationship, this research focused on chicken-related material culture, including depictions, artefacts associated with their remains, and objects used in the care and keeping of the birds. While the latter proved elusive, the former were found in great abundance. "An entirely materially based study is not a realistic perspective upon the past" (Hingley 2005, 73), and therefore this analysis was focused on what these objects say about the people who created, used, and eventually disposed of them instead of the more traditional typological and compositional approach. Hidden within are hints towards the beliefs of these people, whether spiritual, worldly, or both, and their social identity.

1.1 Aims and Objectives

The aim of this investigation is to examine how chickens were depicted in, or otherwise associated with, the material culture of Late Iron Age and Roman Britain, France, and Belgium and explore what this reveals about how the creators of that material interacted with chickens on both a physical and metaphysical level. In contrast to many material culture studies, this research is not restricted to particular types of objects, but includes everything manufactured within the temporal and physical boundaries of the project. Once collected, these objects have been analysed in terms of how they were used, where they were found, and what they depicted.

The primary objectives of this research are:

- Create a database of artefacts associated with or depicting chickens, and their context, where known, including region and period data, populated with material from site reports, museum catalogues, and other verifiable sources from the appropriate regions and periods.

- Analyse the data and assign to categories, where possible, to aid examination for trends in association and meaning.

- Explore changes in chicken-related material culture over time. Did chickens enter the cultural consciousness before or after they appear in the faunal record? What differences were there over time?

- Determine whether there are any variations in chicken associations by artefact type or region. Are there differences between Britain and France/Belgium? Are there differences between northern and southern France?

- Use the above to interpret the social meaning of the chicken in these areas and how it evolved throughout the period.

- Demonstrate the value of this type of cross-disciplinary approach to zooarchaeology, and the need to cross traditional boundaries during both the excavation and post-excavation phases of a project.

1.2 Seeing the people behind the objects

It is beyond the scope of this research to delve too deeply into the identity of those who created and used these objects, but any attempt to explore the meaning they contain must, by necessity, be mindful of who those people were. The concept of Romanisation

continues to influence studies of this period. The history and problems of this approach have been extensively discussed elsewhere (Webster 2001; Mattingly 2011), as has the history of the theory behind material culture studies (Garrow 2012; Eckardt 2014, 7-10). Rather than recap those critiques, this section briefly touches on some of the theoretical frameworks that influenced this study more directly.

"Romanisation" has been described in more modern terms as continuous attempts across the various cultures incorporated into the Roman Empire to create a new identity (Mattingly 2011, 213-214). The research into these attempts is often focused on the elite members of those societies in a one-way process, and the question has been asked, what did the non-elites get out of this exchange (Webster 2001, 216)? The concept of creolisation, based upon studies of the mixed cultures of North America and the Caribbean, is one method that has been put forth to answer this question. Webster (2001, 217-218), in promoting this framework, has noted the tendency to assume Roman objects mean the users identified as Romans and a lack of them indicates they were natives, when in fact the situation is far more complex, with the emergence of a new culture rather than simple replacement or rejection.

This "bottom-up" approach is useful for exploring the lower classes and can help identify meaning beyond merely "Roman" (Webster 2001, 223), offering greater flexibility when looking at identity than traditional methods (Eckardt 2014, 20-21). However, Mattingly (2011, 40-41) has cautioned that the evolution of societies was not a uniform process, and that more than just creolisation is needed to get a full picture of who those people were, going on to state that uncritical use of this approach could lead to a dominance of non-elite-focused studies instead of the more traditional elite-focus (Mattingly 2011, 203-204).

Nevertheless, the Roman northwest was at least as ethnically complex as the Spanish Caribbean, so creolisation studies should be useful in studying this region (Webster 2001, 219). Times of great change, such as the Iron Age to Roman transition, are important in redefining relationships between people and their material culture (Gosden 2005, 193-194), and offer a wealth of opportunities to apply this approach. Creolisation has been used to explore culturally-mixed identities in small, personal objects like brooches and toiletry articles (Carr 2007). Mixed identities in the military have been studied by examining brooches retaining a "native" style, which, rather than showing a rejection of Roman culture, indicate the formation of a new hybridised one (Hunter 2008, 142).

"Artefacts, some of which may be classified as art, are inextricably woven into the fabric of a society, and must be studied in context" (Johns 2003, 9). Unfortunately, that context is not always readily apparent. Roman culture was a geographically variable, ever-changing mix of styles, practices, and beliefs, constantly adapting to new influences from the provinces and the capital in a complex, multi-directional process (Webster 2001, 210; Mattingly 2011, 40). Regionality is an important part of identity, as anyone meeting a proud Texan or Yorkshireman knows, with accompanying variation in meaning (Crummy and Eckardt 2003, 44), but such variation can also occur on local levels due to differing identities within a community (Webster 2001, 218). Modern studies often focus on a single identity, when, as today, people of the past would have had many, whether defined by themselves or others (Mattingly 2010, 288). Differences in material culture could be expressions of these varying social, political, cultural, or ethnic identities, or indeed all of them (Eckardt 2014, 27).

Objects can shape a society's beliefs as well as reflect them, with a person coming to maturity surrounded by the material culture of their predecessors, subtly shaping their view of the world (Gosden 2005, 197; Eckardt 2014, 9). Activities may be guided by objects, whether ceremonial tableware or a dress code (Eckardt 2014, 4). The meanings embodied in these objects and activities may vary by context (Mattingly 2010, 288), such as the toga meaning different things depending on when it was worn (Woolfe 1998, 171). An object may not have simply had a ritual or everyday meaning, but could have existed on a spectrum between them, and it is quite possible that the people who used it may not have seen any difference (Garrow 2012, 105).

Most importantly, when investigating the people behind the objects, it is not simply the style or material of an object that is important, but the meanings they embodied (Hodos 2010, 19). They do not simply relate to a single aspect of their culture, but rather "have multiple and interlocking meanings" (Eckardt 2014, 214). The selection of a chicken for depiction in an artefact will have drawn upon the meanings the species embodied, whether consciously or not.

1.3 Thesis structure

This thesis is divided into nine chapters and two appendices:

- Chapter 1 introduces the research and its aims and objectives.

- Chapter 2 briefly summarises the role of material culture in zooarchaeological

research and, conversely, the study of animals in material culture, including chickens as well as other species. Many of these sources are more fully explored in subsequent chapters.

- Chapter 3 defines the methodology of this study, the extent of the project area, the structure of the data, and analytical techniques.

- Chapters 4 and 6 summarise the British and French/Belgian data, respectively, breaking the material down into the common find types.

- Chapters 5 and 7 interpret the British and French/Belgian data, respectively, and explore the themes that emerge from the previous summaries.

- Chapter 8 expands on the interpretations in Chapters 5 and 7 and places them into a timeline of chickens in material culture, beginning with their earliest appearance in Europe and tracing the evolution of the meaning attached to them through to the end of the Roman period and beyond.

- Chapter 9 summarises the conclusions resulting from the above chapters.

- Appendix A is a digital catalogue of the British artefacts in pdf format.

- Appendix B is a digital catalogue of the French and Belgian artefacts in pdf format.

2 Zooarchaeology and material culture

Several studies have been undertaken on chicken domestication and their spread into Europe, most notably West and Shou (1988), who suggested a southeast Asian origin in the sixth millennium BC and an early arrival in parts of Europe during the late Neolithic and early Bronze Age. These studies not only used faunal remains, but also physical representations of the animals in the form of clay figurines to chart the spread of the animals. However there was no discussion placing them into a cultural context. Several more recent studies of the domestication event(s) have added genetics into the mix (Liu *et al*. 2006; Tixier-Boichard *et al.* 2011; Xiang *et al.* 2014; Eda *et al.* 2016). All of these tend to focus on the date and location of chicken domestication and their subsequent spread rather than their cultural meanings.

In general, traditional zooarchaeology and artefactual studies seldom cross over, and most of the latter tend to focus on one or two particular find types, such as rings or figurines. "More thematically oriented studies which cross-cut the traditional boundaries of find categories and attempt to outline the religious conceptions of a group or a district in context, are sparse" (Derks 1998, 73), and religion is not alone in this regard. "The linkage between material culture and social identity is increasingly recognized as one of the most critical methodological issues to be negotiated" (Mattingly 2010, 287), and any animal that people interact with on a regular basis will form a part of the symbolic lexicon of that social identity.

This chapter will very briefly summarise existing research into the relationship between animals and the people who interacted with them and introduce some of the sources which will be expanded on later. First, it will examine some other species that have been studied through material culture using methods similar to those in this research. Next, it will touch on the place of chickens in historical documents from the ancient world and how they can inform interpretations of material culture. Finally, it will summarise some artefactual studies that chickens have appeared in. Those sources of particular interest in regards to this study will be more fully discussed in later chapters.

2.1 Species-focused research

Studies of other species, most notably horses, have sometimes examined material culture in addition to the faunal and genetic evidence. Moore-Colyer (1994), for instance, used images of tethered horses, bits and the abnormal tooth-wear they cause, and even evidence of "crib-biting", the nervous chewing of fencing or stalls, in a study of early horses in Britain. Other artefacts, such as harness and cart fittings, fed a discussion linking cultural status with horses. Clutton-Brock (1992) also looked at the impact of horses on human culture, noting that the term "horsepower" is still in use today, and discussing how horse-related artefacts such as the horse collar and stirrups changed society.

A study of the depiction of the aurochs in Egyptian art (Beierkuhnlein 2015) concentrated primarily on reconstructing the ecology and behaviour of the species. With such a focus, this research was interested in images of the animal in its environment, examining which other species of animals and plants were portrayed alongside them. However, it also considered both the presence of human figures and the context of these depictions to explore the importance of the species in ancient Egypt.

An analysis of artefacts from pre-Columbian sites in Panama (Cooke and Jimenez 2010) found that depictions of animals appeared on both high and low status goods, but more importantly, the authors made the point that the bones of symbolically significant animals, in this case crocodiles, may not be a common component of the zooarchaeological assemblage, and their importance may only be visible in such depictions.

Such studies can provide a template for how to proceed with other species, but there has been less work on the cultural impact of chickens. Those few will be further discussed below.

2.2 Chickens in documentary research

Other avenues of research have touched on the role of chickens within a culture as part of a wider agenda, and some of these have focused on the documentary evidence. They are mentioned, along with other bird species, in ancient documents, many of which have

been catalogued by Arnott (2007). While many discuss the bird in earthly terms, some provide connections to various myths and deities. Gantz (1993) has compiled a list of these myths and traced their evolution during the early Greek period. With regards to the Roman period, the academic focus seems to shift towards religion in more general terms and its place in society. Discussion of the evolution of myths, deities, and mythological figures is more limited, with various authors generally saying little more than that the Romans adopted the myths and deities of the Greeks, and that provincials adapted their beliefs to fit Roman ideals (Ferguson 1970, 71, 213-214; Cornell 1995, 162; Ando 2008, 43-45), necessitating a closer look at the primary sources. Intriguingly, chickens are rarely documented in the earlier Greek myths, with no gods having a clearly stated affinity for them. However, Greek art is somewhat different, and helped standardise conceptions of the gods who, in an oral tradition, could vary considerably in appearance, if, indeed, they were given one (Boardman 1974, 215; Smith 1991, 63-64; Woolf 2001, 126). This early art may also have shaped future associations, as discussed below.

Closely tied to myth is folklore. The alectorius, or cock's stone, is an ancient example, and its history as a good luck charm retrieved from a cockerel's gizzard was explored by Duffin (2007). Other aspects of chicken-related folklore were recorded in ancient documents, such as Pliny's *Natural History* and the naturalist Aldovandi's Renaissance study of the species (Lind 1963).

2.3 Chickens in artefact-focused research

Studies linking chickens and archaeological artefacts tend to be more focused on the type of artefact being investigated, with chickens being only one of many symbols being addressed, if they are mentioned at all. A few researchers have focused on the bird itself, however, but not to the same extent as this study.

A history of chickens by the 16th century Italian naturalist Ulisse Aldrovandi contains a small section regarding depictions of chickens on various Greek and Roman artefacts, but focuses most specifically on coins. Here he questioned whether the cockerels they displayed represented the bird itself or the gods associated with them (Lind 1963, 345).

Writing somewhat later, Howard Carter (1923) very briefly discussed the history of chickens, as known through documentary and artefactual evidence, while describing an early Egyptian depiction (see 8.1). Even later, Bruneau (1965a) examined images of chickens facing each other, interpreting them as depictions of cockfighting, despite few of these birds being shown in an aggressive stance, and therefore symbolic of combat and victory. Baird (1981) focused on another side of the cockerel's personality to explain symbolism of eroticism and fertility.

Sykes (2009) explored chickens in relation to the changes to the physical and psychological landscape during the Iron Age/Romano-British transition in Britain, specifically mentioning her own experience with keeping hens. She noted that there was an increase in chicken remains on sites after the transition. This theme was continued in a subsequent article (Sykes 2012), which summarised anthropological research on the cultural importance of chickens, specifically in regards to cockfighting, and which again related the author's own experiences with a short-lived cockerel and the psychological impact it had on her household. She also presented faunal and artefactual archaeological evidence of cockfighting in Britain and further examined potential cultural changes during the Iron Age/Romano-British transition that might have been linked to this activity. Csapo (2006) similarly explored the role of cockfighting in ancient Greece, making good use of the iconography on some of the artefacts described below.

Less focused on a particular species, studies of Classical art have examined the portrayal of animals, following the evolution of artistic depictions from Greek to Roman and its spread into the rest of Europe (see 8.1). Some studies have focused mainly on Gallo-Roman (Pobé 1961) and Romano-British art (Henig 1995), and at least one has looked specifically at animals in art (Toynbee 1973). Chickens appear in Greek art from around the seventh century BC, the evolution of which has been the subject of studies such as Carpenter's (1991), which focused specifically on mythological depictions.

Being an early artistic medium with a good rate of survival, Greek pottery has received much attention, tracing the depictions of animals through Geometric, red-, and black-figure ware (Boardman 1974; 1975; 1989; Coldstream 1977). Chickens appear in early

Geometric examples from about the seventh century BC as standalone elements, either unassociated with other figures or as part of animal friezes (Coldstream 1977, 172, 313; Shanks 1999, 136). During the sixth century BC, there was a fashion for depicting young men with cockerels, often receiving them as "love gifts" from older men. This particular theme has received more attention by Shapiro (1981), who explored homosexual relationships between the upper class during the reign of the tyrant Peisistratos, later evolving into a version of Zeus's seduction of Ganymede. Cockerels also appear on Panathenaic amphorae, prizes awarded to the winners of the games of the same name, perching atop columns on either side of Athena, the games' patron deity, possibly as symbols of competition (Boardman 1974, 167).

These amphorae formed the starting point of a study by Callisen (1939), tracing the appearance of cockerels on columns through to early Christian depictions of St. Peter that included the same image. Although acknowledging the significant gap between these two art forms, he suggested a link between them in the form of Mercury, who was often accompanied by a cockerel during the Roman period, with the possibility that as beliefs changed, artists simply started replacing the old god with a figure more appropriate to the new religion (Callisen 1939, 170). This phenomenon will be more fully explored in Chapter 8.

Beaune (1986) further explored the development of the symbol of the chicken in France, specifically attempting to trace the origin of the "Gallic rooster" as an icon of France itself (see 8.5.3). She found it had a double meaning in the medieval period, taking on a positive role in religious symbolism, serving as a righteous sentry of the faithful, and a more negative one as foolishly combative in everyday parlance. It was this negative image that others applied to the French as an insult, but on the rediscovery of the bird's sacred nature in Roman Gaul from the 15th century, this association was given a positive spin by the renewed interest in France's ancient past, and the insult was turned into a symbol of virtue.

Within the project area of Britain, France, and Belgium, studies of various types of iconographic artefacts have included examples of chickens. They appear in catalogues and classifications of brooches (Hattatt 1982, 162-164; 1985, 175; Feugère 1985, 383), hairpins (Cool 1990, 168), figurines (Jeanlin-Rouvier 1972; Green 1976; 1978; Faider-

Feytmans 1979; Talvas 2007; Durham 2012), rings (Henig 1974a; Guiraud 1988; Spier 2010), samian ware (Oswald 1936, 76, 147-148), sculpture (Espérandieu 1907; 1908; 1910; 1911; 1913; 1915; 1928; 1938; Phillips 1977; Cunliffe and Fulford 1982; Tufi 1983; Keppie and Arnold 1984; Brewer 1986, Coulston and Phillips 1988; Henig 1993a), and are mentioned in the Vindolanda writing tablets (Bowman and Thomas 1996). They also appear in catalogues of mosaics (Stern 1957, 82; 1967, 89-91; 1975, 127-130; Neal and Cosh 2009, 266; 2010), and a mosaic featuring a chicken-headed figure from the Isle of Wight has received extensive attention (Ling 1991; Witts 1994; Henig 2013). Some Iron Age coins feature chickens (Mack 1964; Delestrée and Tache 2002; Cottam *et al* 2010), with the manufacture and distribution of the Chichester "cock bronze" being looked at in more detail by Cottam (1999) and a similar group of coins from Belgic Gaul being studied by Delestrée (1980). These studies rarely delve deeply into the meaning of the images they contain, usually offering only a brief interpretation, if any, but are a useful starting point for tracking down such artefacts.

Some of these artefacts are suspected of being votive offerings, especially articles of personal adornment like jewellery and hairpins (Coldstream 1977, 333; Smith 1999, 51). Crummy (2007) explored the possibility that brooches shaped like shoes, chickens, and flies were offerings related to the worship of Mercury in Britain (see 8.4).

While these are examples of studies relating material culture to chickens in a secondary fashion, few have deeply explored the meaning behind them. However, there are studies of Roman artefacts that have considered social and symbolic implications regarding their manufacture and use. For example, a study of lamps in Roman Britain by Eckardt (2002), rather than simply cataloguing and categorizing them, had as its primary focus the social meaning behind the lamps and noted "clearly, there is a need for more cognitive material culture studies which move beyond mere identification to unravel an object's functional and symbolic connotations as well as the cultural context of its use" (Eckardt 2002, 15). Conceptually, that study was similar to this one, but as with most artefactual research, Eckardt approached the material from a typological point of view. Rather than starting with a single type of object and exploring all of the concepts it embraces, this study will start with a concept, namely the social conception of chickens, and will draw upon evidence from a wide variety of objects regardless of their material or typology.

3 Methodology

The goal of this study is to gather a compendium of artefacts relating to chickens and to analyse them in an attempt to extract what the people who created those artefacts thought about chickens (see 1.1). This required the creation of a database of such objects from a wide range of sites across the project area and periods. The Roman period was selected due to the relative abundance of a wide range of artefacts with clear depictions, the presence of documents that provide a glimpse into the cultural landscape of the world at the time, and, although chickens were present in small numbers before, this period is essentially the impact phase of the introduction of the species (Grant 2004, 377). Britain was selected due to the ease of access and overlap with zooarchaeological studies taking place in other branches of the larger Cultural and Scientific Perceptions of Human-Chicken Interactions Project. Belgium and France were chosen because Gaul was the nearest province of the Roman Empire to Britannia and, even before Julius Caesar's conquest, acted as a buffer between Britain and the Mediterranean. Additionally, it was exposed to Mediterranean culture over a longer period, and the variations between its different regions may prove informative.

3.1 Data collection

Artefacts were selected based on their association with chickens; these were mostly iconographic representations, but others were also chosen because of their close association with physical remains of chickens. Artefacts with a practical use in keeping or fighting chickens, such as artificial cockspurs, were also to be included where such interpretation was possible, but, as will be discussed later, such artefacts proved elusive. Whether a depiction represents a chicken was based either on the assumptions in the source material or determined by the researcher, and this was recorded along with a degree of confidence in the identification (see 3.1.2).

Data on the artefacts was recorded in a Microsoft Access database, with accompanying images stored outside the database and linked by the artefact ID (a summary of this data is included digitally as Appendix A and B). Deliberately, a broader approach was taken than is standard with archaeological artefact studies, focusing more on key universal

features, such as the context of the find, material, and what was depicted, rather than specific physical details such as the precise dimensions of the object, chemical makeup, or minor typological variations. Rather than recording a wide range of physical and typological information covering many different find types, which would require a great number of fields, constantly expanding on the discovery of a new find type, only a few broader fields were used compared to more specialist databases. This approach allows easy comparison of objects within the same framework, without the need to first convert them into a more compatible form, and most of the existing, commonly used categories and classifications specific to individual find-types would be of little use in this study.

The information recorded includes the type of object, its association with chickens, and any dating or contextual information. Each artefact record contains some basic information, such as the type of find (e.g. pottery, brooch, figurine), its basic typology, the primary material used to make it (copper alloy, stone, etc.), summary descriptive text from the source, and information on the source. Dating information includes earliest and latest archaeological periods, a year range, where such dating is possible, whether this dating came from the source or from the researcher's own estimates, the dating method, and an estimate of dating strength. The type of association with chickens, whether by depiction, context, or function, and the strength of the association, as well as the sex of the depicted bird and whether multiple animals were depicted are also recorded. Contextual data includes a summary of the context, how strong that contextual information was, whether chicken remains were found at the site, the sex of any associated human remains, and geographical information on where the artefact was discovered, including latitude and longitude.

The dating of the objects was taken from the source material, and, except in unusual circumstances, these dates were not changed by the researcher. Such revisions could possibly be made by an expert in the relevant type of artefact. It was not always clear whether the date reflected the creation of the object or its deposition, but for most the deposition date seems most likely and an earlier date cannot be discounted. The source of the date, where stated in the source material, was also recorded. In the charts that follow, those objects dated by stratigraphy or associated objects are coloured blue, and those dated on stylistic grounds are coloured red.

The type of site was included, with the caveat that these categories are oversimplified and do not always take into account changes to a site's use over time (Eckardt 2002, 29-30). The site types used were urban, military, rural, villa, religious, and small town. An other category was included for those sites of unknown use, usually because of a lack of detail of the object's recovery or due to being found by metal detectorists. Small town was used as a general term for any sizeable settlement that was not truly urban, but too large to have been part of the same individual complex.

3.1.1 Categorisation

Table 3.1 - list of categories assigned to artefacts in the database. At least one of the categories in italics was required for each artefact in order to explain its connection with chickens.

Category	Description
association	*found with chicken remains*
derived	*made out of chicken bones or feathers*
document	*written information*
iconographic	*includes an image of a chicken and/or is in the shape of a chicken*
adornment	clothing, jewellery
animal	depicted with other animals
anthropomorphic	depicted with people or deities
chicks	includes young chickens
consumption	relating to consumption of food
display	static depiction, ex. statue
egg	associated with/depicting eggs

Category	Description
fighting	associated with fighting of birds
funerary	in/related to burial
hybrid	mix of chicken and other characteristics
phallic	depiction includes a phallus
plant	depicted with plants
religion	depicting/dedicated to gods
votive	deposited objects

After recording, each artefact was tagged with one or more categories listing general aspects of the artefact's use, depiction, and context (**Table 3.1**). These categories were designed as a simple way of flagging up each individual finds with information that might be useful later in analysis with a minimum of changes to the database structure. Because of the wide variety of find types included in this study and the uncertainty over what types of information they might contain, a quick and easy system requiring a minimum of adaptation when a new category was deemed necessary was required.

These categories are broad and unspecific to individual artefacts, and include things such as whether it is an iconographic representation, a hybrid of chicken and some other creature, part of some personal adornment, whether it was accompanied by other animals, plants, or humans, and whether it came from a funerary context. They are primarily an easy way to mark objects for categorisation and associations during recording and allow easy analysis of groups of artefacts. Each category can be easily queried to provide a summary of the artefacts that meet its criteria.

Four core categories describe how the artefact was selected for inclusion in the dataset, and therefore every record will include at least one of the following: association, derived, document, and iconographic.

Individual objects could also be assigned to one or more groups, linking them together

based on other, more specific or abstract qualities, such as the deity depicted or similarities of decoration across different find types. This was a less formal system than the categories above, and was more akin to author's notes. These category and group associations were created to make it easier to work with groups of finds during analysis and to more easily spot variation in seemingly similar groupings or similarity in seemingly different ones.

3.1.2 Data scores

In order to easily compare the relative strengths and weaknesses of the artefacts' data, each was assigned a score for: a) the strength of its association with chickens; b) its context; c) its dating; and d) an overall score. Given the high degree of variability in the data, coming from sources written over two centuries, and the interpretation of often unclear images of chickens, these scores are largely subjective and based on the researcher's impression of the source material, but were applied systematically across the dataset.

The individual ratings were developed to deal with their own areas, but each can be reduced to a weak, neutral, or strong score as indicated below. These three degrees can then be more easily compared against each other to create a general idea of an object's strengths and weaknesses. The scores may represent the source material as much as the object itself.

a) Association is how closely linked the object is to chickens, whether by depiction or being found with their remains. Approximately 51% of the artefacts, dropping to about 11.5% when coins are excluded, lacked images of any sort, but this generally only affected the score when the accompanying description expressed doubt in the identification of the species or was otherwise ambiguous. As the objects in this study were selected because of their association with chickens, this score is often quite high.

- Strong, indicating that the object was definitely found in close association with chicken remains or clearly depicts one.

- Neutral, indicating that the object was found in close association with chicken

remains or that a depicted bird is likely to be a chicken, but lacks enough strong features to be definite.

- Weak, usually indicating that a bird is depicted, but lacks enough diagnostic features to determine the species, but sometimes that the depiction is either too fragmentary or otherwise unclear to be certain of species, or even if it is avian. In these cases, the object was often included because the source material suggested it was a chicken.

b) Context is a measure of confidence in where the object was discovered. It should be noted that this score in particular strongly reflects the source material. The artefact might be from a more secure context than was reported, but if that was not stated it will have a lower score. Likewise, if the source material was a catalogue of material in a museum, it might contain little to no information on the artefact's background. As so many objects in this study were not recovered from modern, controlled excavations, this score tends to be quite low.

- Strong, indicating that the object came from a sealed context with little chance of disturbance, usually a grave.

- Neutral, indicating that the object came from a known context during a controlled excavation.

- Weak, indicating that the object came from a known site, but with a lack of detail. For example, a brooch may have come from a ditch somewhere on site, but the exact details are unknown. This also covers unstratified artefacts, as well as those completely lacking in context altogether, which may be due to being in a museum collection, found by a metal detectorist, or otherwise lacking details of its recovery.

c) Dating is a rough measurement of how reliably dated the object is, whether by stratigraphic/associative dating or style. All objects were assigned a dating score, even when lacking a date range. In some cases, these objects may be capable of being more closely dated by modern specialists.

- Strong, indicating that the object came from a securely dated, sealed context or

is itself strongly dateable. These are often coins or pottery.

- Neutral, indicating the object came from a context with other dateable material or is dateable itself, but with less certainty than the above.

- Weak, indicating that the object was undated or dated based solely on stylistic grounds.

d) Each object was also given an overall score, a general assessment of the above scores. The other scores were not equally weighted, with context in particular being more important in cases where an overall score was unclear, but most overall scores were generated by the following method.

- Strong, indicating that at least two strong scores in other categories.

- Neutral, indicating either all neutral scores, or a neutral score balanced by a strong and weak one in other categories.

- Weak, indicating at least two weak scores in other categories.

The scoring for different types of artefacts led to some interesting variations; for example, coins are generally quite well dated, but the lack of context for most of them gave them a much lower overall scores than might otherwise be expected.

3.2 Data sources

For Britain, a preliminary survey of the Portable Antiquity Scheme's (PAS) online database (2016) provided both an initial dataset and informed the data collection methodology outlined above. Searches were run based on chicken-related terms, such as "cockerel" and "poultry", and on deities with known or suspected associations with chickens, such as Mercury, Cupid, and Abraxas. Results from the late Iron Age and Roman period, roughly from the first century BC to the fifth century AD, were examined and recorded. This initial survey provided examples of the types of artefacts likely to have an association with chickens and a set of references to explore for other examples.

During the first year of the study, the survey focused on material from England,

Scotland, and Wales. The dataset of archaeological material was taken from published site reports, catalogues of museum and private collections, and journals, including full runs of *Britannia*, the *Journal of Roman Studies*, and assorted local journals. These sources were methodically scanned for chicken-related material culture, taking advantage of online search tools where available. References to related artefacts or sites were followed up, accessing the resources of other institutions as necessary through interlibrary loans and onsite visits to the University of Leicester, University College London, and Oxford University's Sackler Library (**Figure 3.1**). A deep scan of the grey literature was deemed unnecessary after a rapid survey of reports deposited with the Archaeology Data Service (ADS) via the OASIS (Online AccesS to the Index of archaeological investigationS) service returned few results.

Figure 3.1 - Oxford University's Sackler Library. Data collection included all shelves on the left up to the footstool. Similar exercises took place at the libraries of Bournemouth University, University College London, and the University of Leicester. Even in the digital age, trawling the physical material is the only way to ensure as complete a dataset as possible.

The second year of research shifted the focus of data collection across the English

Channel to France and Belgium. Some examples of artefacts from this region, as well as other parts of Europe and the Mediterranean, were already known from their presence in British collections, and references associated with these provided a starting point. Online resources such as the Artefacts© Online Encyclopedia of Archaeological Small Finds (2016) offered a further list of potential sources.

The survey of French and Belgian material started with online material, including the journals *Comptes Rendus des Séances de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres*, *Gallia, L'Antiquité Classique, Les Cahiers Lorrains*, *Revue Archéologique de Narbonnaise*, *Revue Archéologique de Picardie*, *Revue Archéologique du Centre de la France*, and the *Revue Numismatique*. Research proceeded to those resources present in British institutions, beginning with Bournemouth University and later extending to University College London, the University of Leicester, and Oxford University and the Bodleian Library, with additional resources obtained via interlibrary loans as necessary. When these sources were exhausted, it was determined that the sample size of 1368 objects from this region was sufficient.

3.3 Analysis

Analysis of the data started with a focus on individual finds grouped by type, focusing on similarities or variations in typology and categories across the region and period, before expanding to look for broader trends across the dataset for each project region, either Britain or France/Belgium.

3.3.1 Artefact focused analysis

The initial phase of analysis (chapters 4 and 6) stayed close to the structure of the source material, focusing first on the traditional find types, counting the number of artefacts belonging to each find type and then quantifying the various fields associated with them. Each find was recorded with the find type label used in the original source, unless a more appropriate term was already in use, and during analysis some find types were grouped together. For example, rings and intaglios essentially refer to the same type of artefact, with the latter simply being a component of the former, and are therefore considered together. The terms "mount" and "fitting" are somewhat vague,

and both often apply to objects that are visually, and possibly functionally, similar to figurines, and therefore are included in that find type's analysis. Further examples will be discussed when they appear in the analysis.

First, the data was examined by find type, with the caveats expressed above, summarising them by location type, category, relative strengths and weaknesses, and, where possible, date ranges were plotted on a floating bar chart. Following this, the objects were further broken down into any appropriate typologies or sub-groups for more detailed description of broad trends or noteworthy individual artefacts.

Most of the charts and graphs used, usually bar and pie charts, should be self-explanatory, but the strength summary is somewhat more complex. In an attempt to quickly show a find type's relative strengths and weaknesses, the association, context, dating, and overall scores were broken down into three degrees (red = weak, amber = neutral, green = strong), and plotted on a stacked area chart (**Figure 3.2**). Each score type and the percentage of the total count in each degree are plotted against the total (100% of the count). In this example, approximately 70% of the find type in question possessed a strong *association* score, but 80% or more had weak *context*, *dating*, and *overall* scores.
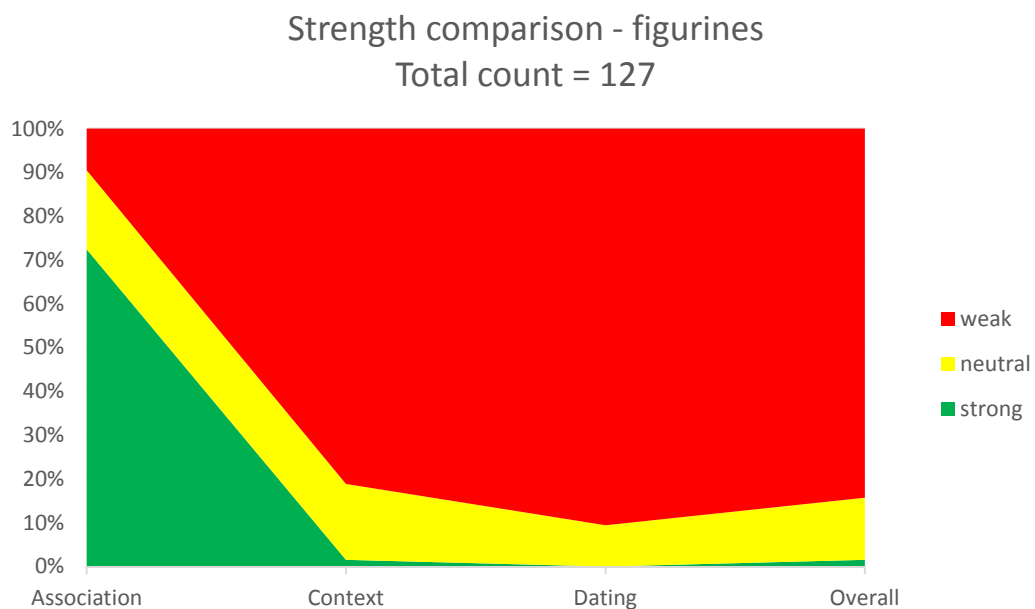
Figure 3.2 - example of a relative strength comparison chart.

45

Each find was plotted in a Geographic Information System (GIS), in this case QGIS, by both find type and category, and the maps this produced were used to illustrate the distribution of these artefacts in each appropriate section. Also included were sites that were investigated but returned negative results.

3.3.2 Thematic analysis

The second phase of analysis (chapters 5 and 7) builds on the previous one, particularly the category summary, and breaks the data down into thematic groups more appropriate to this study, largely ignoring find type and examining it at a higher level. This involved an examination of the function of the objects, breaking them down into broad categories of display, personal adornment, ceremonial use, and "other". This was followed by taking a closer look at the how the context of the artefacts can convey meaning, exploring their distribution across the various types of site and, where enough detail was present, votive and funerary deposits. Finally, the depictions on iconographic representations were broken down into what they depicted and how, as well as the figures and objects associated with the chickens in this imagery.

3.3.3 Synthesis

All of this analysis was pulled together into a single, broadly chronological timeline of chickens in material culture for the project area (chapter 8), which explores in greater detail the evolution and meanings behind the artefacts. This includes a brief summary of chickens in earlier material, showing how some of the themes of the Roman period grew out of the ideas of foreign cultures, before tracing the chicken through the Late Iron Age and four centuries of Roman administrative rule.

3.3.4 Data archive

The data collected during this research will be stored as an online database with the rest of the Perceptions of Human-Chicken Interactions Project material. It has been summarised in a more easily digestible form in Appendices A and B, attached as a digital catalogue to this document.

4 British data

The following is a summary of the material from England, Scotland, and Wales, broken down by find type. A total of 508 artefacts relating to chickens have been recorded from this region, spread across roughly 20 different types of finds (**Table 4.1**).

Table 4.1 - number of artefacts by find type, Britain.

Find type	Number of artefacts	Find type	Number of artefacts
coin	136	lid	4
figurine	126	leg ring	2
brooch	73	plaque	2
pottery	59	brick	1
ring	43	egg cup	1
sculpture	20	amulet	1
pin	12	manicure set	1
lamp	12	oven	1
tablet	8	patera	1
mosaic	4	sandal	1
		Total	508

The find type used described in the source was used during recording, except when a synonymous one already allowed for a more uniform recordset. Some find types were grouped together as described in section 3.3. Dates were recorded for artefacts as presented in the source material, occasionally giving variation in otherwise identical

finds. Artefacts listed under each find type were analysed together, with scores and typologies adjusted as necessary for consistency.
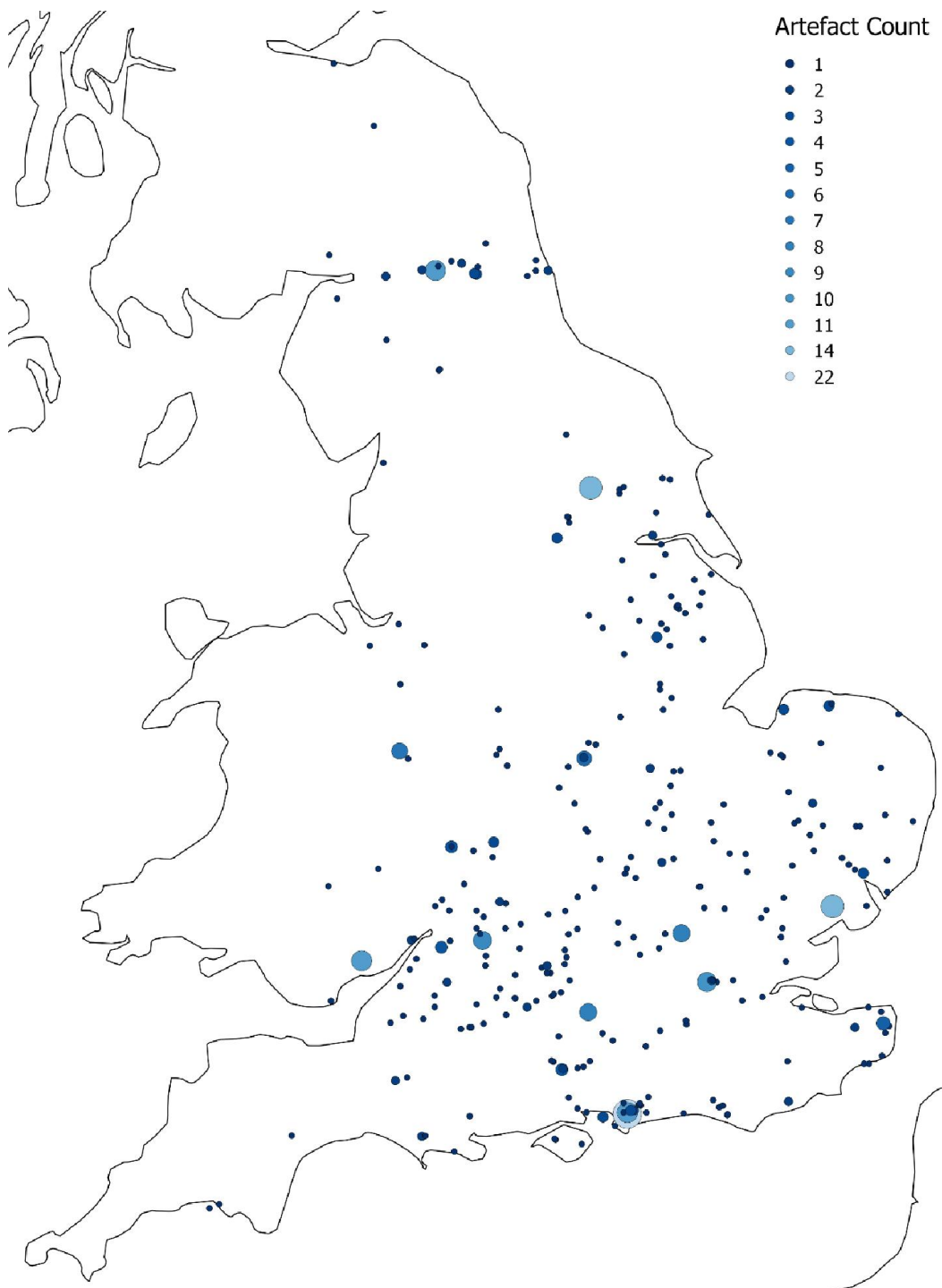
Figure 4.1 - distribution of artefacts with density weights.

Artefacts were found across Roman Britain, with no particular concentrations apart from urban centres and along Hadrian's Wall (**Figure 4.1**). In contrast to the French and

Belgian data (see chapter 6), none of these concentrations appear related to either manufacturing sites or significant votive deposits, although the site of Uley, Gloucestershire, has a significant concentration of religious sculpture.

Across all find types, some categories were more common than others (**Figure 4.2**), usually those that are broader in scope and cover multiple find types. The *iconographic* category in particular shows the importance of visual representation in identifying relevant finds. Many of the other categories, such as *association*, *funerary*, and *votive,* are highly dependent on context and are therefore likely to be underrepresented. These are more fully discussed below (see section 5.22 and 5.23).
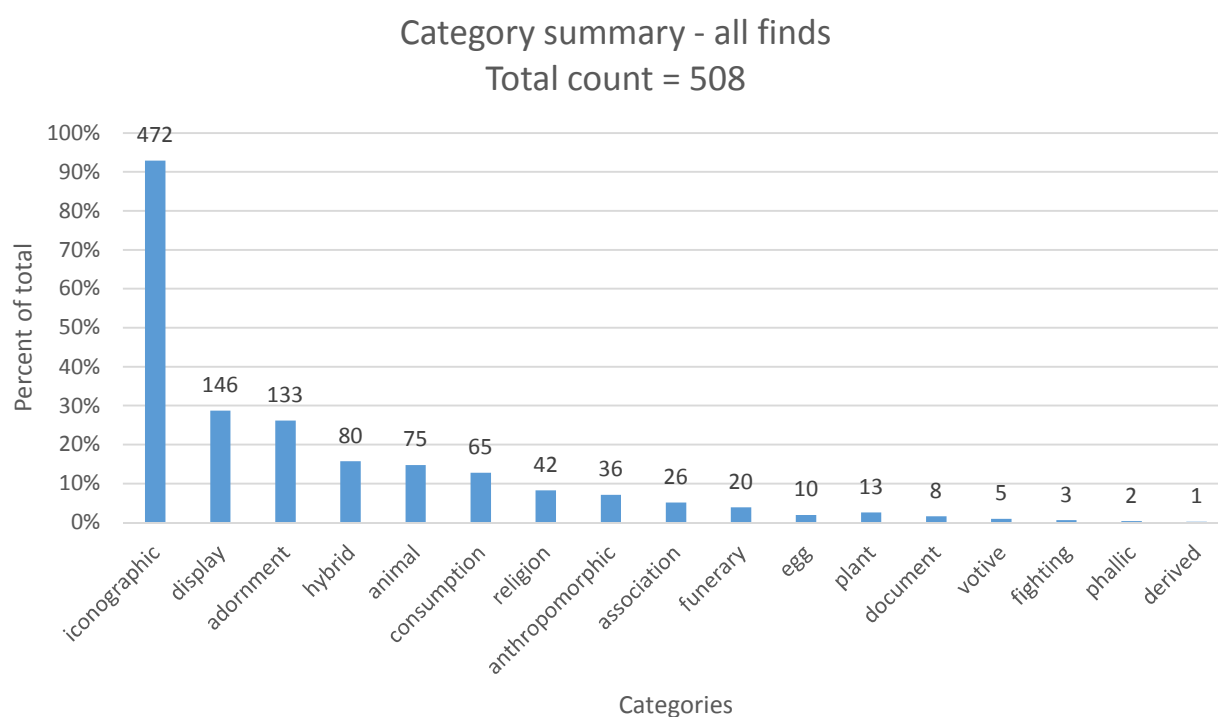
Figure 4.2 - percentage of total finds tagged with each category.

A comparison of the association, context, dating, and overall strengths assigned to each artefact reflects the importance of associating a depiction with an animal (**Figure 4.3**). Simply by identifying an object as a probable chicken, demonstrated here by over 50% of artefects having a "strong" rating in *association*, gives it a strength that is often lacking in other areas. *Context* and *dating* strength are often poor due to how the artefact was recovered and recorded, which carries over to the *overall* score and

counteracts the high association strength.

Strength comparison - all finds
Total count = 508
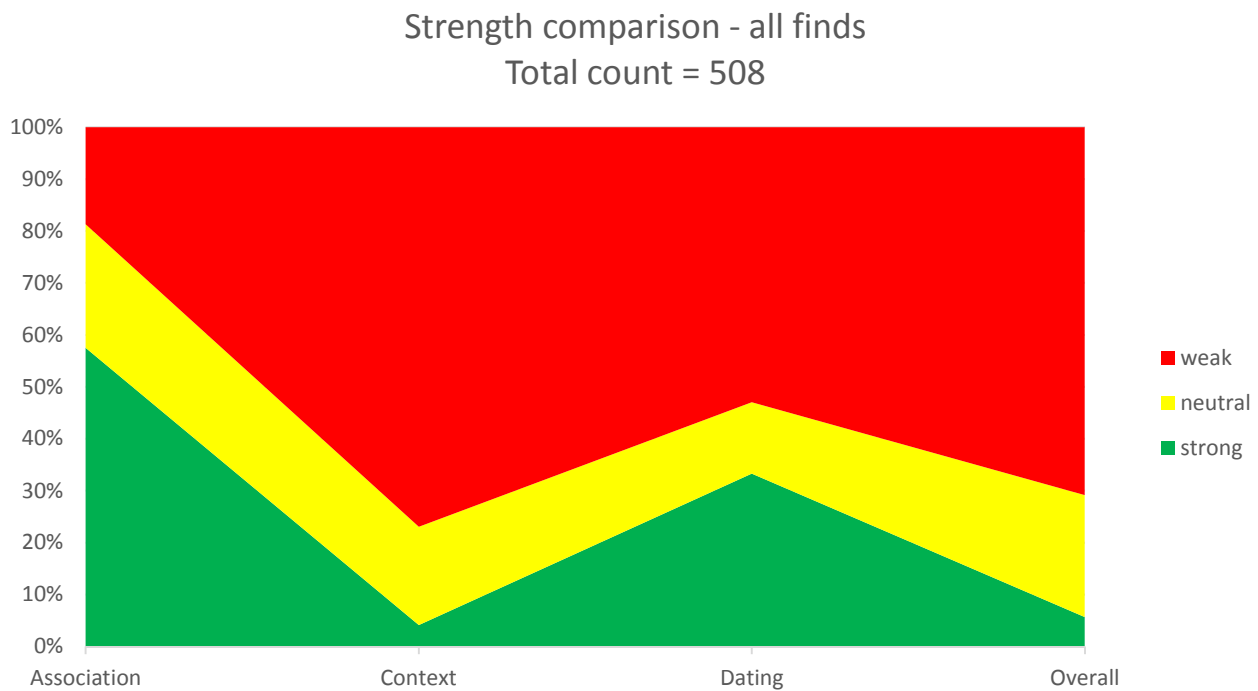
Figure 4.3 - comparison of strength rating proportions for all finds.

The overall dataset has an unsurprising bias towards urban and military sites (**Figure 4.4**). Given the problems of using an overall location type on sites that were in use over a long period (Eckardt 2002, 29-30), where possible the use at the time of deposition was used. Artefacts that were discovered by metal detectorists or came from museum collections rarely had enough information to clearly define the type of site they came from. Most of these were left undefined rather than risking overpopulating any of the site types likely to be in such rural areas (rural settlements, religious sanctuaries, villas, or small towns). This reflects the poor context data of most of the dataset, with approximately half of the objects being unprovenanced.

Location type - all finds
Total count = 508
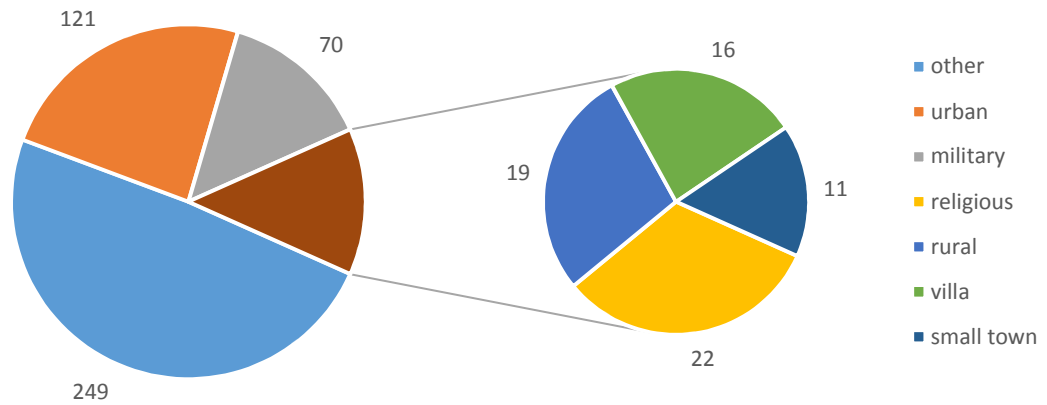
Figure 4.4 - finds by location type. "Other" includes isolated metal-detected finds and those with an otherwise unknown find site.

The poor contextual information accounts for the weak dating score for many of the artefacts. Some find types have better intrinsic dating, which is reflected in a comparison of the date ranges represented (**Figure 4.5**). The better-dated finds tend to show sharper spikes where they have more refined dating typologies, with more poorly dated finds spreading over a wider range.

There was an initial spike in chicken-related material culture in the first century BC, represented exclusively by images on coins. From the beginning of the Roman period, a much wider range of finds appeared, with the highest levels coming from the late first to early third centuries AD. The gap between these two periods may be at least partially artificial, with otherwise poorly dated Roman finds given dates appropriate to the official period of occupation. Likewise, it is unclear how much of the early Roman popularity is due to an abundance of well-dated finds from that period.

The individual find types are discussed below in order of abundance.
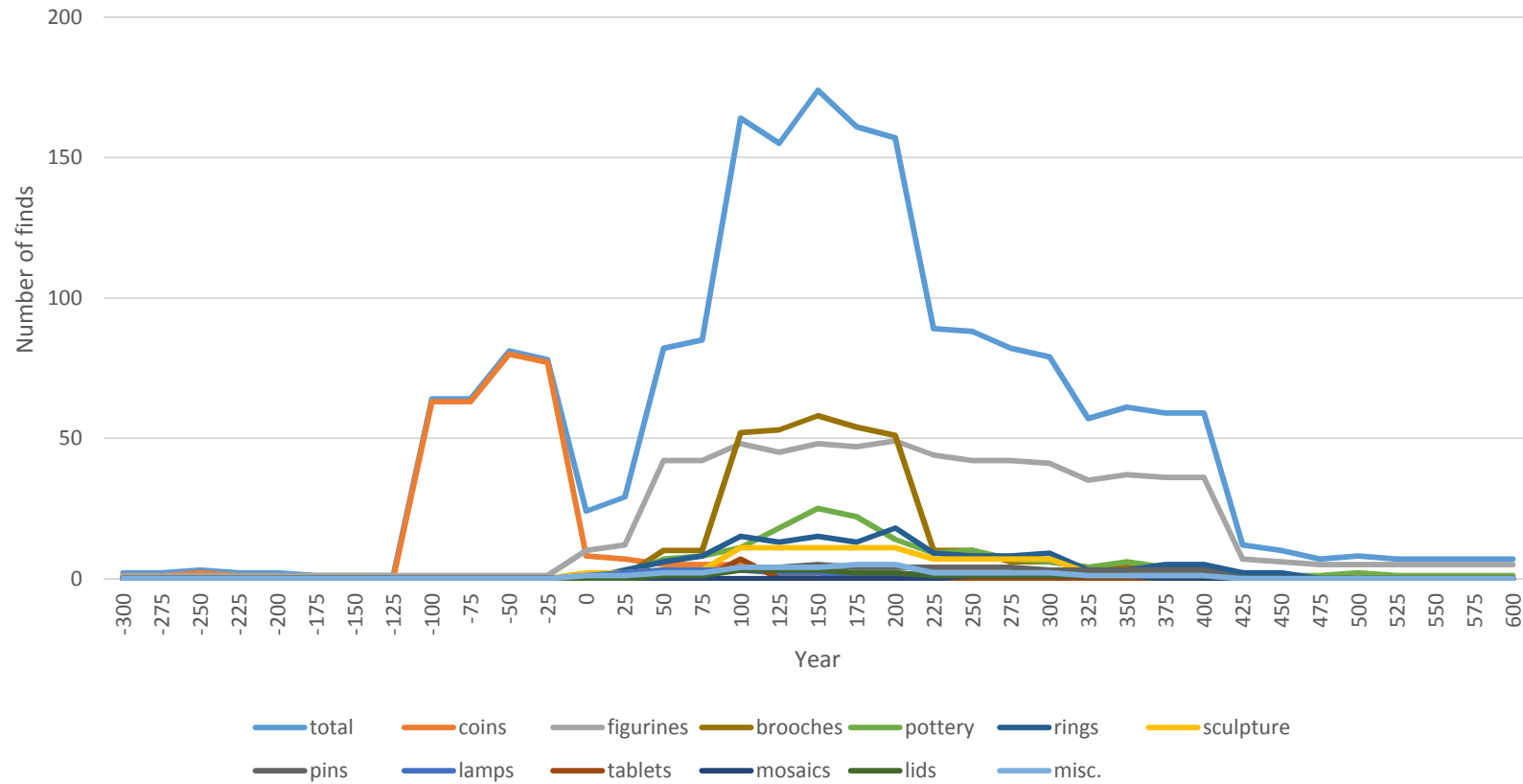
Figure 4.5 - summary comparison of date ranges for dateable finds.

4.1 Coins
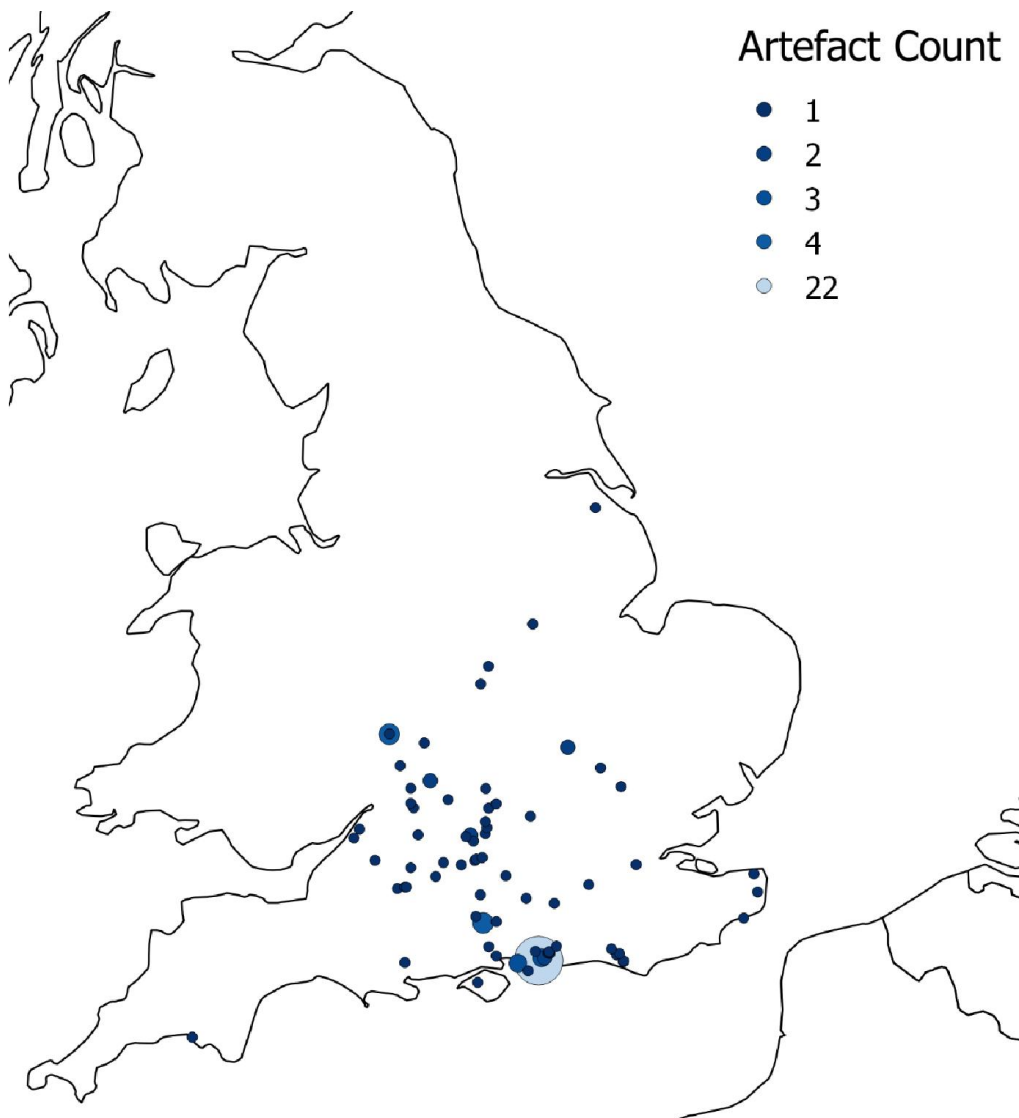
Figure 4.6 - distribution of coins in Britain. Larger, lighter circles indicate a higher concentration of artefacts.

Coins were the single most abundant type of artefact in the British dataset. Almost all date to the Late Iron Age and form two main clusters around Chichester and the Cotswolds (**Figure 4.6**). With older coins, it is not always clear if the recorded location is where the object was found or first recorded. Of particular interest is the fact that these appear to be the earliest depictions of chickens created in Britain, some of which bear a remarkable similarity to a spatially and temporarily restricted group from Belgic Gaul. The reasons for this will be discussed in Chapter 8.

Few coins had enough context data to securely place them into a location type. Of those that did, three came from rural sites and four from Roman small towns. With the vast majority of coins dating to the Iron Age, most of them would come from sites that would be considered rural. However, there were some that were found in oppida or significant trading sites: 27 from Chichester, 4 from Winchester (finds 37, 45, 85, and 86), 4 from Worcester (finds 783, 784, 785, and 786), 1 from Silchester (find 56), and 1 from Mount Batten (find 259).
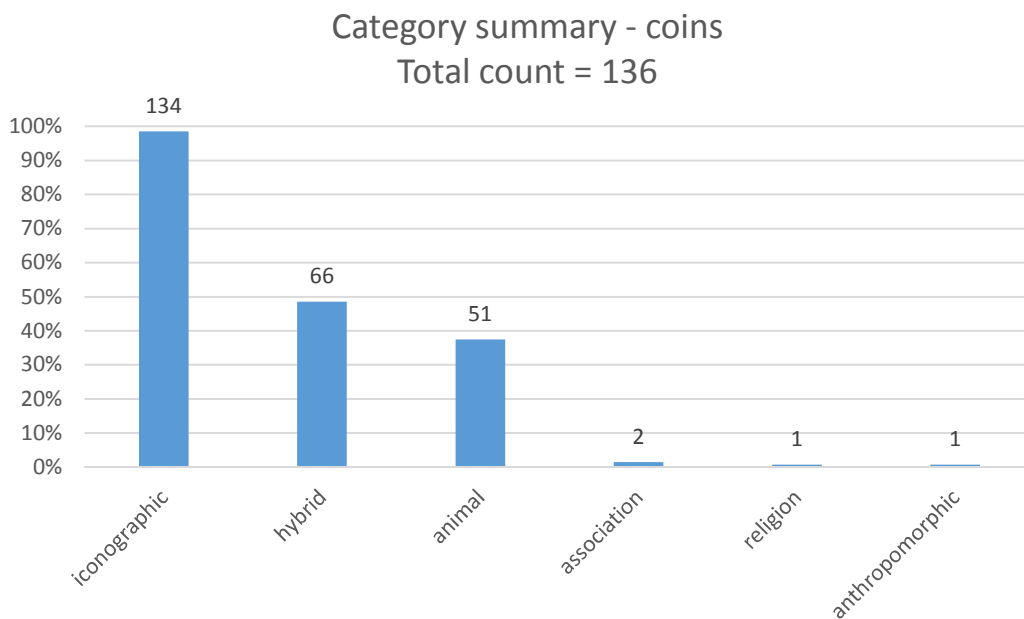
Figure 4.7 - percentages of coins by category.

As with the rest of the assemblage, most coins were associated with chickens based on *iconography*, often stylised due to the size of the object and artistic style at the time (**Figure 4.7**). Almost half of these include the bird as part of a *hybrid* creature, all representing a single type of coin (see cock bronze below), and roughly a third include another *animal* in the form of a horse. Depictions of chickens on coins drop sharply in the Roman period, but one British coin features an image of Mercury accompanied by a cockerel, accounting for the *religion* and *anthropomorphic* categories. The other two Roman examples have an *association* with the physical remains of chickens.
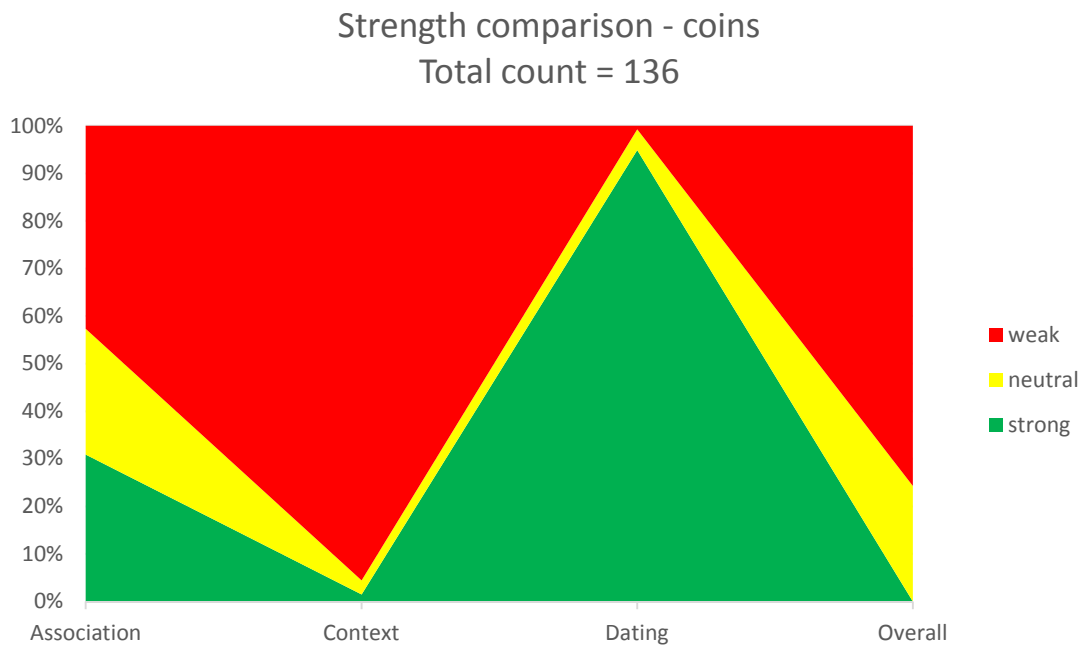
Figure 4.8 - comparison of strength ratings for coins.

Images on coins were often unclear due to their small size and commonly worn surfaces, but the uniform nature of coins meant that a clear image on one could be reasonably assumed to carry over across the series. The Cotswold cockerels, however, are an exception, as the image varies over time, and it is not always clear what they depict. These kept *association* scores somewhat lower than expected (**Figure 4.8**). Because they were commonly found by metal detectorists or in museum collections, very few coins had any *contextual* information. The nature of coins gives them quite strong *dating* in spite of this, as they will only have been made in discrete batches on rare occasions, even if the exact date of minting is not known. The lower context and low association scores of some coins kept the *overall* scores fairly weak in spite of this.

The date ranges for coins are relatively compact, with most being minted sometime during the first century BC (**Figure 4.9**). The early outliers represent imports from the Campanian region of Italy, which may have had some influence on the development of local coins.
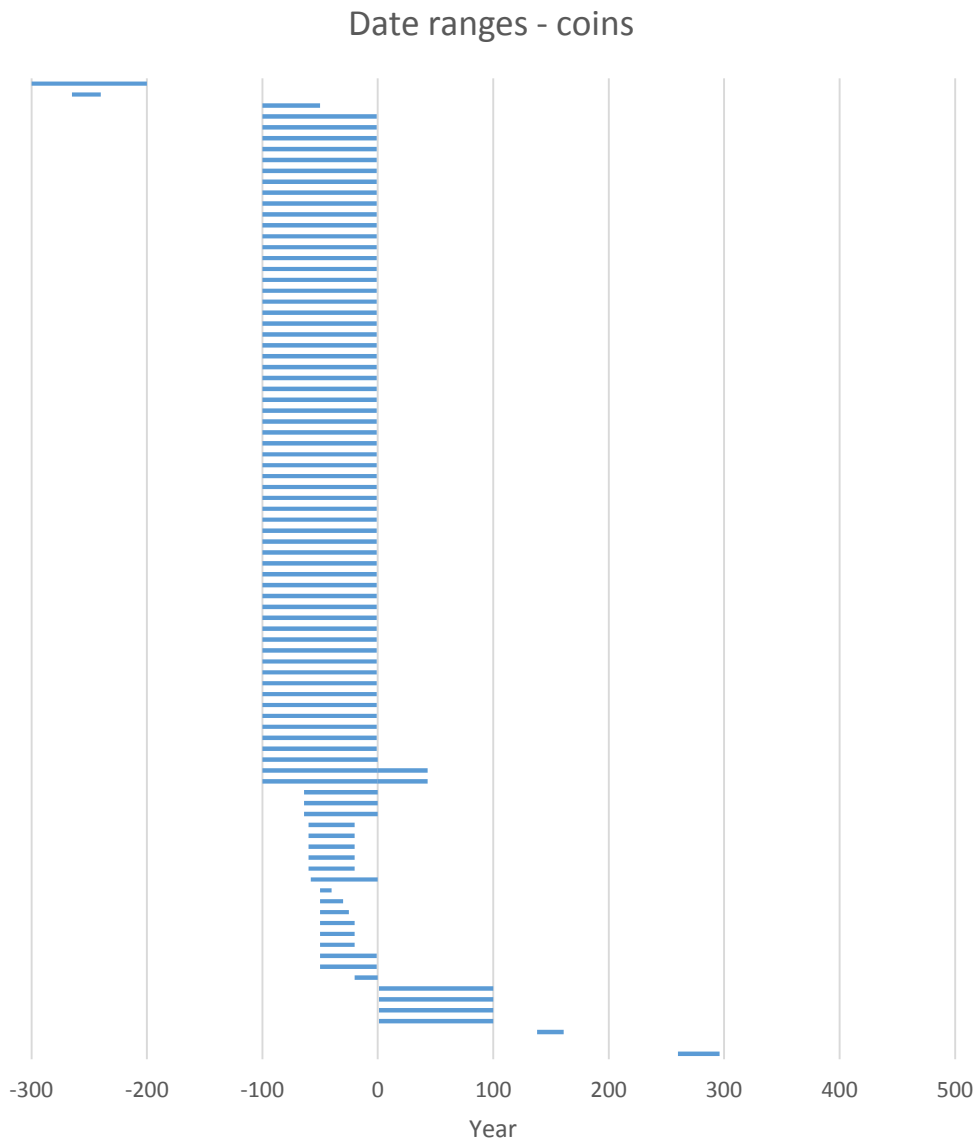
Figure 4.9 - date ranges for dateable coins. Each line represents a single artefact.

The different types of coins are discussed below, following the typologies of Cottam *et al.* (2010) where appropriate.

4.1.1 Imports

The earliest coin found in Britain (find 159) was minted at the town of Cales in the Campanian region of Italy in the third century BC and found in Wilmington, Kent. It shows a bust of Minerva or Pallas on one side and a cockerel facing a star on the other. Another Campanian coin (find 161), this one minted in Suessa in the mid-third century

BC, and found in Botley, Hampshire, has a similar depiction. These are the earliest representations of chickens in Britain, and, despite the time gap, it is coins like these that are thought to have influenced the development of the British and Gaulish cock bronzes, the earliest native representations (see 8.2.2).

Some Late Iron Age coins may have been Gallic imports. One featuring two cockerels facing each other on the obverse and found in Kent (find 158) appears to be the Gallic type DT 519/520 (see 6.1.7), but no image was available for comparison.

Three coins, all unfortunately quite worn, could be examples or variants of the Gallic type DT 521, which features a boar on the obverse and a standing chicken on the reverse (see 6.1.11). Two (finds 40 and 41) were found in Chichester, Sussex and the third (find 1100) in Mildenhall, Suffolk. None of the obverse sides are particularly clear, but they appear to show a crescent shaped object similar to the boar on the Gallic example (**Figure 4.10**). The reverse images are clearer, but these are reversed from the Gallic one and have minor variations, including the chickens having spread wings more in line with the rest of the Belgic coins, and this suggests that these coins are at least derivatives, if not true examples.

Figure 4.10 - comparison of Gallic type DT 521 (top, Delestrée and Tache 2002, plate XXII) and find 1100 (below, image copyright Trustees of the British Museum).

A possibly unique coin with a standing cockerel (find 239), sometimes referred to as the Chiltern cock type (Cottam *et al.* 2010, 118), could also be an import, but without any further examples it is impossible to say with any certainty.

4.1.2 ABC 737, Chichester cock bronzes

The group of coins known as cock bronzes were the most abundant type of coin, with 65 examples recorded. They have been found across southern England, but are most strongly concentrated around Chichester (**Figure 4.11**) and date to 1st century BC. One study estimated four mint runs producing up to half a million of them (Cottam 1999, 15), which would have made them an abundant early symbol.
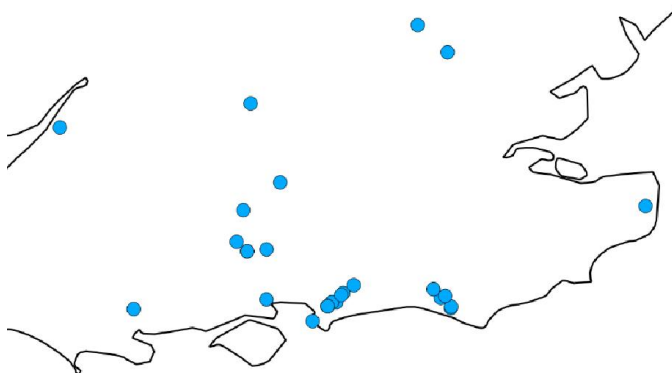
Figure 4.11 - distribution of cock bronzes with known provenance.

The images on the coin are more stylised and abstract than many of the Gaulish examples (**Figure 4.12**, see 6.1), with a human head wearing some kind of helmet or headdress on the obverse and a chicken with a human face on its stomach on the reverse. Here the face appears to be bearded, with the line of feathers merging into beard towards the front of the bird. This coin type has been examined in most detail by Cottam (1999), who studied minor variations to determine how many minting runs there were. They are thought to have been copied from the Gaulish coins, possibly more than once, with early examples being influenced by types DT 511 and DT 509 (Cottam 1999, 10) and some later ones seemingly copying elements of types DT 517 and DT 518 (Cottam 1999, 12).

Figure 4.12 - find 45, cock bronze, left: obverse with head; right: reverse with chicken-face hybrid (image copyright Oxford University and The Portable Antiquities Scheme).

A similar type of bronze coin that may originate from the same region was also recorded. The wolf cock (find 237) has the hybrid chicken face on the reverse, but replaces the human profile with an image of a wolf on the obverse.

4.1.3 ABC 2012, Cotswold cockerels

This group of coins from the Cotswolds was the second most common type, and are of a similar date. Fifty examples were recorded, but due to variations in the coins over time it was not as easy to assume uniformity and some were left unrecorded due to illegibility. They were occasionally recorded as being made of a copper alloy instead of the usual silver, but it is possible these were recording or transcription errors made when transferring the data to the PAS database from the earlier Celtic Coin Index. They cluster around the Cotswolds with a few outliers, most notably from Hayling Island and Mount Batten (**Figure 4.13**), in the region associated with the Dobunni tribe (Cottam *et al.* 2010, 103).
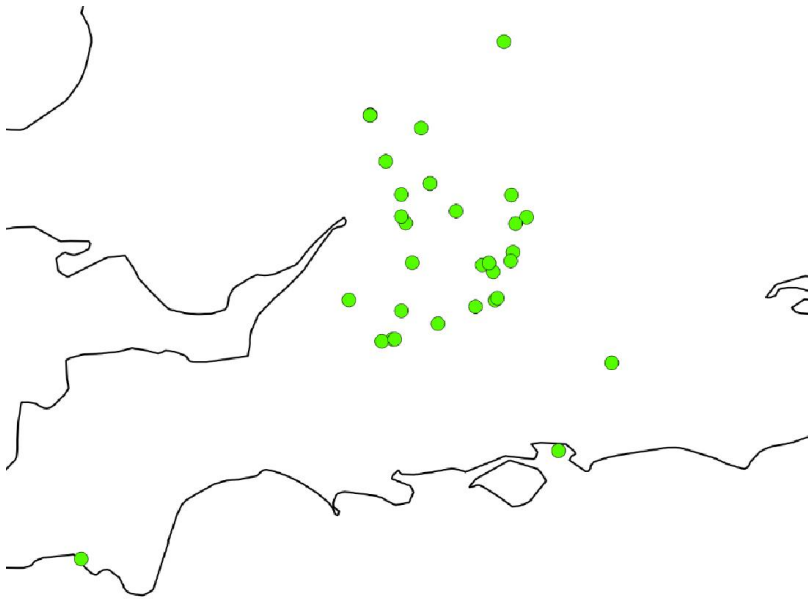
Figure 4.13 - distribution of Cotswold cockerel coins.

The reverse of the coin shows a triple-tailed horse with a chicken head below (**Figure 4.14**). The chicken head varies, occasionally appearing more like a ram, and over time evolves into a flower and later a cross (Cottam *et al.* 2010, 19). It has been suggested that the face on the obverse side is Cuda, a goddess native to the region (Cottam *et al.* 2010, 19). The image of the horse is quite common on Iron Age coins across this part of Europe, possibly symbolising a link between ruler and ruled (Creighton 2000, 24-26, 54), and the inclusion of a chicken in this composition is unusual. Quite often a wheel occupies this space on similar coins, possibly referring to the earlier versions based on a chariot (Creighton 2000, 26), so the chicken, and presumably the flower and cross that followed, shared a symbolic space with it.

Figure 4.14 - find 281, Cotswold cockerel coin, left: obverse with head; right: reverse, horse above a chicken head (image copyright Oxford University and The Portable

Coins of the Chieveley chicken type (type ABC 1010, find 238) are similar, but a second chicken head appears upside-down above the horse.

4.1.4 Roman coins

Depictions of chickens on the coins of Imperial Rome are much more rare, appearing on only two coin types in the Roman Imperial Coinage catalogue (Mattingly and Sydenham 1930, 205), both of Marcus Aurelius (types 1071 and 1074, see 8.4.2). One of these types, a sestertius of type RIC 1074 (find 236), was found at Caistor, Lincolnshire, and shows a temple of Mercury with a cockerel and ram on the pediment, but this example is too worn to see those images clearly. It should be noted that since it is common for site reports to only state the emperor depicted and the dates of coins, many chicken images may have been missed due to lack of any method of identifying them from the given description.

Some provincially minted coins include images of chickens, but none came from within the project area. As an example, a series of denarius serratus (a Republican coin type) of Juno Sospita with a girl confronting a snake on the obverse has examples depicting chickens and a possible chicken coop (Classic Numismatic Group, Auction 295, Lot 375). Four examples of this coin were found in British material (finds 289, 290, 291, 292), but none clearly showed this. The symbols vary and appear to be mint marks used on different runs.

Not all coins were recorded for iconographic reasons. Two were found in a posthole with the remains of two headless chickens at a farmstead in Kempston, Bedfordshire, leading to the interpretation of the post having a possible ritual meaning (Luke and Preece 2011, 49). The coins were a copper alloy sestertius of Antoninus Pius (find 604) and a copper alloy radiate too worn to make out any depictions (find 603).

Also included here is a small copper alloy disc or token found by a metal detectorist near Thurlaston, Leicestershire (find 129), which has a chicken cast on one side. The exact date and purpose of this object are unclear.

4.2 Figurines
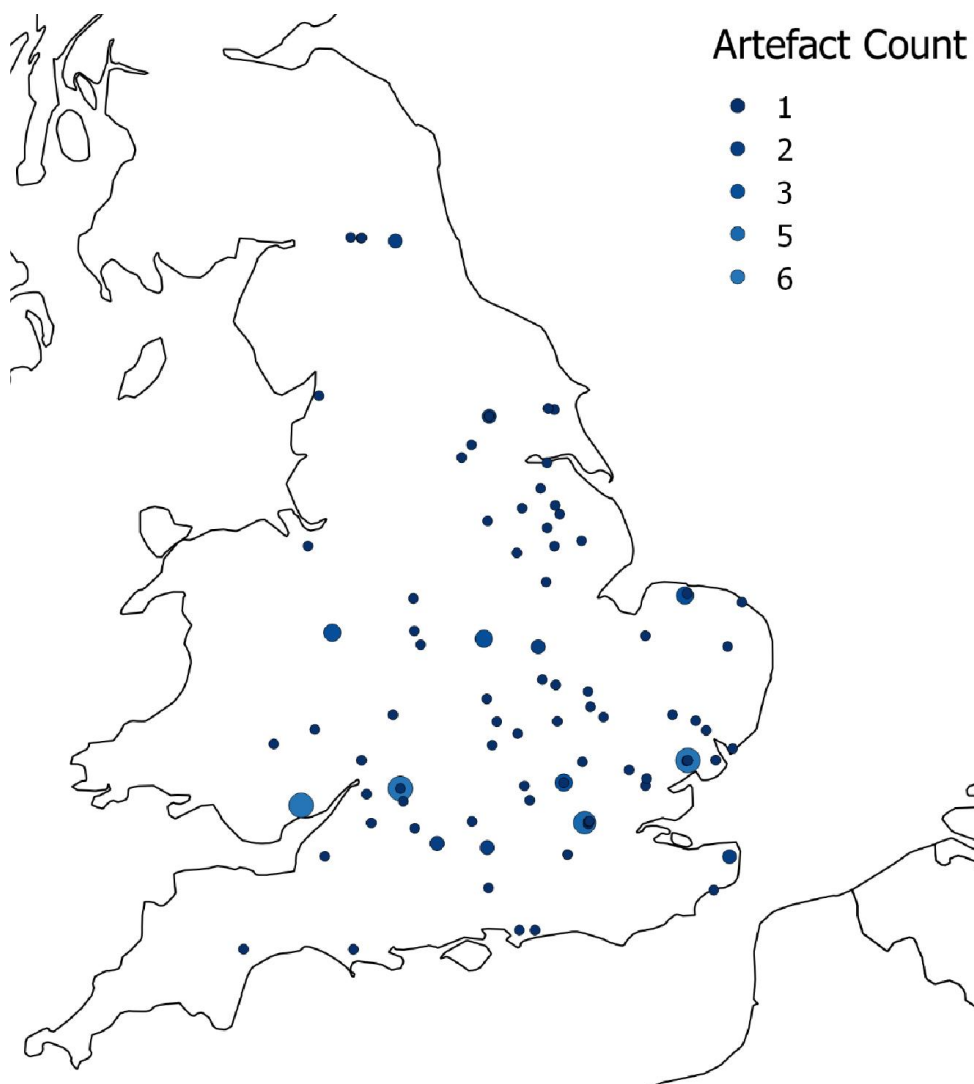
Figure 4.15 - distribution of figurines in Britain. Larger, lighter circles indicate a higher concentration of artefacts.

Figurines and other small, often free-standing metal or ceramic objects in the shape of chickens were abundant, ranging in size from roughly 20 to 150mm in height, with 126 examples from Britain (**Figure 4.15**). Chickens have been noted as the most common animal depicted in Romano-British figurines (Durham 2012), so these numbers are not surprising. Other find types included here include those described as fittings, mounts, and weights. They were primarily made of copper alloy and fired clay, with the latter possibly being imported from Gaul, and it should be remembered that cheaper versions could have been made of perishable materials like wood. Some figurines may have

been children's toys (Crummy 1983, 143; Pearce 2015, 151), but identifying them as such is very difficult.
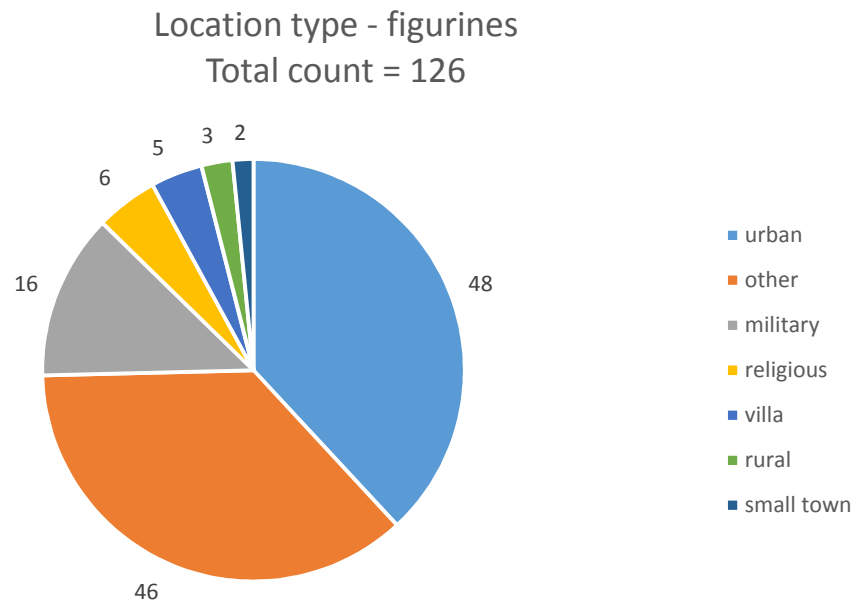
Figure 4.16 - figurines by location type.

Finds from urban and military sites dominate the dataset, with fewer coming from *rural* sites (**Figure 4.16**). Those in the *other* category, largely representing metal detectorist finds, likely belong to the latter categories, but there would still be quite a large urban bias. This appears to mirror the distribution for figurines in general (Durham 2012).

Category summary - figurines
Total count = 126
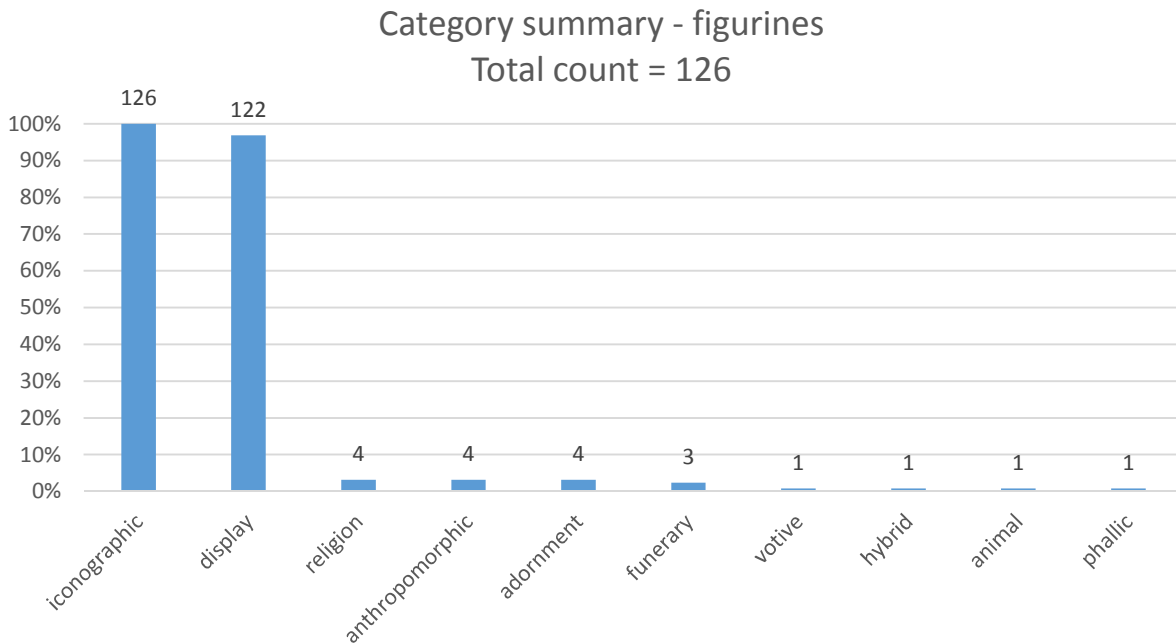
Figure 4.17 - percentages of figurines by category.

All of the recorded figurines were selected for *iconographic* reasons, and it is assumed the image was important and meant to be *displayed*, even if only briefly (**Figure 4.17**). Four figurines were assumed to have *religious* associations due to the figures they accompanied, with two featuring depictions of Mercury and one *animal* in the form of a goat. Two other figurines of people holding chickens made up the rest of the *anthropomorphic* category. Four of the fittings may have been attached as some form of *adornment*. Three were recovered from *funerary* contexts. It is possible that some of these artefacts were created to be *votive* offerings, in which case such display may have been limited to selection by the devotee, but without being found in a secure context it is difficult to determine if this was the case, with only a single find meeting these criteria. One small figurine or mount appears to be a *hybrid* of a chicken, a *phallus*, and a chariot.
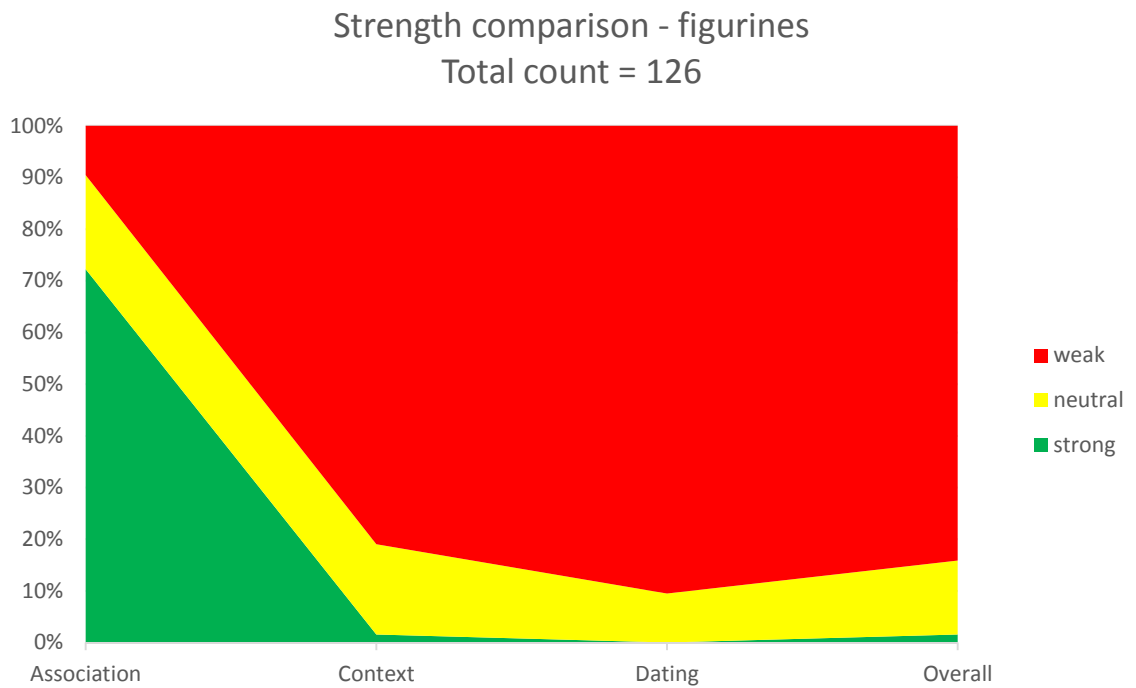
Figure 4.18 - comparison of strength ratings for figurines.

Figurines were usually fairly clear in what they were depicting, apart from some stylised or extremely worn examples, giving most of these objects a strong *association* score (**Figure 4.18**). Many were discovered by metal detectorists or by antiquarians or found in disturbed deposits, however, giving them a generally low *context* strength. Likewise, this led to poor *dating*, which is typical of this type of find and exacerbated by the possibility that even objects with a known context may have been heirlooms or religious objects with a long period of use before deposition (Durham 2012). Except where datable by context, these finds have often been assigned long date ranges covering most, if not all, of the Roman period (**Figure 4.19**). Even those dated stratigraphically tend to have quite large ranges.

Figure 4.19 - date ranges for dateable figurines. Each line represents a single artefact. Objects in blue were dated by stratigraphy or associated finds; objects in red were dated stylistically.

With their clear images, figurines are a strong indication of chickens in material culture, but they are somewhat limited in terms of abstract interpretation due to their often poor context and dating. Given the unique and quite variable nature of most of the examples, this find type lacks a strong typology to aid discussion. They have been broken down into single depictions of animals and those that accompany other figures. Some of these demonstrate the difficulty in determining the difference between figurines, mounts/fittings, and other forms of decoration.

4.2.1 Chickens

Nearly all of the figurines recorded depict a single animal, usually assumed to be a cockerel. They vary from exceptionally detailed to quite simplistic, covering a range of artistic tastes and costs (**Figure 4.20**). Copper alloy is the most common material, but there were also 16 ceramic figurines, or fragments of them, and two cast in silver.

Figure 4.20 - assorted chicken figurines. From top left, find 91 (image copyright Durham 2012), find 146 (image copyright Northamptonshire County Council), find 301 (image copyright Durham 2012), find 294 (image copyright Smith 1999), find 626 (image copyright Trustees of the British Museum), find 594 (image copyright Colchester Castle Museum), find 532 (image copyright Green 1976), find 131 (image copyright Buckinghamshire County Council).

The 110 metallic figurines are highly variable, with most appearing to be unique creations. Although more densely distributed on some of the urban sites, none came from particularly large deposits. Six were found on religious sites at Great Walsingham, Norfolk (finds 294, 295, and 296), Uley, Gloucestershire (find 310), Lowbury Hill, Berkshire (find 532), and Nettleton, Wiltshire (find 1186) and could have been votive in nature. A ceramic figurine found in the Walbrook near the London Mithraeum (find 1145), where a large number of skulls and other potential offerings have been found, has also been interpreted as a votive object (Leary and Butler 2012, 13), and is the most convincing. Only three came from funerary deposits; two from cemeteries in London (finds 1146 and 1148) and one from near Cirencester (find 1181).

The majority of figurines are fairly unexceptional, but some are worth further comment.

Perhaps most noteworthy is the figurine just mentioned, a somewhat stylised, enamelled copper alloy figurine recently discovered in a child's grave near Cirencester (find 1181, Pearce 2015, 151). Three mostly complete examples (finds 102, 135, 304) and three fragments that appear to be from other copies (finds 141, 489, and 510) have been recorded across England, all seeming to show enough similarity to suggest they could come from the same workshop. Other examples are known from Ezinge, the Netherlands (Zadoks-Josephus Jitta *et al.* 1967, 114), Cologne, Germany (Menzel 1986, 59), and Tongeren, Belgium (find 2545). Due to the hollow space on the back, it has been suggested that some of these are lamps (Worrell 2006, 436), but since some are sealed this seems unlikely.

Not all of the metal figurines were complete, which sometimes made definite identification of the species difficult. One was unusual in not merely being a fragment, but a complete depiction of just the neck and head (find 127). Others were merely fragments of the head, including the three enamelled ones mentioned above. The other three head fragments were oddly stylised, and could be depicting another species (finds 12, 565, and 633). Pieces of legs or feet were likewise impossible to identify as definite chickens, but there was only one metal example; a bronze figurine of just legs (find 563) that was suggested as a possible chicken. Two figurines (finds 141 and 494) were more complete than these examples, missing only their tails, which looked to be a separate piece, but these were so stylised that it was hard to tell if they represented chickens or peacocks without that crucial bit of anatomy.

Four figurines (finds 98, 115, 146, and 132) are very stylised and two-dimensional, sometimes with the legs wide apart, a style also seen in some hairpins (see 4.7.1). Whether these are also pins or meant to be mounted on another object is unclear, and the groups were kept separate based on the source description to keep both possibilities evident.

These are not the only figurines that appear to have been attached to something bigger. While most of these objects could conceivably have been attached via their legs or base, some have more definite points of attachment. Four simply have a longer shaft or peg in place of or extending below the legs (finds 195, 356, 755, 1144), while four have the remains of a loop on the back, suggesting they were hung for some purpose, possibly as

some form of weight (finds 126, 128, 147, 303).

Others are more unusual. One (find 142) is highly reminiscent of the "sitting chicken" type of brooch (see 4.3.1), raised on a small stalk that may have helped mount it on a strip of leather or other material. Two are small and quite stylised, with small "legs" extending to either side, presumably to help attach them to something else (finds 97 and 137). Another, possibly not a chicken (find 242), also has two "legs", but in front and in back, as if to "perch" the bird on something. Two more have more unusual attachment methods, with one seeming to be attached flat to a surface by its back (find 493), and another mounted on a strange ring (find 349).
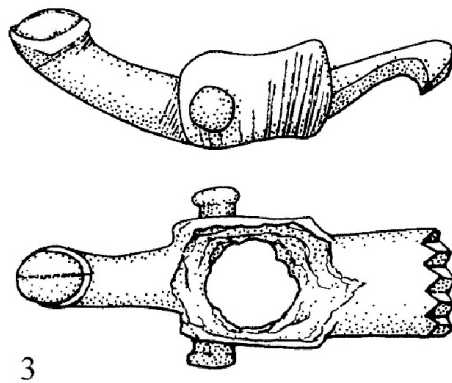
Figure 4.21 - find 596, a possible phallus-chicken hybrid (Crummy 2006, 64).

The most unusual mount is a bizarre hybrid of what appears to be a phallus, chicken, and chariot (find 596, **Figure 4.21**). This type seems to have evolved from a more common phallus and fist amulet (Crummy 2006, 67), but it is only the tail that suggests a connection to chickens.

Ceramic figurines were much less common, with only 16 examples coming from across the southern half of Britain. It was not always possible to be certain of the species in these depictions, as they often appear to be of female birds, which are less distinctive. This problem will be discussed in more detail with regard to the French and Belgian material below (see 6.2.1), where these finds are much more common. Identification of species was further complicated in some examples by their fragmentary nature. Two consisted of only feet on a base (finds 472 and 759), which could be nearly any bird.

Two were heads (finds 1186 and 1190), which were more recognizably chicken.

Traces of paint were noted on one example (find 1190), of which only the head survived, having a reddish-brown paint around the eyes and crest.

Many of these examples are thought to have been imported from Gaul, and they do appear similar to many specimens found there (see 6.2.1). Whether they are truly foreign objects or local reproductions is uncertain, but it should be noted that the painted head (find 1190) was found in a kiln at a possible villa where local pottery was being made and this object was suggested to be a local product (Woods 1978, 147).

4.2.2 Chickens with humans

A much smaller group of figurines depicts chickens with human figures. Two have cockerels at the side of Mercury, accounting for those these being placed in the *religion* category. The suggestion that lone chicken figurines are part of otherwise lost Mercury groups like these is fairly common. Although, with over 100 examples of Mercury (Durham 2012), but so few definitely associated with cockerels, this seems a dangerous assumption to make. However, it is possible that the larger figure of Mercury was more likely to be destroyed through religious zealotry or simply through recycling, with the chicken too small or inoffensive enough to be left intact.

These two figurines vary quite significantly (**Figure 4.22**). The first is a bronze figurine from St. Albans, Hertfordshire (find 595), and depicts Mercury with a chicken, sheep, and tortoise, which is incredibly rare, possibly unique, for this region. The various figurines were separately attached to a large base, and the slightly awkward placement is interesting when compared to French examples where the base and the animals appear to be a later addition (see 6.2.2). The other was found by a metal-detectorist near Aylesbury Vale, Buckinghamshire (find 119), and is much less clear in what it depicts. The main figure is less recognizably Mercury, but the stance, with the nude figure draping a cloak over one elbow, is suggestive. The small object at his feet may be a chicken, but is far too lacking in detail to be certain.

Figure 4.22 - figurines of Mercury from Britain. Left; find 595, a figurine from St. Albans (Durham 2012); right, find 119, metal-detected figurine from Aylesbury Vale (image copyright Buckinghamshire County Council).

Two figurines show chickens with other human figures. One from Caerleon (find 566) shows a child, possibly Cupid, holding a chicken. An antiquarian find from Sussex, currently in the British Museum (find 831), shows a youth holding a chicken in a similar manner. Figurines of this sort appear to be more common in the eastern Mediterranean (**Figure 4.23**)

Figure 4.23 - figurines of a person holding a chicken. Left, find 831 from Sussex; right, figurine from Milos, Greece (image copyright Trustees of the British Museum).

Although not attached to human figures, one chicken figurine (find 485) was found in a collection with two figurines of Mercury, one of Apollo, one of Mars, and one of Fortuna. While this may represent a stash of objects for reworking or a hoard of some sort, it does suggest that, even if not directly associated, such figurines may have been displayed together.

4.3 Brooches
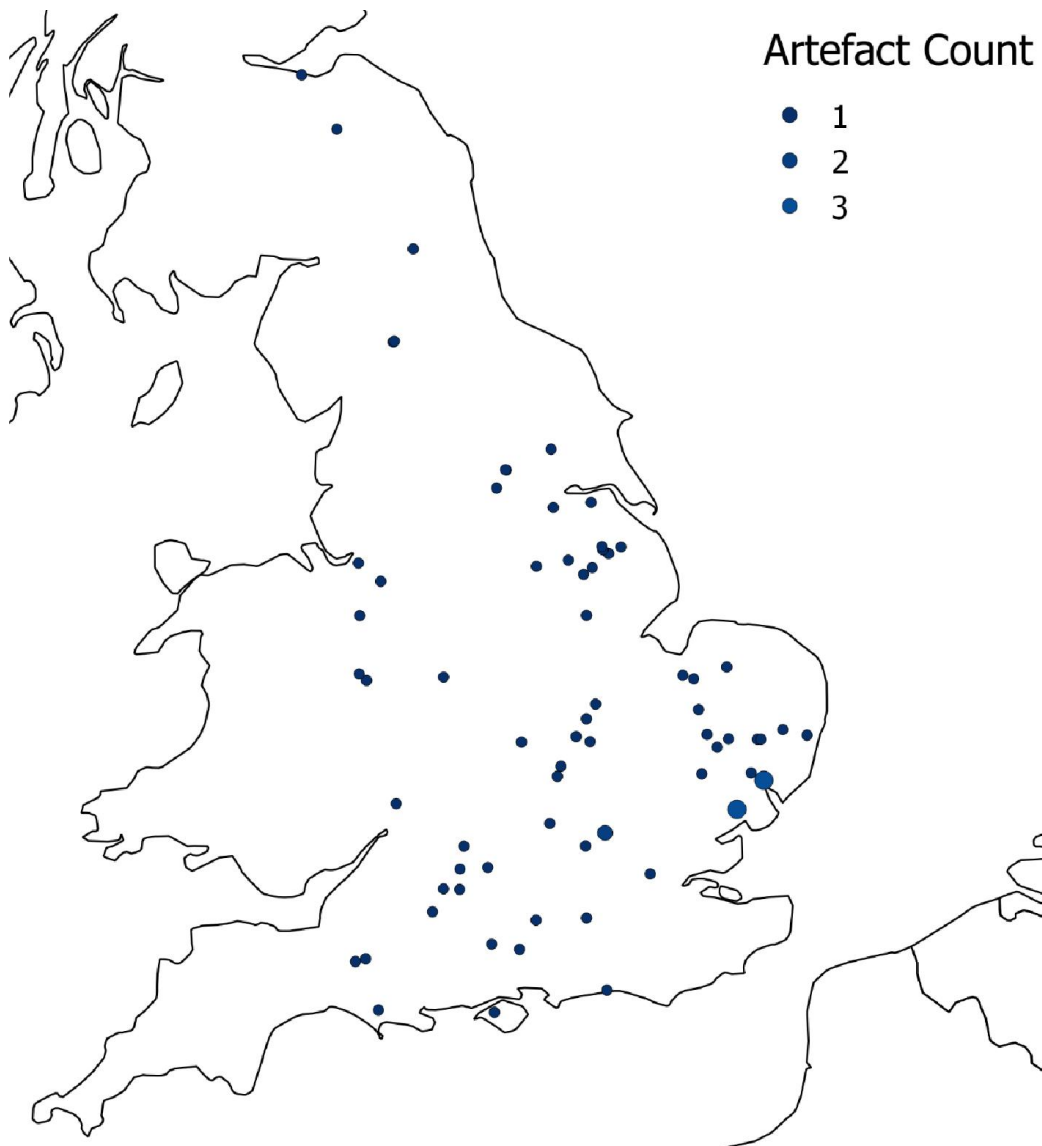
Figure 4.24 - distribution of brooches. Larger, lighter circles indicate a higher concentration of artefacts.

Brooches were the most common form of personal adornment featuring chickens, with

73 examples recorded for the whole of Britain. They were found across the country (**Figure 4.24**), with a slightly higher concentration in the east, which appears to be the trend for zoomorphic brooches (Hattatt 1982, 160).

Location type - brooches
Total count = 73
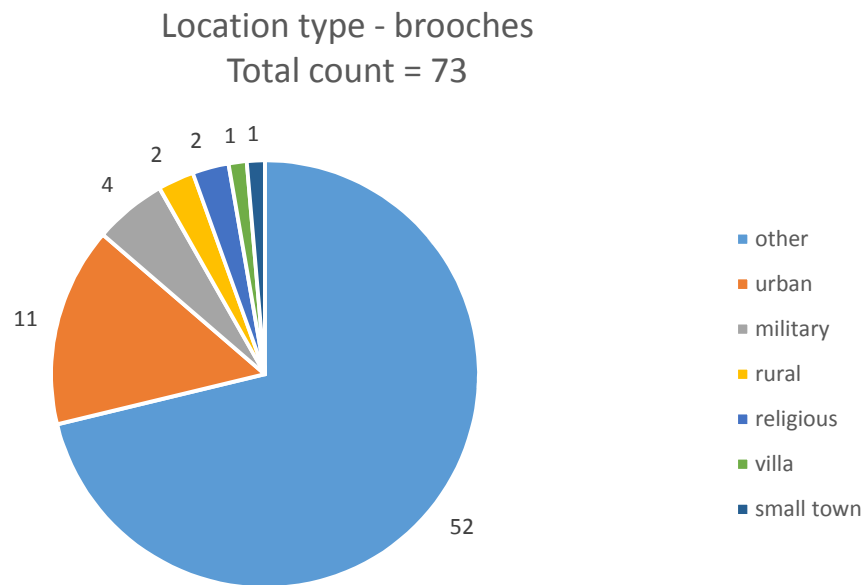
Figure 4.25 - brooches by location type.

With many brooches being from museum collections or discovered while metal-detecting, the location type of most of them is uncertain (**Figure 4.25**). Within known sites, urban is most dominant, but examples are known from most site types.

Category summary - brooches
Total count = 73
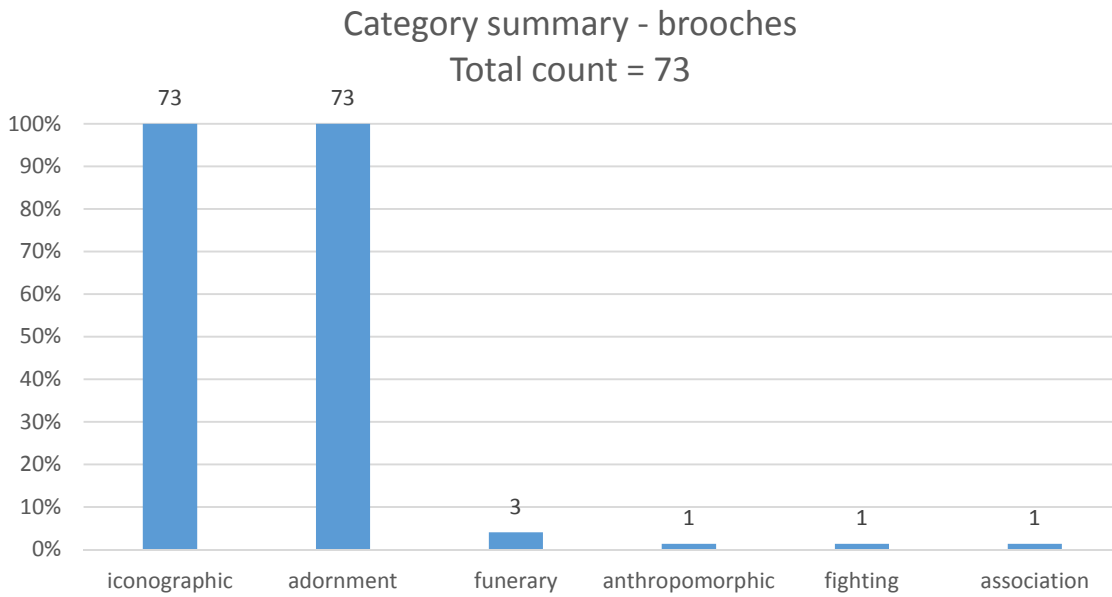
Figure 4.26 - percentages of brooches by category.

All recorded brooches were associated with chickens *iconographically* (**Figure 4.26**), with one of them being further *associated* with chicken remains in an inhumation. Two more brooches also came from *funerary* contexts, and a single brooch had a depiction of a possible cockfight underneath an *anthropomorphic* figure.

Strength comparison - brooches
Total count = 73
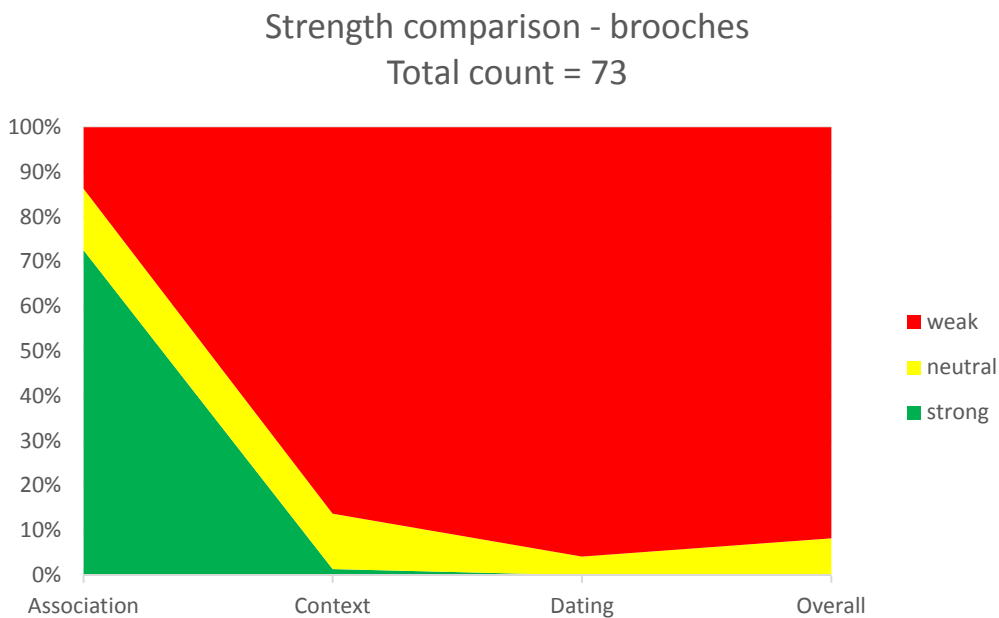
Figure 4.27 - comparison of strength ratings for brooches.

All of the brooches depicted birds, giving a quite strong average *association* score, but not all were conclusively chickens (**Figure 4.27**). Due to the way they were recovered, many lacked *context*, which also meant a lack of strong *dating*, with nearly all of it being done on stylistic grounds. All of this led to low *overall* scores on average.

This stylistic dating placed most of them in the second century AD, but firm dates based on stratigraphy or associated artefacts were exceedingly rare (**Figure 4.28**). Less common types tended to have wider ranges assigned to them. Two early medieval brooches were kept in the dataset due to poor dating and for comparison to Roman examples.
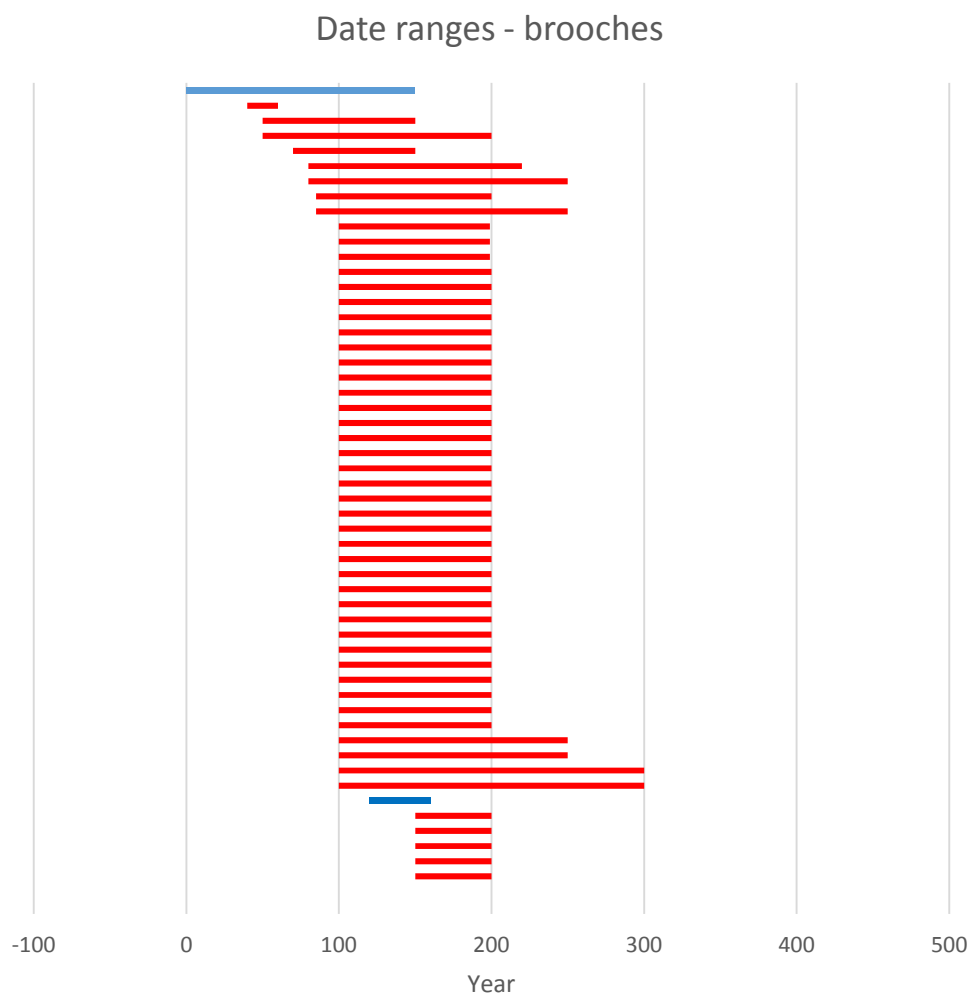
Figure 4.28 - date ranges for dateable brooches. Each line represents one artefact. Objects in blue were dated by stratigraphy or associated finds; objects in red were dated stylistically.

75

The depictions of chickens on brooches suggest a positive association that people sought to claim by including them in their apparel. It has been suggested that such objects of personal adornment may have had a primarily votive purpose (Hattatt 1982, 158), possibly relating to the worship of Mercury (Crummy 2007). If this is the case, then they might not have been meant for wearing as decoration but to show devotion or as objects intended for use as offerings. However, without stronger contextual data this is difficult to investigate.

The different types of brooches are discussed below.

4.3.1 Sitting chicken brooch

Figure 4.29 - find 508, sitting chicken brooch (image copyright Great North Museum).

The most common type of brooch, representing 60 of the total, the sitting chicken brooch (Crummy type 214) is a somewhat stylised hen or cockerel, usually covered in enamel (**Figure 4.29**). Brooches of a similar shape exist for ducks and swans, but lack the curved tail and feature a different pattern of enamel (Hattatt 1982, nos. 168 and 169).

They have the same distribution as brooches as a whole, with no particularly strong concentrations, although, intriguingly, no examples are known from France or Belgium (see 6.9). There are two unusual outliers in Scotland; one a metal-detected find from Edinburgh (find 613), and the other (find 558) from Bow Broch in Midlothian. Two were found with burials; one from Lancing, Sussex, also containing a chicken skeleton

(find 598) and the other (find 194) from an inhumation in Colchester. Neither skeleton was sexable.

These are generally dated to the second century AD, with some estimates extending into the late first century AD. Those with stronger context and dating tend more towards the early second century AD.

A manicure set found near Fangfoss in Yorkshire (find 299, see 4.12) is very similar to these brooches, and may possibly have been worn as one. A figurine or mount (find 142, see 4.2.1) is remarkably similar in shape.

4.3.2 Plate brooches
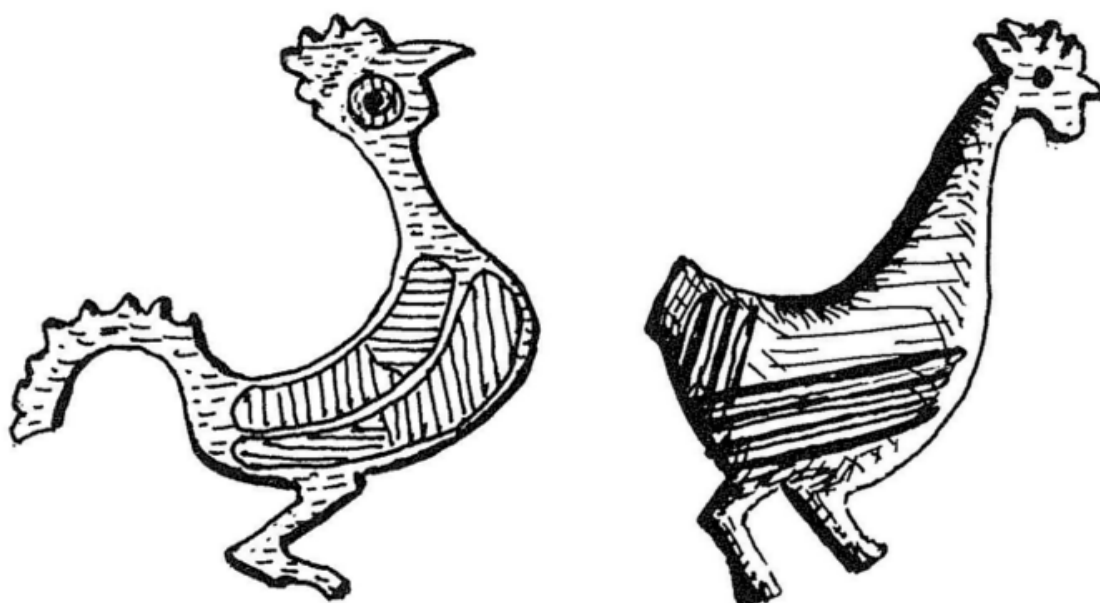
Figure 4.30 - flat plate brooches, left: enamelled, find 1178; right: unenamelled, find 1179 (Hattatt 1982, fig. 69, nos. 163 and 164).

Nine of these artefacts were flat plate brooches in the shape of chickens or other birds (**Figure 4.30**). Many were damaged, often lacking the head, tail, or both, making positive identification difficult. Most were enamelled (finds 5, 20, 123, 136, 442, and 1178), with the exceptions being a rounded brooch from near Ipswich (find 1179) and two bird brooches that may be early medieval (finds 230 and 1161). The latter two were included in the dataset due to their weak dating and for comparative purposes.

4.3.3 Raised head bird brooch

Figure 4.31 - find 165, raised head bird brooch.

Three brooches (finds 165, 328, and 329) were shaped like an overhead view of a stylised bird, flat but with a raised head (**Figure 4.31**). It is unclear what species they represent, but it has been suggested (Green 1987, 97; Mackreth 1999, 222) that they are roosting chickens, swimming ducks, or a flying bird. These examples do not appear typical of Roman chicken depictions, however, and one of the other interpretations seems more likely.

4.3.4 Magpie brooch
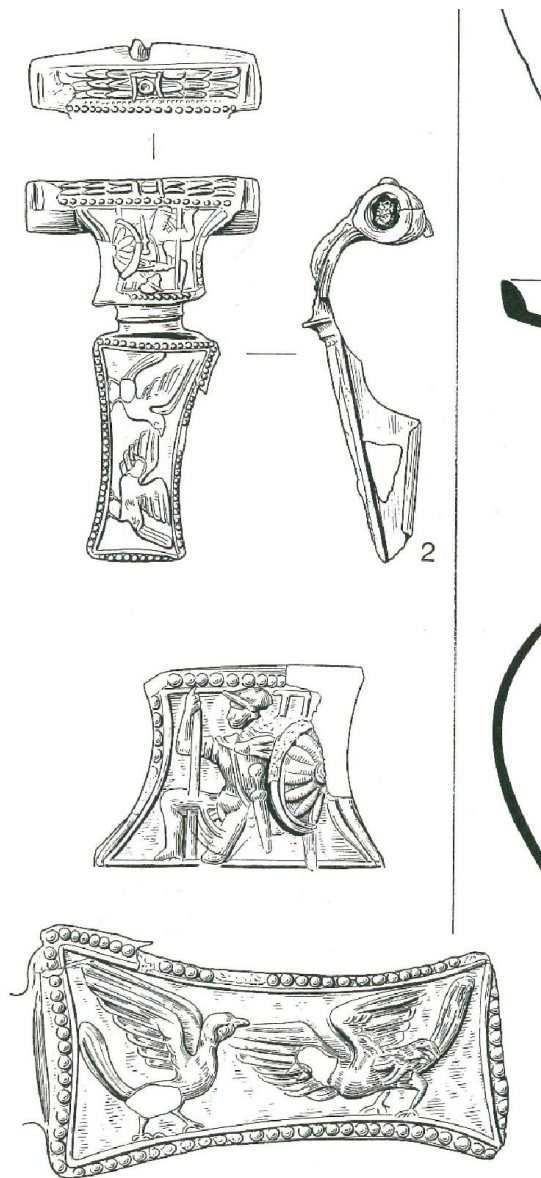
Figure 4.32 - find 760, magpie brooch.

This brooch (find 760, **Figure 4.32**) was found in a beaker with cremated human remains at the King Harry Lane site in St. Albans and is decorated with two scenes. One depicts a kneeling warrior, and the other two birds with outspread wings. An ornithologist and a bird artist suggested they were magpies greeting each other, but a magpie specialist thought they were more likely to be "fighting domestic cocks" (Stead and Rigby 1989, 95). The birds do not have the crest or strongly curved tail usual in Roman depictions of cockerels and lack the spurs that would be expected in a combat

scene, so it is unlikely they are chickens.

4.4 Pottery
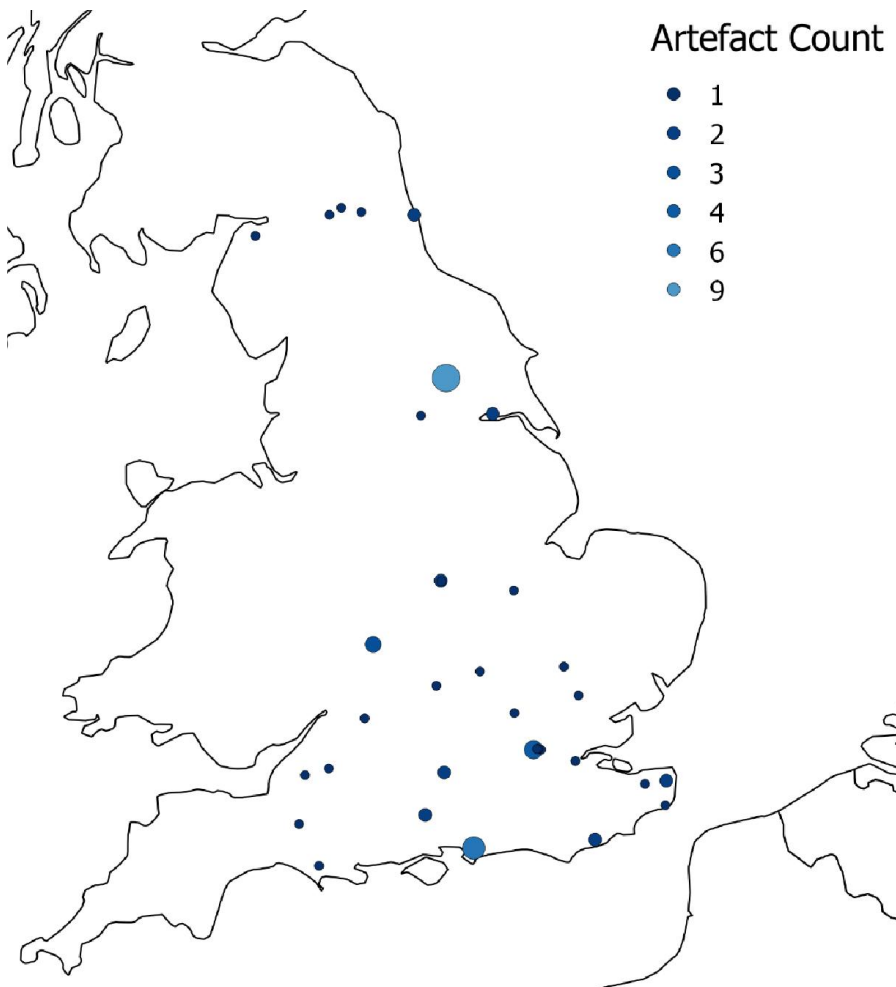
Figure 4.33 - distribution of pottery. Larger, lighter circles indicate a higher concentration of artefacts.

Pottery and other vessels associated with chickens were relatively abundant, with 59 examples from Britain, including a pewter dish. They were spread across the study area, which is not unexpected for such a common find type (**Figure 4.33**). This category is likely to be underrepresented, with associations between physical remains of chickens or their eggs being either lost over time or simply not published in enough detail to be of use.
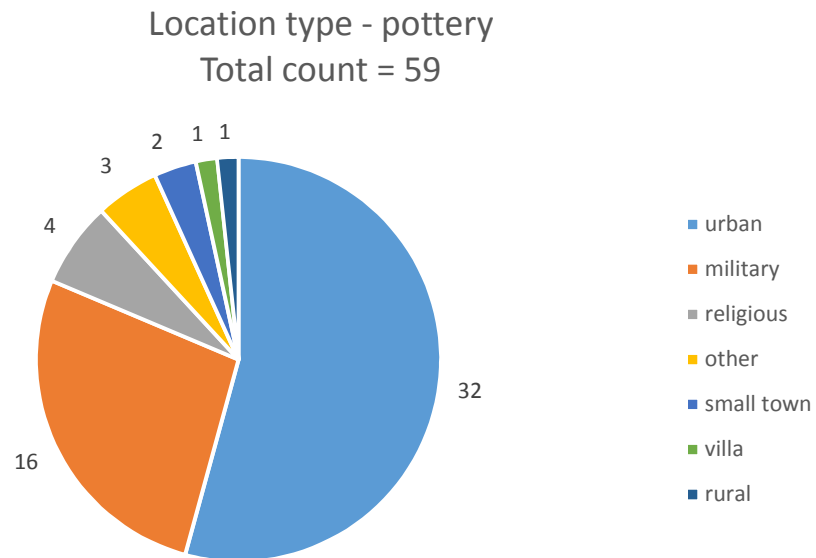
Figure 4.34 - pottery by location type.

Over half of the examples came from urban contexts, followed by military sites (**Figure 4.34**). Compared to other find types, very few came from unknown sites, with most being recovered during controlled excavations.
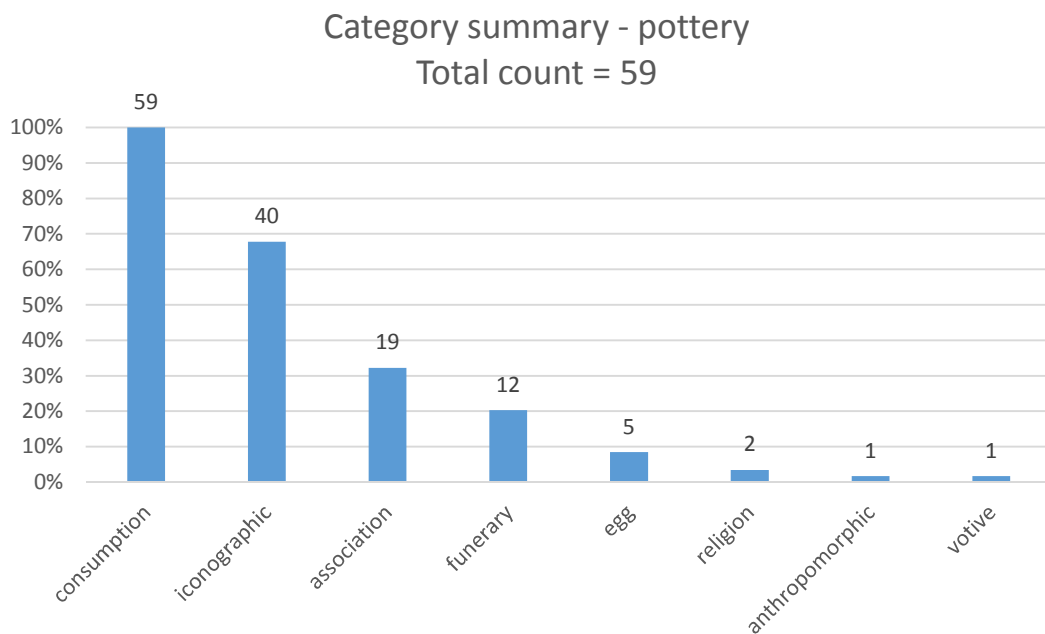
Figure 4.35 - percentages of pottery by category.

The primary category associated with pottery was *consumption*, and the objects were further divided into two broad groups related to how they were associated with chickens, reflected in the *association* and *iconographic* categories (**Figure 4.35**). Many of the former were found in *funerary* contexts, which accounted for 12 pots in total, with three of these containing *eggs* instead of chicken bones. The sole *votive* example (find 645) was found beneath an altar in the mithraeum at Carrawburgh. The other *religious*-themed object was a Castor-ware pot with an image of Mercury, accounting for the *anthropomorphic* category (find 542).

Strength comparison - pottery
Total count = 59
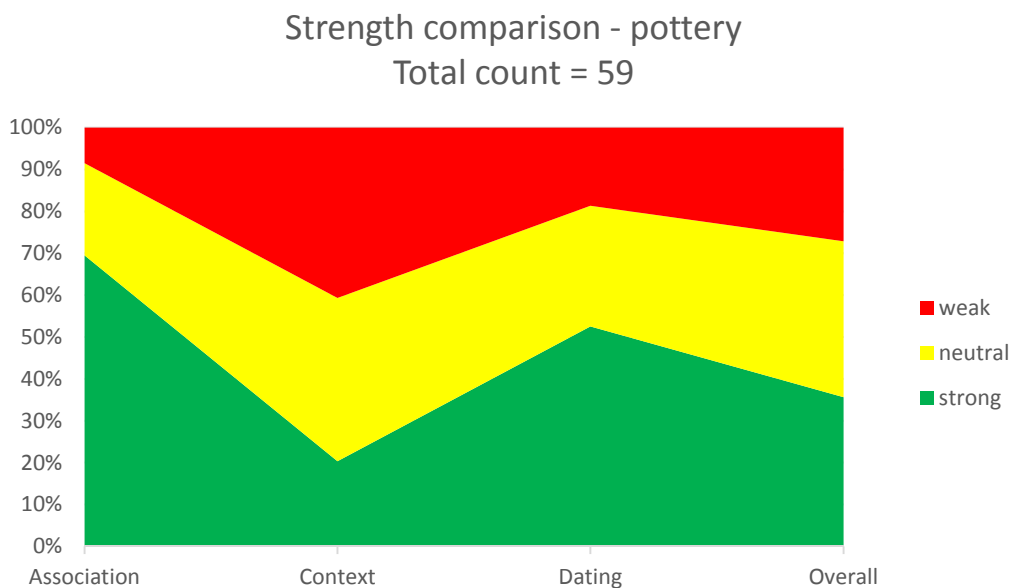
Figure 4.36 - comparison of strength ratings for pottery.

Images did not always have enough detail to be sure of the depiction, but most were fairly clearly chickens (**Figure 4.36**). When found in association with physical remains, it was not always clear if they were definitely chicken bones and/or eggs. Since most were recorded during excavations, *context* strength is relatively high. The highly dateable nature of pottery also gave this find type a stronger *dating* score than usual, often restricting production dates to a few decades, mostly in the mid to late second century AD (**Figure 4.37**). All of this gave pottery a higher average *overall* score than most other categories.

Date ranges - pottery

Years
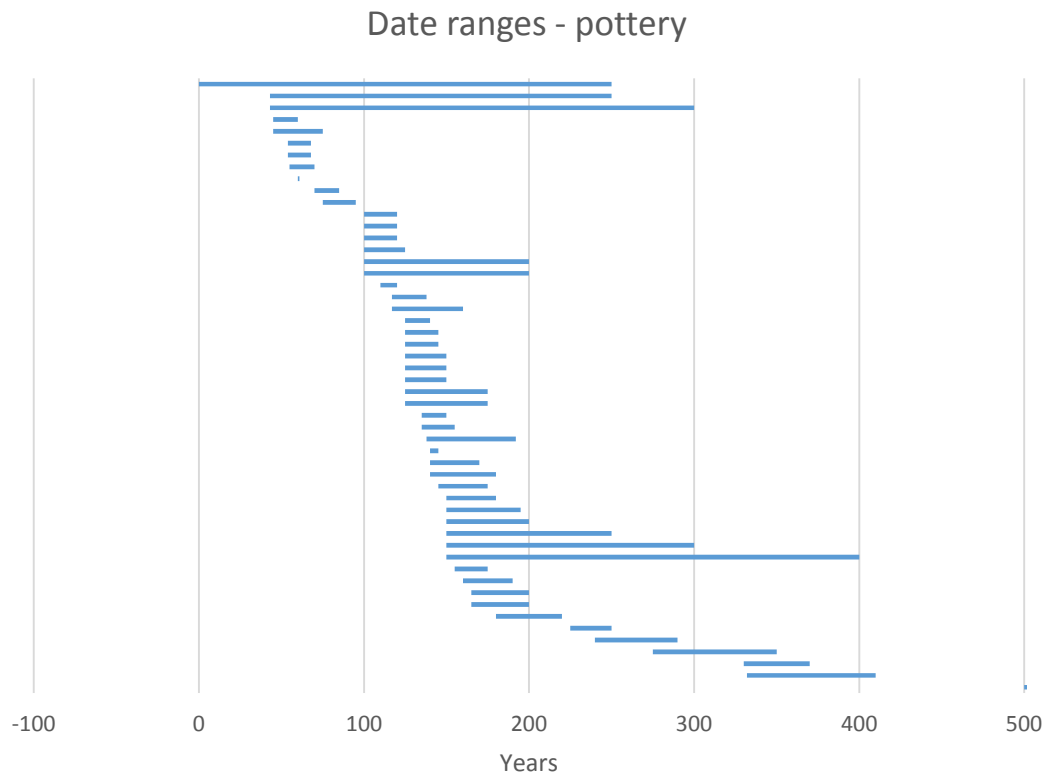
Figure 4.37 - date ranges for dateable pottery. Each line represents a single artefact.

The inclusion of chicken imagery on such a common find is not unexpected, nor is its use as a container for holding their remains. The two groups are summarised below.

4.4.1 Depicting chickens

Most of the pottery fragments with images of chickens were samian ware. Oswald's catalogue of figures appearing on samian ware has 36 unique images, including one of a chicken perched atop a column (Oswald 1936, 76, 147-148). Many bird images on samian are small and unclear as to species, but cockerels tend to be larger, more detailed, and formed of several parts. The bird is usually shown on its own, often occupying a panel to itself, but at least one (find 500) seems to show a bird next to a Cupid. Even there the bird does not seem to be interacting with the other figure.

Most of these appear to have been bowls, with form 37 being the most common, but at least one was a cup (find 361) that appears to be an imitation of samian ware. In 10 examples the chicken is in a crouched position, reminiscent of the bird in combat.

A black-gloss Lezoux ware beaker (find 387) had a large image of a chicken on one side. Three fragments of a Castor-ware pot are supposed to depict Mercury and a chicken (find 542). An unusual image, a stamp on the base of a Belgic beaker from Richborough (find 400) may be of a chicken.

4.4.2 Holding chickens

Vessels holding remains of chickens or eggshell were often found in funerary deposits. They vary from platters to beakers to cooking pots, seeming to use whatever was convenient and available rather than selecting something unusual, and were found in both cremation and inhumation burials.

As stated previously, the 12 examples of funerary pots presented here probably represent only a fraction of those in Britain, and a more focused survey of cemetery sites would likely reveal more. The cemetery at Trentholme Drive in York had the most, with four in total. All were inhumation burials, with two cooking pots holding chicken bones (finds 546 and 549) and two beakers, one of which held bones (find 551) and the other eggshell (find 552). Two pots came from Winchester; one a piece of local fineware containing eggshell in an inhumation burial (find 559), and the other a cremation burial with bones on a terra nigra platter (find 605). The others include a cremation burial with bones in a samian pot from Chichester (find 361), chicken bones in a black burnished ware pot from Cirencester (find 471), local tableware with bones from an inhumation in London (find 506), a beaker with bones from an inhumation in Ilchester (find 554), and a cremation from Canterbury with chicken remains on a samian ware platter (find 674). There was also a small Anglo-Saxon bowl from Great Chesterford which contained three eggs (find 704), included to demonstrate that these practices appear to have continued past the end of the Roman period.

Of the six not found with burials, four came from a cemetery site in York, with two holding eggs (finds 547 and 550) and two holding bones (finds 545 and 548), and may therefore still have had a less direct funerary connection. Another (find 620) came from near the walls near the Walbrook in London. The remaining one (find 645) was found beneath an altar at the Carrawburgh mithraeum.

Although not strictly pottery, an octagonal dish found near Somerton, Oxfordshire (find

3) in what appeared to be a burnt kitchen area of a possible villa, covered chicken bones when it was discovered. It was part of a larger collection of pewter material, all found unturned in a pile. It was not clear if the remains or pots were burned as well.

4.5 Rings
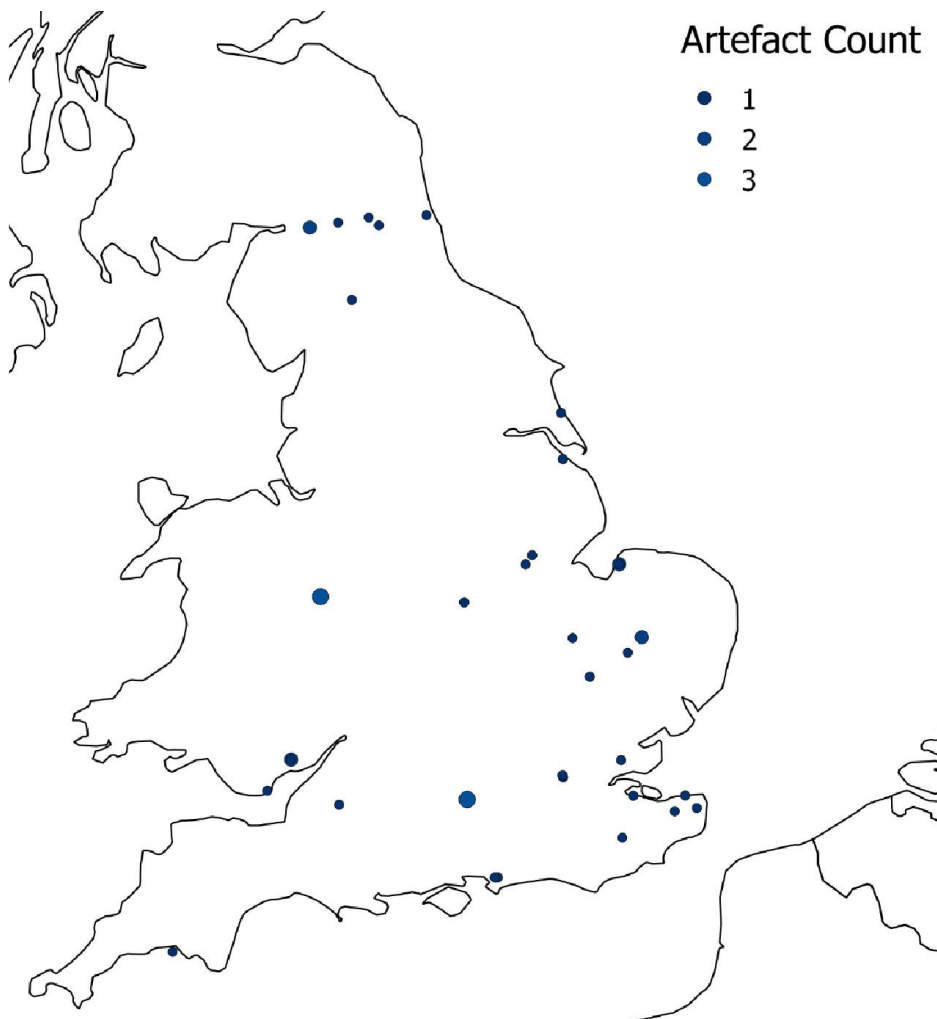
Figure 4.38 - distribution of rings. Larger, lighter circles indicate a higher concentration of artefacts.

This category includes rings and intaglios that have been removed from them, along with a single lead seal impressed by one, with 42 examples recorded. They have been found in small numbers across Roman Britain, with a small concentration along the line of Hadrian's Wall (**Figure 4.38**). Fourteen were complete rings, with five gold, five silver, and four bronze examples. The stones, perhaps unsurprisingly, were even more

variable, with intaglios of red and green jasper (n=10), carnelian (n=9), nicolo paste (n=6), glass (n=3), amethyst (n=2), bloodstone (n=2), bluestone (n=1), agate (n=1), and onyx (n=1). Three rings lacked an intaglio (finds 101, 112, and 306), with the decoration being set directly into the metal.
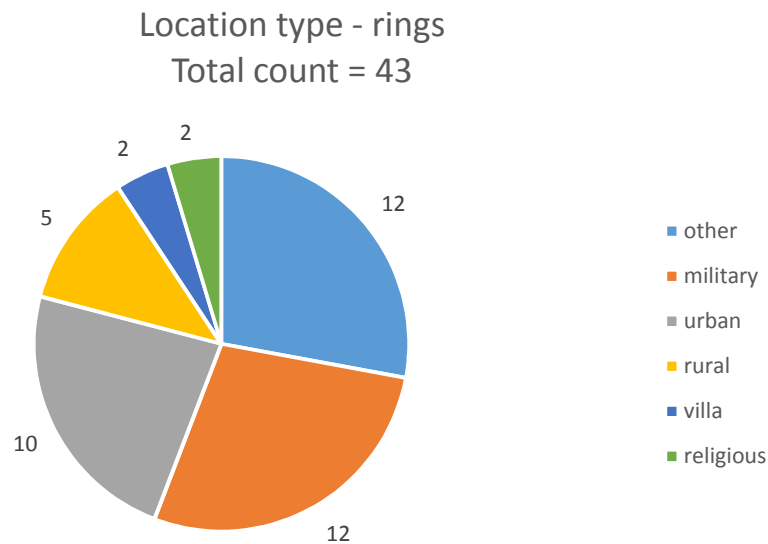
Figure 4.39 - rings by location type.

They were primarily found on military and urban sites, with a smaller but significant number coming from rural sites (**Figure 4.39**). Many come from museum collections or were found during metal detecting and therefore lack enough context to be sure of location type.

Category summary - rings
Total count = 43
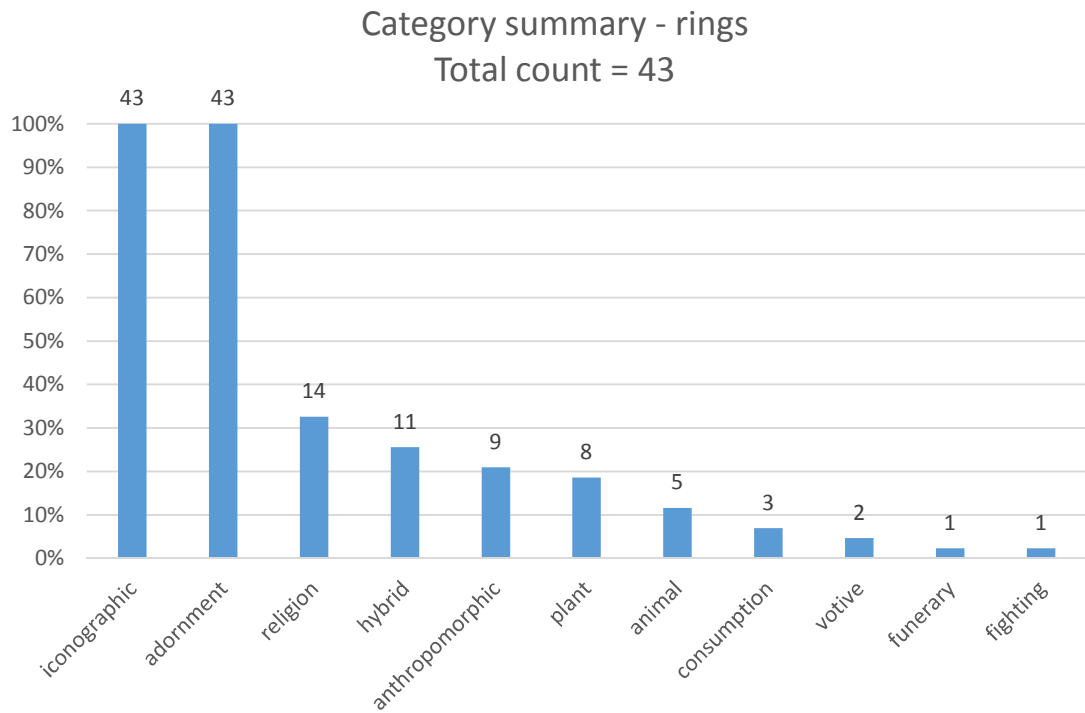
Figure 4.40 - percentages of rings by category.

All of the rings depict something which has been interpreted as a chicken and all were articles of personal *adornment* (**Figure 4.40**). Fourteen had a *religious* connection, with eight featuring *anthropomorphic* depictions of deities. *Hybrid* figures are relatively common, occurring on 11 examples. *Plants* appear on eight, other *animals* on five, and three seem to be linked with the *consumption* of the animal. Two seemed to come from *votive* deposits and one came from a *funerary* deposit. One image may depict two birds *fighting*.

Strength comparison - rings
Total count = 43
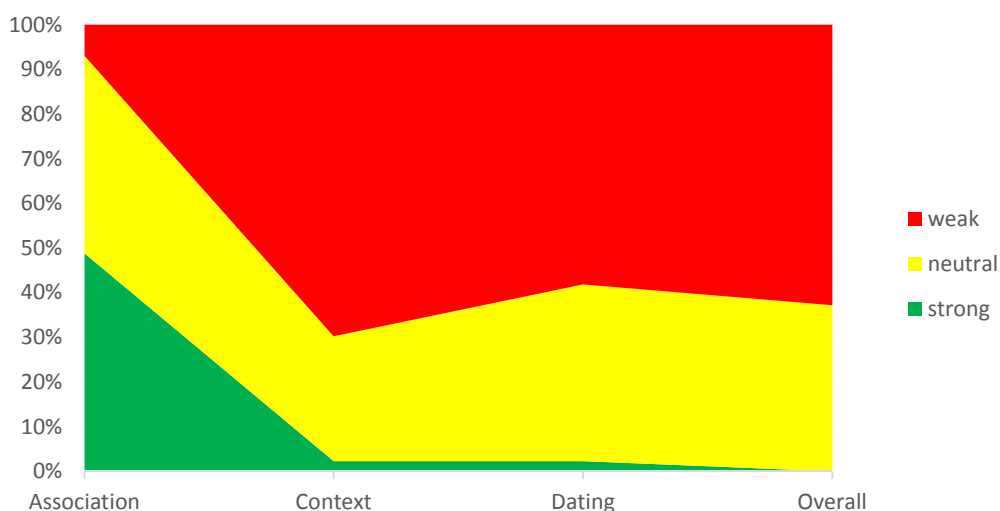
Figure 4.41 - comparison of strength ratings for rings.

Due to their small size and frequent damage, along with unclear illustrations, it was not always clear that it is chickens that are being depicted, especially when they make up only a part of the composition or were part of a hybrid. Because of this, roughly half of the rings scored neutral or lower in *association* (**Figure 4.41**). More were retrieved from secure *contexts* than some other finds, but most were still lacking detailed histories, and *dating* is still based more on style than stratigraphy. Despite this, o*verall* scores tended to be higher than average.

Rings were most commonly dated to the first and second centuries AD, but can extend through the entire Roman period (**Figure 4.42**). Most were dated on purely stylistic grounds. Signet rings were more commonly used during this earlier period, with the theory that the economic crisis after the early third century was responsible for the change (Henig 1974a, 28).
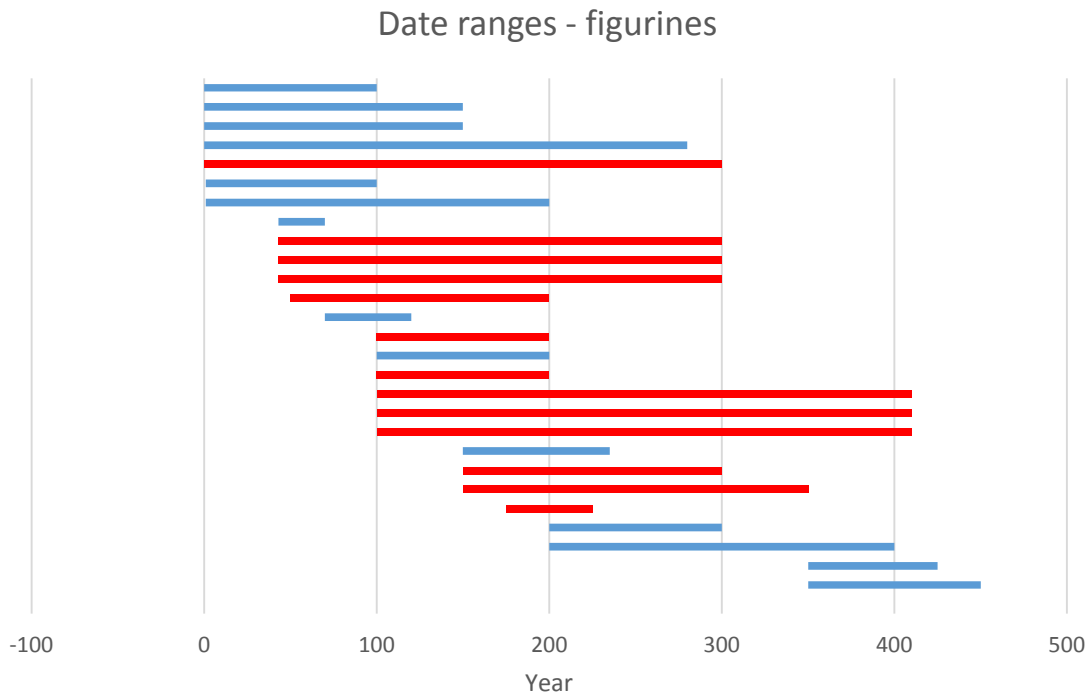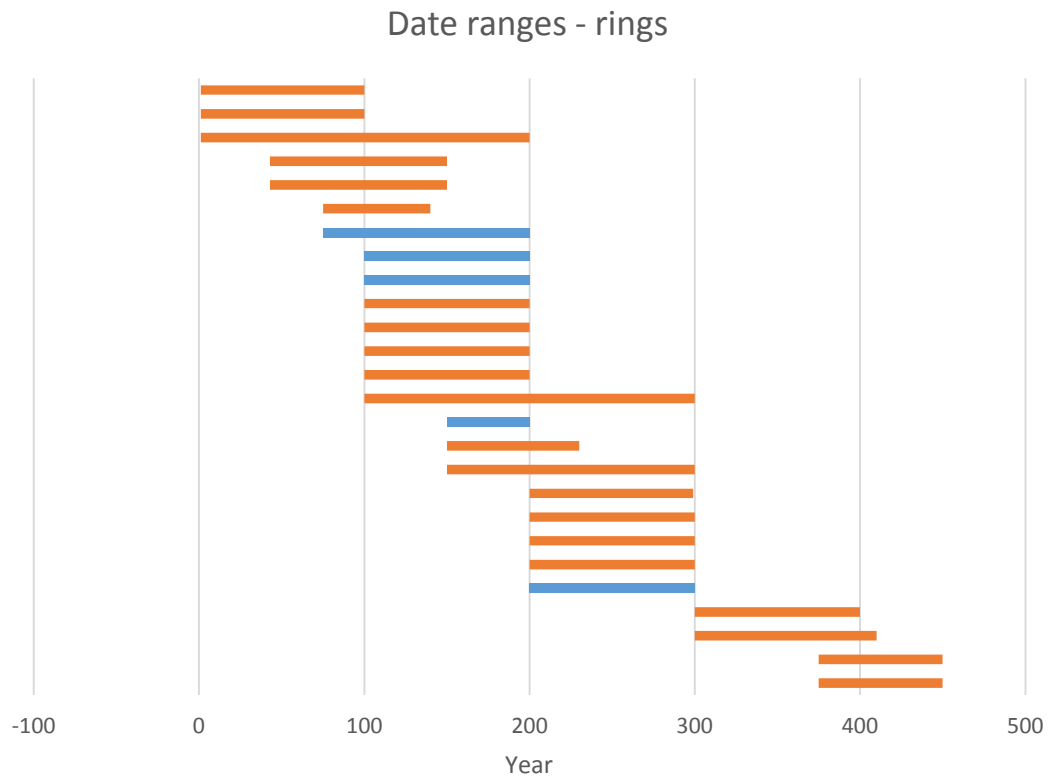
Figure 4.42 - date ranges for dateable rings. Each line represents a single artefact. Objects in blue were dated by stratigraphy or associated finds; objects in red were dated stylistically.

Despite their small size, rings display a wide range of subjects and fulfil a number of roles. In addition to simple adornment, early rings acted as a means of identification and were therefore very personal objects (Henig 1974b, 26-27). This is undoubtedly why the images vary so much. Some also served as protective amulets, especially those depicting hybrid creatures (Henig 1974a, 28, 142). They were made of different metals and stones, making them widely available to different social classes. More importantly, each was created as a unique identifier of an individual, providing a rich variety of iconography, each linked in a quite personal manner to a specific person.

4.5.1 Chickens

Figure 4.43 - rings with chickens alone or with other animals. Left: standing chicken, find 118 (image copyright Cambridgeshire County Council); top centre: chicken pulling a mouse-driven chariot, find 429 (Henig 1974b, plate XII); top right: crowing chicken, find 898 (image copyright The Trustees of the British Museum); lower middle: trussed chicken, find 287 (image copyright The Trustees of the British Museum); lower right: chicken with grain, find 833 (image copyright The Trustees of the British Museum).

Rings with depictions of chickens, either on their own or with other animals, were the most common, with 22 examples, but these images were quite variable (**Figure 4.43**). Five rings featured chickens without further decoration (finds 101, 112, 118, 306, and 419). A sixth ring also showed a chicken on its own (find 898), but it was unusual in showing the bird crowing. Three rings had an image of a chicken trussed and prepared for cooking. One (find 287) came from a votive hoard dedicated to the mother goddesses at Backworth, near Hadrian's Wall. Another (find 1149) came from the Cheapside Hoard and was reset in a 17th century ring, while the third (find 231) was found by a metal detectorist in Cambridgeshire.

Nine rings included a piece of grain. Six of these were of a single bird, either standing next to the grain or pecking at it (finds 408, 431, 432, 439, 83, and 869), and two had a pair of birds (finds 302, 396). The final ring had a more complex image, which seems to show a chicken standing in front of a basket or cornucopia of fruit and two ears of corn (find 430). Although lacking grain, another ring includes a cornucopia in a similar manner (find 433). Two further rings do not show grain, but have a pair of birds, with one of them pecking at the ground (finds 420 and 434), possibly evoking the same meaning as these others. Those with pairs may be intended to show male and female birds, but at least one (find 434) has been reinterpreted as showing a cockfight (Henig 2000, 161).

Other animals appear in four of these images. Two include rodents, with a mouse or rabbit, and possibly an insect of some sort, appearing with the basket or cornucopia mentioned above (find 430). The other (find 429) has a charming image of a mouse or rabbit driving a chariot pulled by a cockerel. A chicken was said to confront a snake on a now lost ring (find 435), and one of the trussed chicken rings (find 1149) also includes a fish as part of the repast.

4.5.2 Accompanying humans
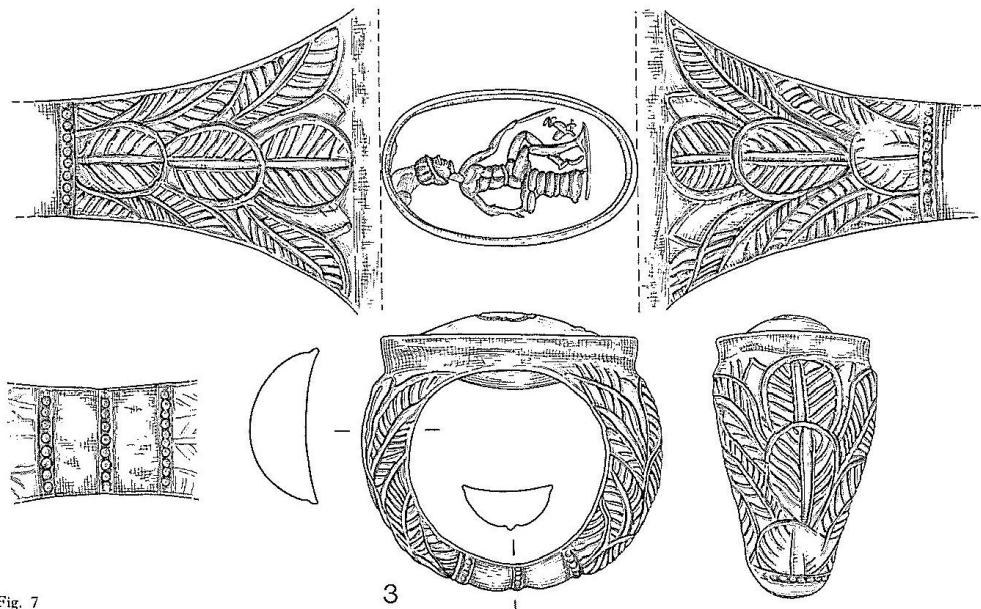
Figure 4.44 - find 334, ring of Mercury from the Thetford Hoard (Johns and Potter

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Chickens appear with human figures in nine of the images. Six of these are of Mercury, showing him in Classical style (finds 334, 380, 421, 422, 560, and 780). One (find 380) was found beneath the entrance hall at Fishbourne Palace and has a gemstone made of amethyst, which was believed to be helpful in approaching a ruler in supplication (Henig 1971, 87). Another (find 334, **Figure 4.44**) was part of the fourth century Thetford hoard, along with a remarkably similar ring depicting Abraxas (see below).

Cupids or Erotes appear with chickens on three rings (finds 423, 424, 1150). In one of these (1150) he is riding an unusual hybrid hippalectryon, and in the other two he is chasing a chicken.

4.5.3 Hybrids
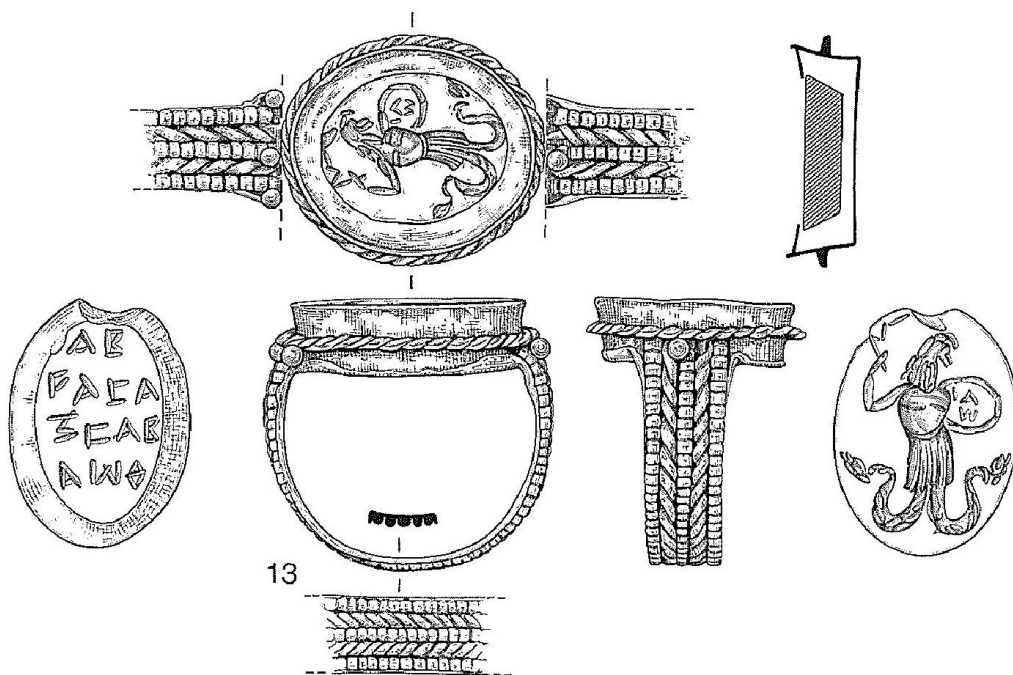
Figure 4.45 - find 335, ring from the Thetford hoard showing Abraxas.

Eleven rings feature hybrid creatures of one form or another. The most uniform is the figure usually referred to as Abraxas, a deity related to Gnosticism (**Figure 4.45**). A chicken-headed figure holding a whip and a shield, intaglios featuring this image often have words inscribed on the opposite surface. Since this was not visible and the words

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relate to Gnostic teachings, these have been interpreted as amuletic talismans (Boon 1974, 172). These date to the later Roman period, appearing to be in use from the third to fifth centuries AD. Five were recorded from Britain (finds 335, 386, 425, and 529). The one from the Thetford treasure (find 335) was found with an almost identical ring depicting Mercury (see above). Another (find 437) was found in a bishop's tomb at Chichester Cathedral, but it is not known if it is a reused Roman example or a later copy.

The other hybrids vary, but apart from a baboon-headed cockerel holding what appears to be a snake (find 781), all but one include a human face, usually said to be Silenus (Henig 1974b, 54-55), incorporated into a strange creature featuring some part of a cockerel, often taking the form of a hippalectryon, or horse-chicken hybrid. Five of these are known (finds 426, 427, 428, 438, and 1150), all with a variable mix of animal parts. One appears to be a medieval example (find 438) and has a more elaborate border. Cupid rides on the back of another (find 1150). A lead sealing made by such a ring appears to show a hippalectryon without the Silenus face (find 436).

4.6 Sculpture

Figure 4.46 - distribution of sculpture. Larger, lighter circles indicate a higher concentration of artefacts.

Twenty stone carvings depicting chickens were mostly concentrated along the northern frontier and in the west, where there they could be explained by a larger military presence and easier availability of stone (**Figure 4.46**). This is roughly a third of the number found in France and Belgium. Four sites had more than one example, with three each from Corbridge, Northumberland and the temple at Uley, Gloucestershire, and two each from York and the fortress at Vindolanda.

Location type - sculpture
Total count = 20
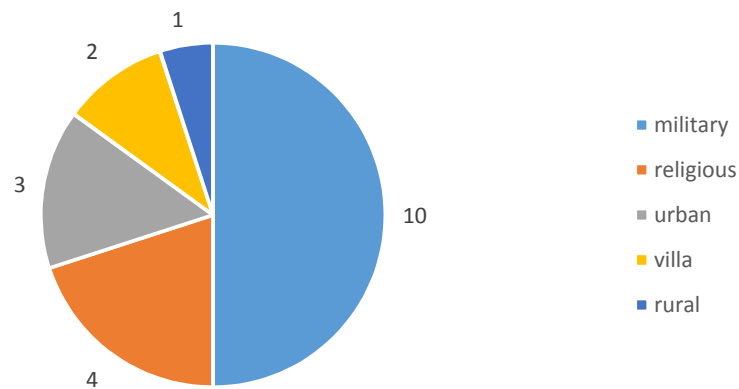
Figure 4.47 - sculpture by location type.

Fully half of them were recovered from military sites, followed by religious sites, urban sites, villas, and only a single rural find (**Figure 4.47**). Notably, all had a known find site, even if the precise details of the discovery were not known.

Category summary - sculpture
Total count = 20
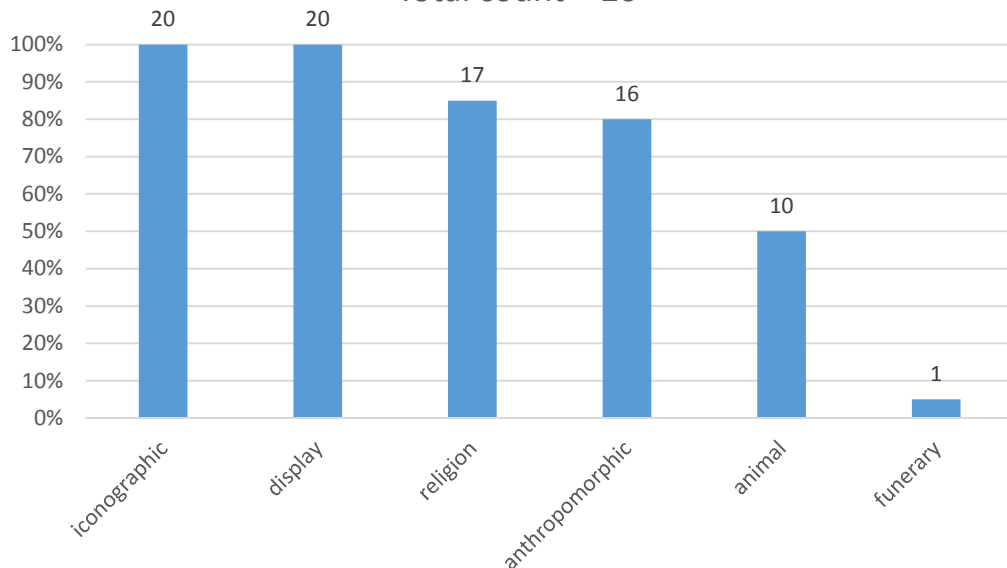
Figure 4.48 - percentages of sculpture by category.

All of the statues included a possible *iconographic* representation of a chicken and were

almost certainly meant to be *displayed*, and 17 were in some way related to religion (**Figure 4.48**). Sixteen included *anthropomorphic* figures, all but two *religious* figures, and 10 contained images of other *animals*. A single carved tombstone represents the *funerary* category.

Strength comparison - sculpture
Total count = 20
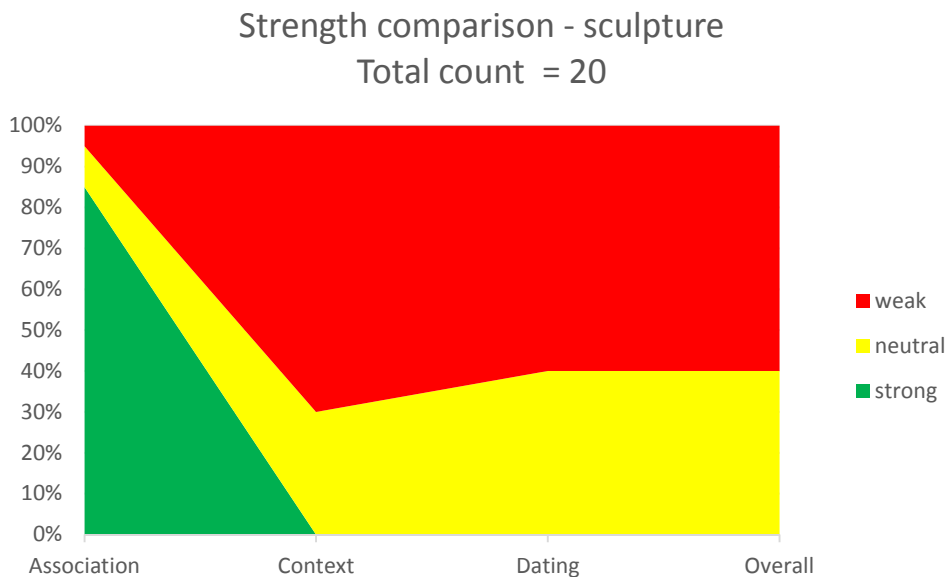
Figure 4.49 - comparison of strength ratings for sculpture.

Although some carvings were worn or incomplete, it was usually possible to identify the image as a chicken and give it a high *association* score (**Figure 4.49**). As large, heavy objects, the find spot of most statues is known, but the reuse of statues in other structures resulted in many being removed from their original *context*, and this lowered some of the *dating* scores as well. However, the *overall* scores remained more towards neutral than many other find types.

Date ranges for statues were based on style and tended to cover a wide range (**Figure 4.50**), with a strong focus on the second and third centuries AD.

Date ranges - sculpture
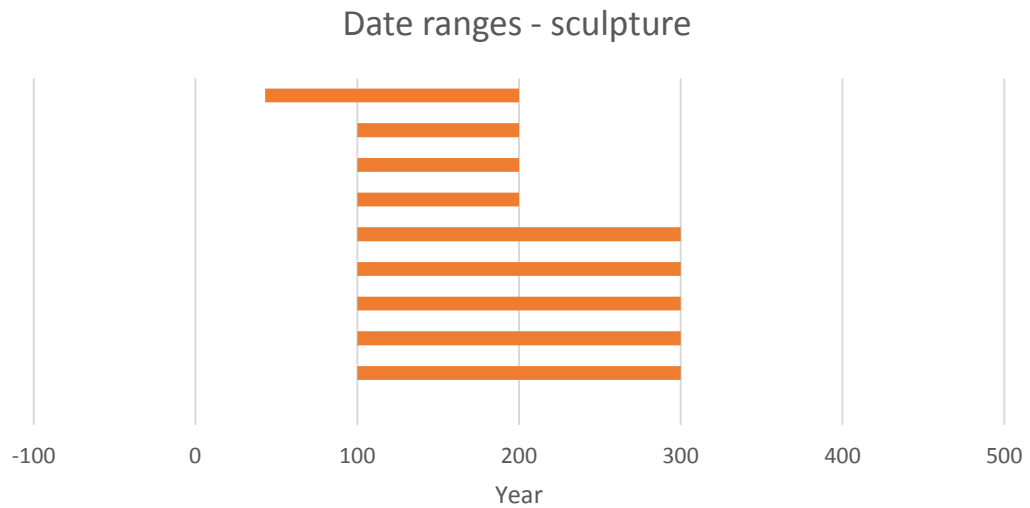
Figure 4.50 - date ranges for dateable sculpture. Each line represents a single artefact. Objects in blue were dated by stratigraphy or associated finds; objects in red were dated stylistically.

The reuse of statues in later structures and their ritualised destruction or burial means that many have probably been lost or irreparably damaged. It should be noted that artefacts serving the same purpose, particularly smaller examples, could more easily and cheaply be made of perishable materials, or metals which could have been easily recycled.

4.6.1 Mercury
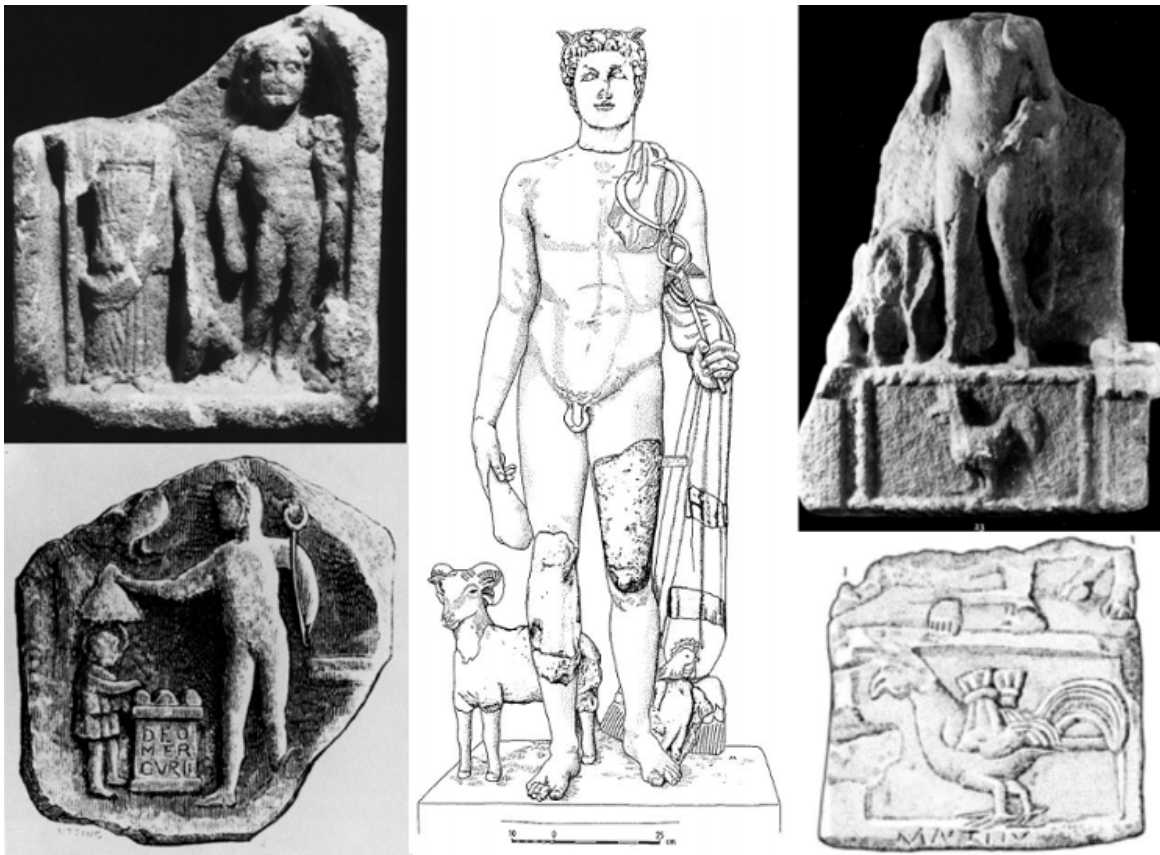
Figure 4.51 - sculptures of Mercury. Top left, find 93, relief of Mercury and Minerva from Aldsworth, Gloucestershire (Henig et al. 2000, plate XX); centre, find 307, reconstruction of statue of Mercury from the Uley temple (Henig 1993b, figure 76); top right, find 462, relief of Mercury from Corbridge, Northumberland (Phillips 1977, plate 6); lower left, find 468, relief of Mercury from Vindolanda (Coulston and Phillips 1988, plate 21); lower right, find 790, relief of chicken carrying bags beneath Mercury's(?) feet from York (Frere et al. 1983, figure 39).

Thirteen pieces of worked stone were related to Mercury (**Figure 4.51**). The figure is not always clear, but is usually identifiable by a caduceus and purse. Two were altars, while the rest were more traditional sculptures. Two depicted Mercury sitting next to a female figure. One (find 93) was interpreted as Minerva (Henig *et al.* 2000), and the other Rosmerta (find 521), a native goddess commonly associated with him in Britain and Gaul (Henig 1993a, 78). The surviving part of a carving from York shows feet which may belong to Mercury above an odd image of a cockerel carrying sacks over its

back (find 790).

Only three of these came from a religious site, all of them Uley, Gloucestershire. One of them is highly fragmented (find 307), but appears to have been a free-standing sculpture of Mercury, with quite a Classical head surviving, accompanied by a goat and chicken at his side. The other two are altars (finds 308 and 309), one of which (find 309) includes the name of the sculptor, one Searigillus, son of Searix.

The other sculptures were from a mix of sites, with six coming from military sites, three from urban, and one, the relief of Mercury and Minerva (find 93), coming from a villa at Aldsworth, Gloucestershire.

4.6.2 Other

Chickens appear in six other carvings seemingly unrelated to Mercury. From Corbridge, Northumberland, a carving of Fortuna and another goddess holding a torch, an object commonly associated with Ceres, has a chicken perched next to one of them (find 461). A cockerel appears beneath a crescent moon, possibly associated with either Men or Attis, Cybele's consort, on a relief from Vindolanda (find 469). A small, seated figure of uncertain gender found with a collection of four altars and three other statues in Lower Slaughter, Gloucestershire (find 544) includes what appears to be a bird of some sort, possibly a chicken, at its feet. What deity, if any, this depicts is unclear, but it does bear some similarity to the seated goddess figurines from Gaul (see 6.2.2).

Not associated with any deity is a clay relief from Corbridge of a soldier with a cockerel (find 509), and a lone chicken statue carved of Carrara marble has been found at Bradwell villa (find 300). Although later in date, an unusual Anglo-Saxon frieze including chickens from a church at Breedon-on-the-Hill, Leicestershire (find 626) is included in the dataset for comparison.

4.6.3 Funerary

Figure 4.52 - find 541, gravestone of a young girl from Bristol (Cunliffe and Fulford 1982, plate 35).

Only one grave marker from Britain is known to contain chicken imagery. It is the gravestone of a young girl from near Bristol (find 541), with small carvings of a dog and a chicken on either side of a crude portrait. It has been suggested that these may represent the child's pets (Cunliffe and Fulford 1982, 39), although both animals are commonly thought to have chthonic associations that could also explain their presence. Although associated with a female, the bird, although crude, seems more like a cockerel through its stance and strong crest and tail feathers, and one of the lines near its feet may be a spur.

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4.7 Pins
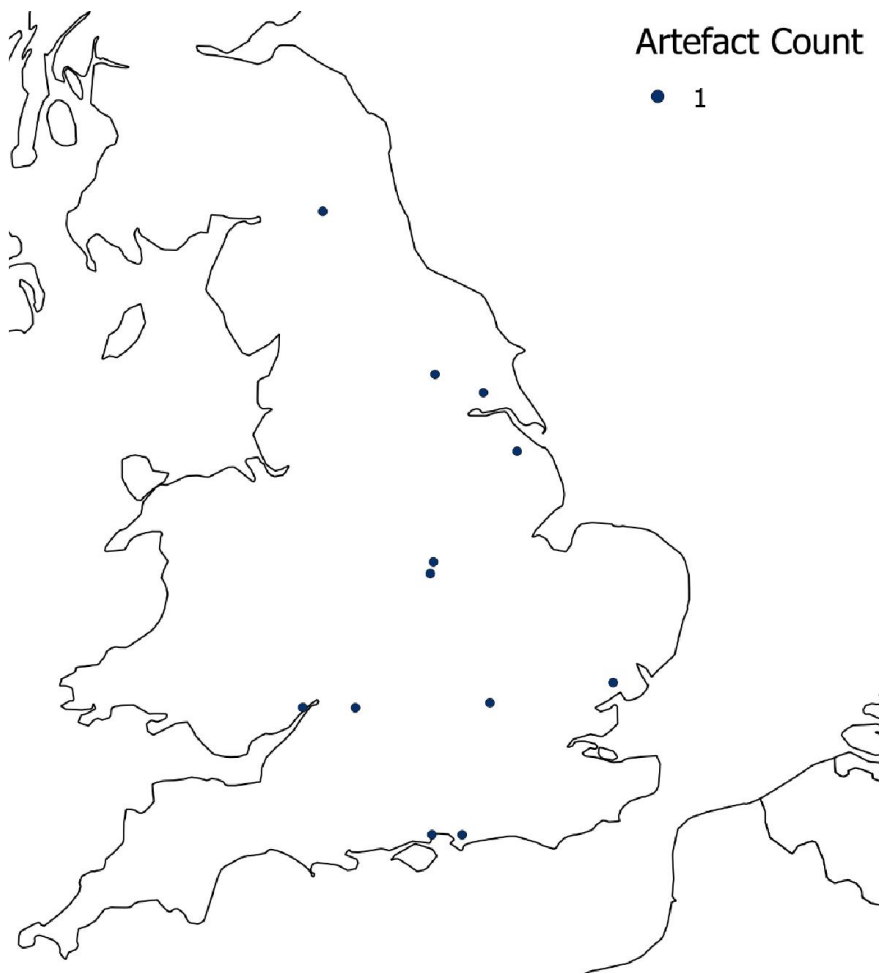
Figure 4.53 - distribution of pins. Larger, lighter circles indicate a higher concentration of artefacts.

A small number of pins (12) were recovered from across Britain (**Figure 4.53**). Half were carved out of bone and half were of a copper alloy. Most of these appear to be hairpins, but one was a normal pin possibly made out of chicken bone.
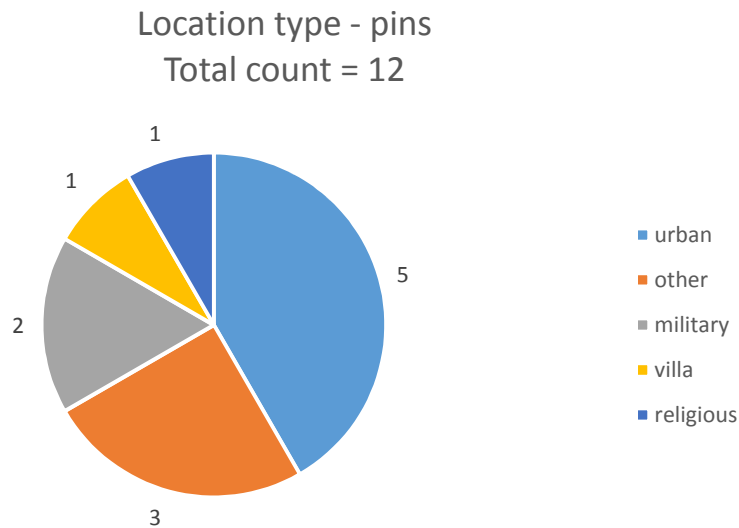
Figure 4.54 - pins by location type.

Urban sites make up the largest proportion of find sites (**Figure 4.54**), with smaller numbers from other site types.
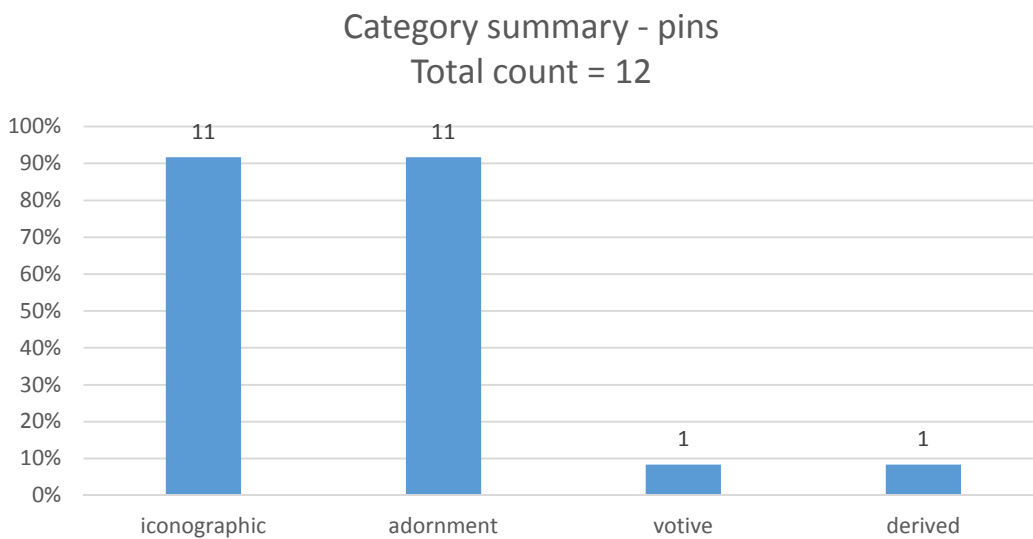
Figure 4.55 - percentages of pins by category.

Most of the pins had heads shaped like birds, and are thought to have been hairpins, accounting for the *iconographic* and *adornment* categories (**Figure 4.55**). One was found at the temple of Nodens in Lydney Park, Gloucestershire (find 677), and may have been a *votive* deposit. The normal pin was recorded as being been made out of

chicken bone, which explains the single *derived* example.

Strength comparison - pins
Total count = 12
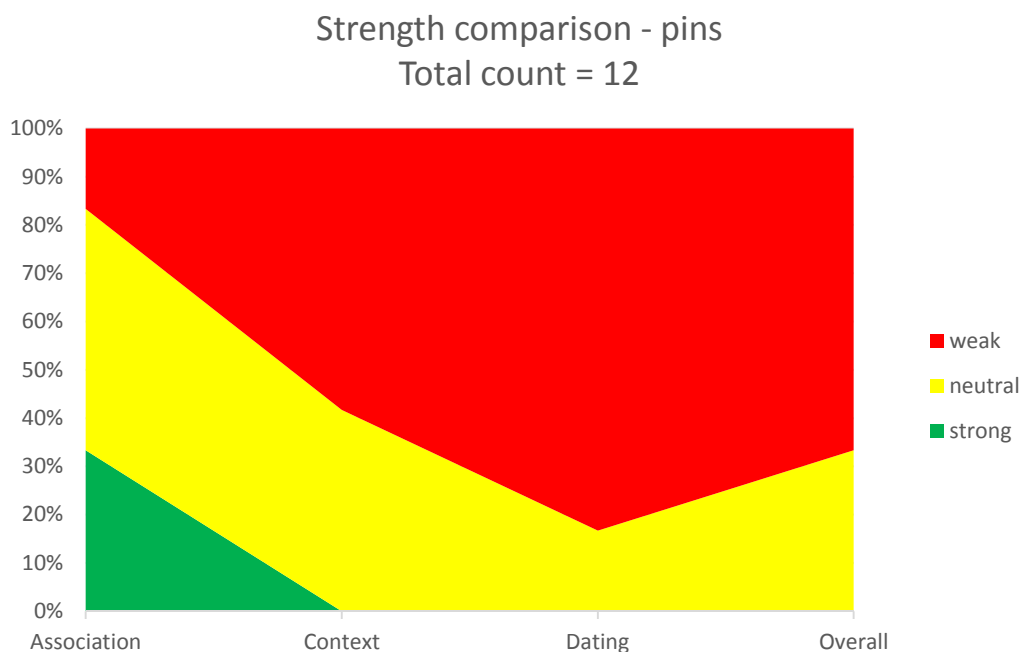
Figure 4.56 - comparison of pin strengths.

Possibly due to their small size, many of the pin heads were quite stylised and it was difficult to clearly identify them as chickens (**Figure 4.56**). Nearly half were recovered from relatively secure *contexts*, but *dating* was still based more on style than stratigraphy. This kept the *overall* scores at a fairly standard level for the dataset overall.

Few pins were well-dated (**Figure 4.57**). One (find 441) was restricted stratigraphically to a range of about 60 years, but it was not clear how firm this dating was. The small pin supposedly made of chicken bone (find 1176) was found with samian ware dating it to the late second to early third century.
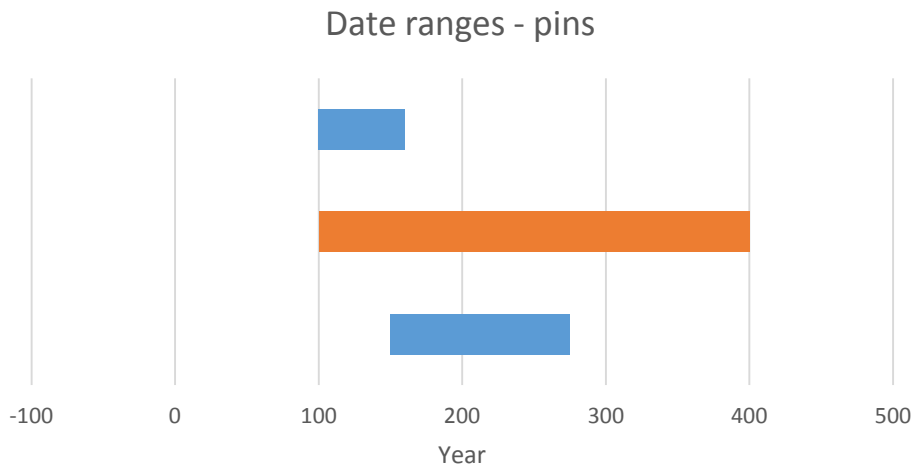
Date ranges - pins

Figure 4.57 - date ranges for dateable pins. Each line represents a single artefact. Objects in blue were dated by stratigraphy or associated finds; objects in red were dated stylistically.

Hairpins of the same type were made of different materials, and it should be noted that these could have included more perishable materials. The two main groups are described below.

4.7.1 Chicken-headed hairpins
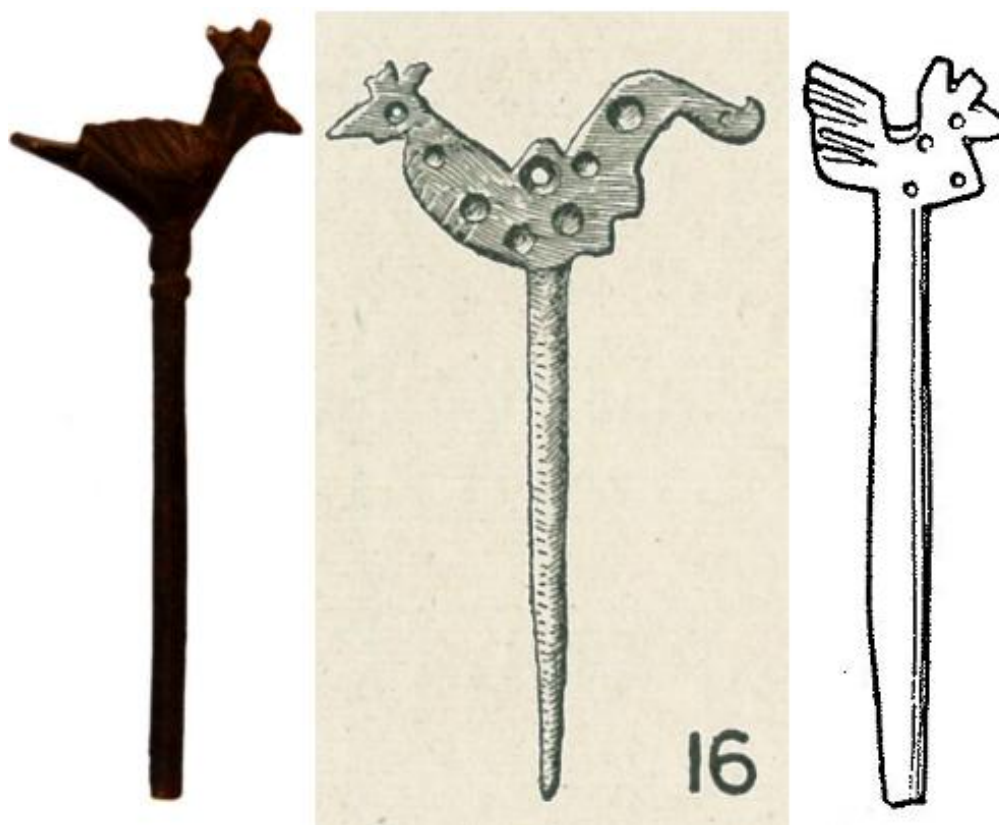
Figure 4.58 - hairpins. Left, find 152, bronze hairpin (image copyright York Museums Trust); centre, find 680, bronze hairpin (Kenyon 1948, figure 89); right, find 409, bone hairpin (Neal 1974, figure 67).

All but one of the pins were hairpins with a zoomorphic shape on the head (Cool group 18B, **Figure 4.58**). They vary in shape considerably, with some weaker examples possibly only representing a rough curved tail and head. One (find 441) was of a flat, heavily stylised form also seen in some figurines (see 4.2.1).

4.7.2 Chicken-bone pin

One pin (find 1176) found at Housesteads fort was said to be made of a "fowl" bone (Allason-Jones 2009, 468), but no details were given on how this identification was made.

4.8 Lamps and candlesticks

Figure 4.59 - distribution of lamps and candlesticks. Larger, lighter circles indicate a higher concentration of artefacts.

A total of five lamps and six candlesticks were recorded from across the study area, along with a candelabra which more likely came from Italy (**Figure 4.59**).
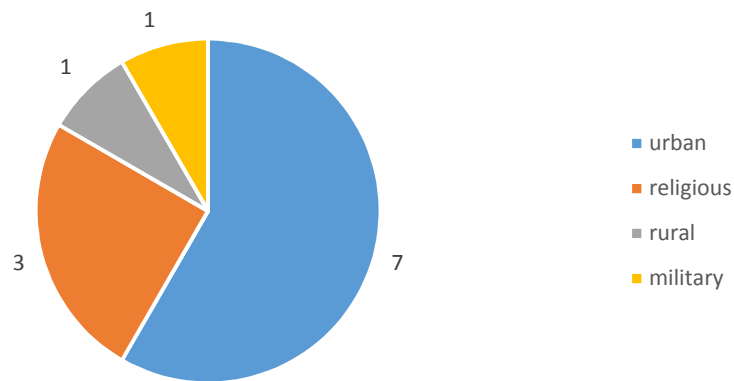
Figure 4.60 - lamps and candlesticks by location type.

Urban sites were the most common find spot (**Figure 4.60**), followed by religious, rural, and military. Lamps tend to be more common on military sites than in this collection (Eckardt 2002, 58), but this may simply be an issue of sample size.
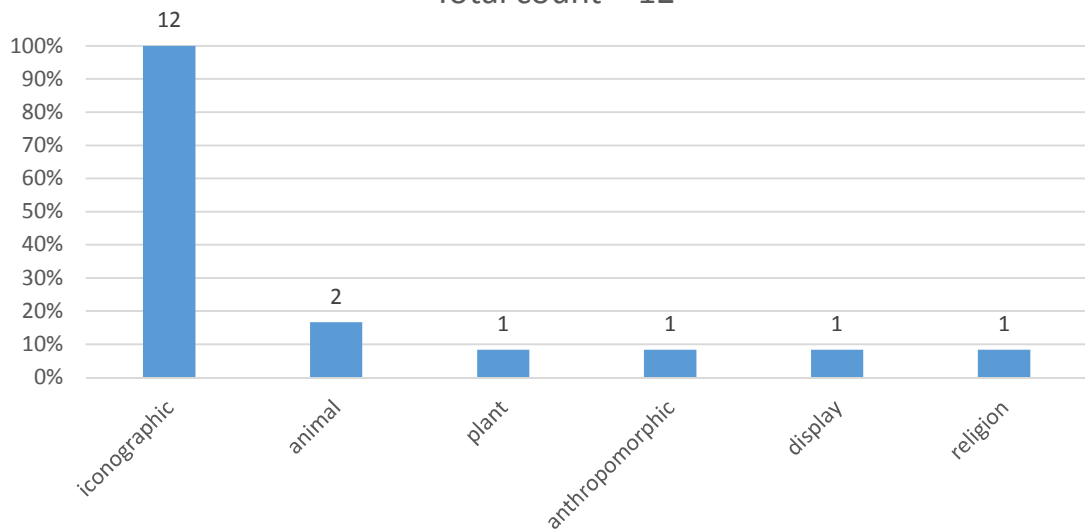
Figure 4.61 - percentages of lamps by category.

All of the lamps and candlesticks included a possible *iconographic* representation of a chicken (**Figure 4.61**). Two included other *animals*, one had a *plant* in the form of a

palm leaf, and one had an image of Mercury accounting for the *religion* and *anthropomorphic* categories. A bronze lamp (find 815) may have had a cockerel mounted on it, which suggests it may have been intended for *display*.

Strength comparison - lamps
Total count = 12
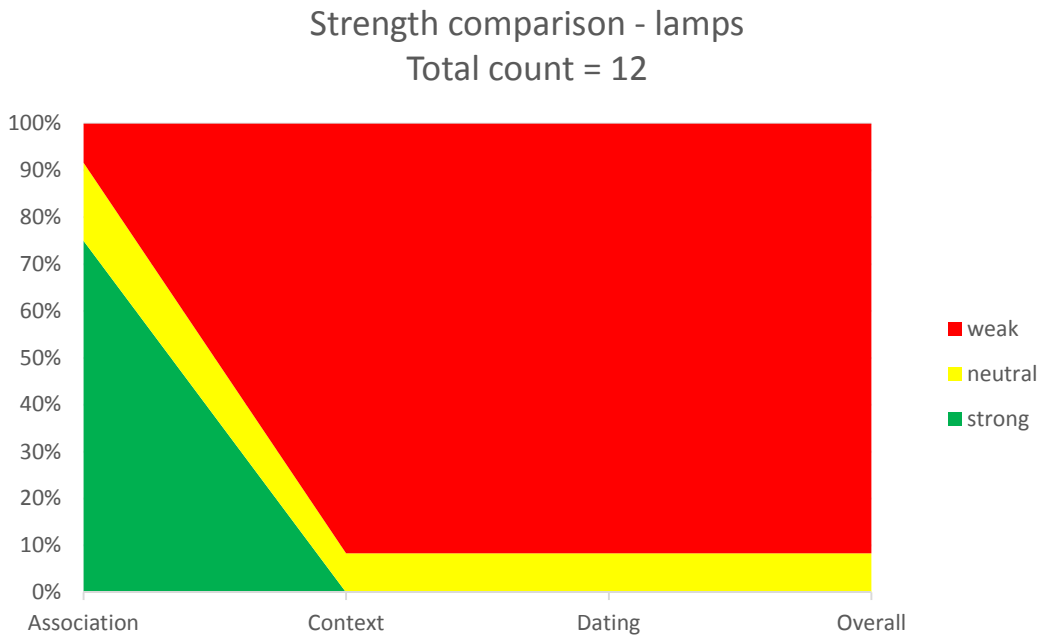
Figure 4.62 - Comparison of lamp and candlestick strengths.

The depictions were usually identifiable as chickens, generally giving them a high *association* score, but most of the objects lacked any *context* or *dating* (**Figure 4.62**).
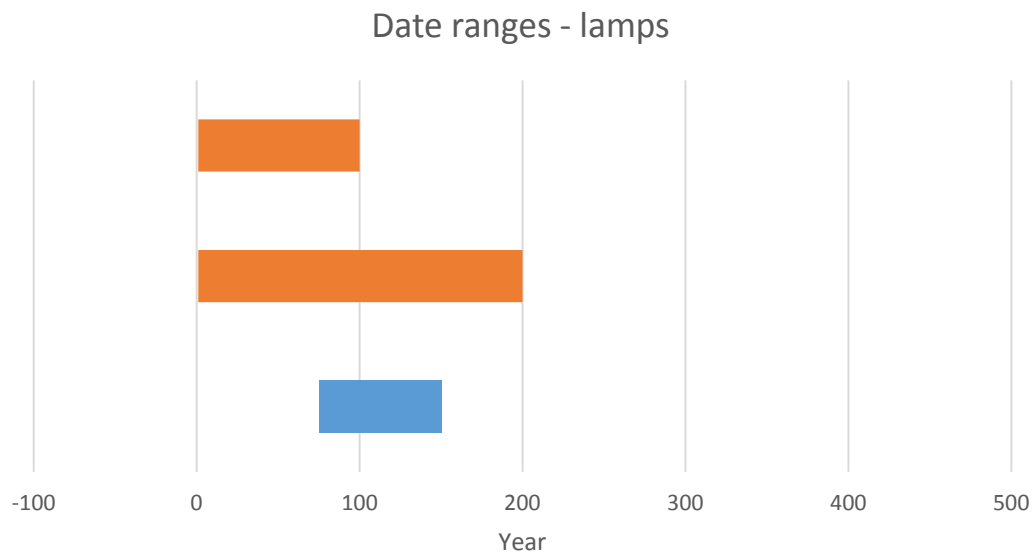
Date ranges - lamps

Figure 4.63 - date ranges for dateable lamps. Each line represents a single artefact. Objects in blue were dated by stratigraphy or associated finds; objects in red were dated stylistically.

Three of these objects were dateable (**Figure 4.63**). First was a ceramic lamp with only an image of a pair of bird feet surviving (find 363), found in Chichester with objects dating it to the late first to early second century AD. The other two were ceramic lamps (finds 1184 and 1188) dated on stylistic grounds to the first and second centuries AD.

4.8.1 Lamps

Lamps were more commonly made of clay than metal (Eckardt 2002, 55), evidenced here by three ceramic and two bronze examples, all of them from urban contexts. The ceramic lamps lack illustration, but one was described as including a palm leaf (find 1188), which is a very common image on lamps from southern France (see 6.4.1). Two of the others (finds 363 and 815) were damaged, and it is not impossible they were the same type. The remaining one (find 1184) was apparently complete, and only included the chicken image.

One of the copper alloy lamps was in the unusual shape of a chicken sitting atop a galley (find 567). The other (find 815) was less fully described, but was said to be only the top of the lamp, perhaps implying the cockerel was attached or raised in some way.

4.8.2 Candlesticks

Candlesticks were more usually of metal (Eckardt 2002, 97). The material of one candlestick was unknown (find 520), but at least four were made of a copper alloy. One (find 534) was made of chalk. One of the metal candlesticks (find 675) may be the same as the one of unknown material (find 520), as both came from the temple of Nodens at Lydney Park, but not enough detail was present to be certain.

All of the bronze candlesticks (finds 530, 535, 675, and 1189) appear to have had a socket on the back of the chicken, and it is not impossible they were actually fittings of some sort, as was suggested for find 675 (Wheeler and Wheeler 1932, 86). There was one chalk candlestick (find 534) from Silchester, which was a simple square block with carvings of Mercury, a chicken, and what appears to be a snake on three sides.

There was also a large bronze candelabra or incense burner (find 1187) in the Pitt Rivers Museum, recorded as coming from London. Whether this is where it was found or where it was previously is unclear, but it appears to be an Etruscan type, with other examples present in the British Museum and in France (see 6.4.2).

4.9 Tablets

Eight of the Vindolanda tablets were related to chickens in some way. Four only mentioned chickens (finds 641, 642, 643, and 644), one mentioned both chickens and eggs (find 638), and two only mentioned eggs (find 637 and 640). Most were simply lists of provisions, often with prices, but some offered a bit more information. One tablet (find 640) included eggs in a list of objects which may have had a medicinal purpose. An eggcup was mentioned in another (find 639), but the only eggcup found (find 190) in the study area lacked any context or dating, even to period. Finally, two of the tablets (finds 641 and 642) mention a poulterer by name, one Chnisso.

4.10 Mosaics

Figure 4.64 - distribution of mosaics. Larger, lighter circles indicate a higher concentration of artefacts.

Only four mosaics from Britain were found with potential images of chickens (**Figure 4.64**). All of them were found at villa sites.
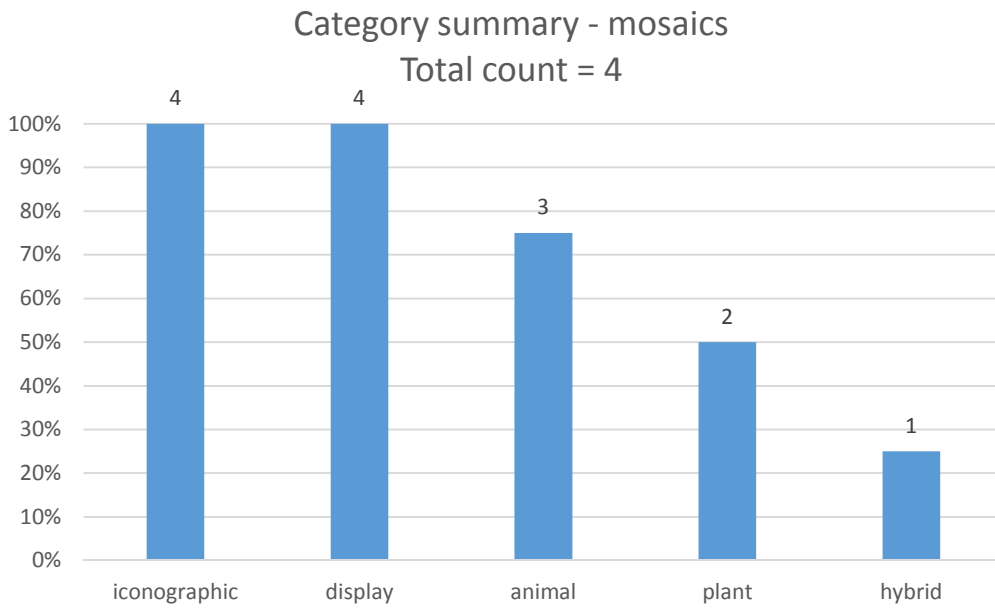
Figure 4.65 - percentages of mosaics by category.

All of the mosaics included images of chickens and were intended for *display* (**Figure 4.65**). The other categories are more fully explained with the individual summaries below.
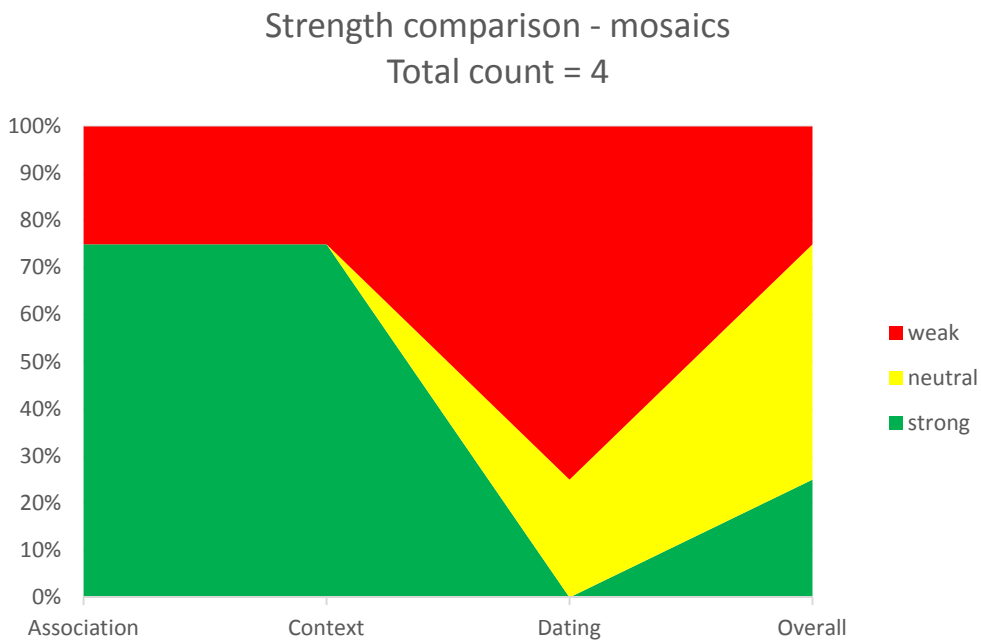
Figure 4.66 - comparison of mosaic strengths.

Three of the mosaics had clear images of chickens, with the fourth having a lower *association* score due to its uncertainty (**Figure 4.66**). As large, immobile, easily damaged compositions, the high *context* scores for most of them should be expected. Only a now-lost mosaic (find 724) scored low in this area. *Dating* was more difficult, with only one having a decent date (find 332). This lowered the *overall* scores somewhat more towards neutrality.

Figure 4.67 - mosaics with head-scratching birds. Top left, find 723, the Great Pavement mosaic from Woodchester (Neal and Cosh 2010, figure 229); top right, find 724, Bacchus mosaic from Stonesfield (Neal and Cosh 2010, figure 263); bottom, find 722, Orpheus mosaic from Withington (Neal and Cosh 2010, figure 218).

Three of them were from an area around the Cotswolds and share a similar image, that of a cockerel or similar bird scratching its comb with a foot (**Figure 4.67**). These include mosaics of Orpheus from villas at Withington (find 722) and Woodchester (find 723) in Gloucestershire, as well as a now-lost mosaic from a villa at Stonesfield, Oxfordshire (find 724). In the first two, the birds form part of a band of other animals around or beneath the central Orpheus scene. In the latter, the bird, which is impossible to speciate based on the surviving illustrations, is one of four set in the corners around

the image of Bacchus in the middle.
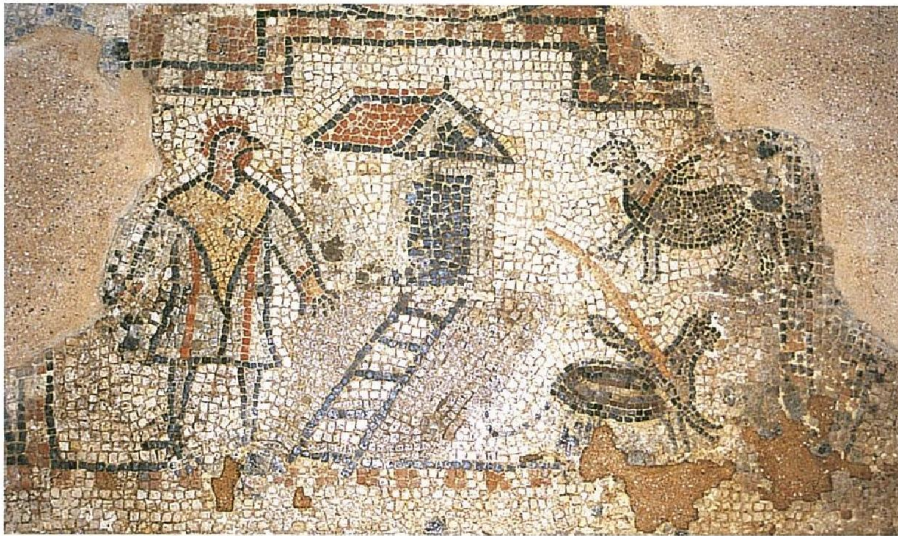
Figure 4.68 - find 332, the Bacchus mosaic from Brading villa (image copyright Neal and Cosh 2009, fig. 247).

The remaining mosaic is from the villa at Brading on the Isle of Wight, and features an unusual chicken-headed figure (find 332, **Figure 4.68**). This image is one of the most discussed in Romano-British mosaics. Interpretations include the figure representing the Gnostic deity Abraxas, a gladiator, a pun on someone's name or a priest's title (Witts 1994, 115; Hanworth 2004, 240; Neal and Cosh 2009, 268), a misinterpretation of the ibis-headed god Thoth (Henig 2013, 260), and even simply a purely fictitious monster (Ling 1991, 150).

This mosaic illustrates one of the issues with this type of study, with most of the interpretations favouring religious or mystical elements, with the building behind the admittedly unusual figure often taking on some meaning based on the interpretation of the figure itself. The idea that the building is simply a chicken-coop, further enhancing the "chicken-ness" of the figure, has been suggested in passing (Baird 1981, 92), but has largely been left unexplored.

4.11 Sealbox lids

Figure 4.69 - distribution of sealbox lids. Larger, lighter circles indicate a higher concentration of artefacts.

Four lids belonging to sealboxes were found from across Britain (**Figure 4.69**). Two came from urban sites and two were found by metal-detectorists. All featured *iconographic* representations of chickens. The exact purpose of these objects is unknown.

Strength comparison - sealbox lids
Total count = 4
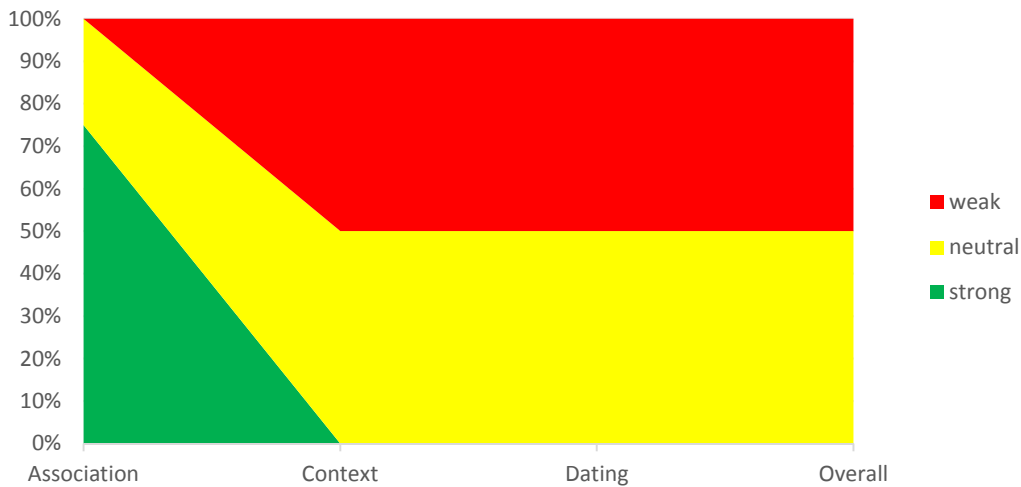
Figure 4.70 - comparison of sealbox lid strengths.

Three of the images were obviously chickens, resulting in strong *association* scores, but one was damaged and not particularly clear (**Figure 4.70**). Half came from relatively secure *contexts*, which also provided better *dating*, placing both into the first two centuries AD. These carried over to the *overall* scores.
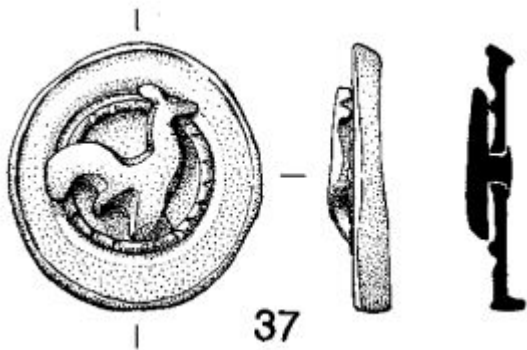
Figure 4.71 - find 505, sealbox lid from St. Albans (Adamson and Niblett 2006, figure 44).

All of these objects had a similar image of the silhouette of a chicken (**Figure 4.71**). Two were found in Yorkshire by metal-detectorists (finds 108 and 120). The others came from Chichester (find 362) and St. Albans (find 505).

4.12 Miscellaneous
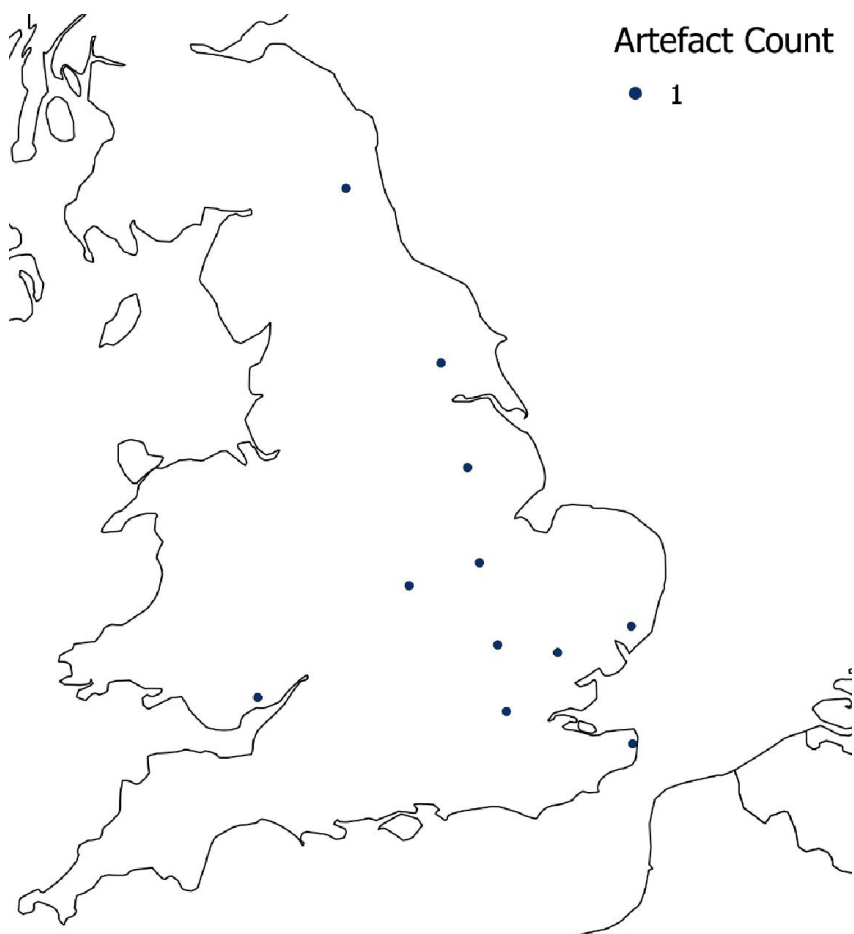
Figure 4.72 - distribution of miscellaneous artefacts. Larger, lighter circles indicate a higher concentration of artefacts.

Eleven artefacts did not fit into any of the more common typologies above and are briefly summarised here. They came from across Britain, with most coming from the east (**Figure 4.72**). They included two unusual leg rings, two plaques, an amulet, a brick, an egg cup, a manicure set, a miniature oven, a patera, and a sandal.
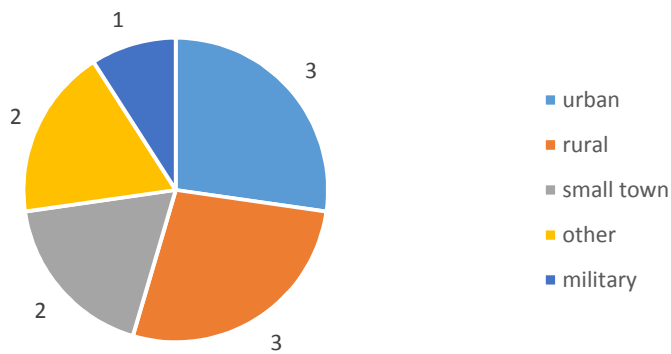
Figure 4.73 - miscellaneous artefacts by location type.

These came from all types of site, with urban and rural being slightly more common (**Figure 4.73**).
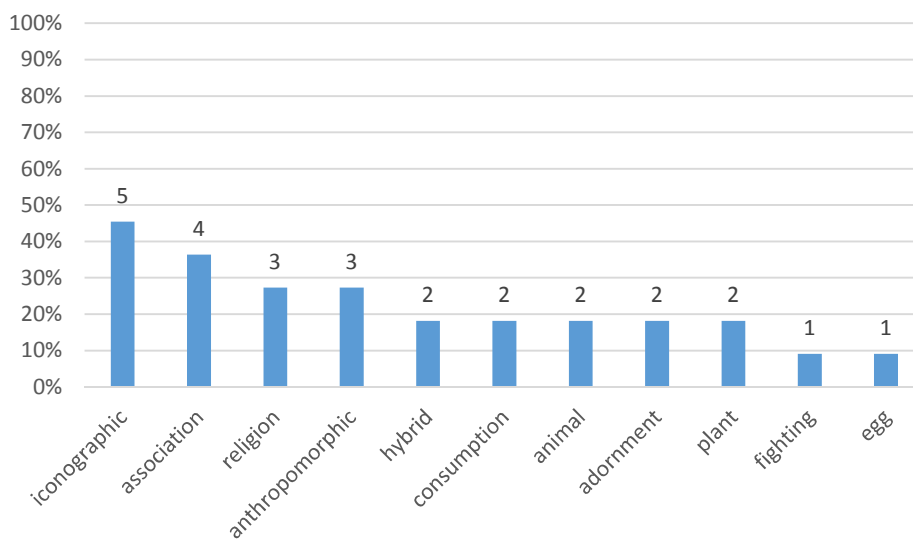
Figure 4.74 - percentages of miscellaneous artefacts by category.

Only five of these objects included images of chickens, and four were found in *association* with physical remains (**Figure 4.74**). Three were *religious* and included *anthropomorphic* depictions. Two included other *animals*, two with *plants*, two were

linked with *consumption*, two were articles of personal *adornment,* and one each was associated with *fighting* and *eggs*.

Strength comparison - miscellaneous
Total count = 7

Figure 4.75 - comparison of miscellaneous artefact strengths.

Most of the *associations* among these were quite strong, but some were more dubious and had weaker scores (**Figure 4.75**). Nearly half came from fairly good *contexts,* but not as many were well *dated*. The *overall* scores tended to be weak, but not as much as some of the more common find types.

Of these, one of the most interesting is a potential artificial cockspur (find 325), found attached to the leg of a cockerel in a ditch at Baldock, Hertfordshire. Unfortunately, it was never illustrated or photographed and has since been lost. A rough sketch produced on site shows a ring around a bone, but without a protruding spur, either artificial or natural. What appears to be a similar ring was found on a chicken bone at Tripontium in Warwickshire (find 1438), so this may not be an isolated activity. The exact purpose is unclear.

The plaques include a lead sheet and a die probably used in the making of clay examples. The lead sheet (find 782) depicts Mercury and was found in the baths at Caerleon. The die (find 543) likewise depicts Mercury and was found near a pottery

kiln at Stibbington, Cambridgeshire.

A strange, phallic amulet from Ufford, Suffolk (find 599) has at one end a shape that could be either a fist or a chicken's tail as part of some unusual hybrid. It is similar to hybrid figurine or mount (find 596, see 4.2.1).

A brick from a farmstead at Shalford, Essex (find 619) has a bird's footprint on it, possibly from a chicken kept on site, although it is impossible to be certain. Footprints like this on bricks and tiles may be more common, but it seems unlikely that the weight of a chicken would be enough to leave a mark in any but the softest clay.

One of the more unusual artefacts is a manicure set in the shape of a chicken (find 299), found near Fangfoss, Yorkshire. It is remarkably similar to the sitting chicken type of brooch in both shape and style (see 4.3.1), and it seems likely it was influenced by them, and possibly even made in the same workshop.

A miniature oven, unfortunately not more fully described, in Lincoln Museum (find 519) was apparently found with chicken bones inside it, but whether this was some sort of votive deposit is unknown.

The handle of a patera that formed part of the Capheaton Treasure (find 918) includes a scene of Mercury sitting beneath a bust of Juno and above Bacchus and Ariadne. A chicken stands at Mercury's side.
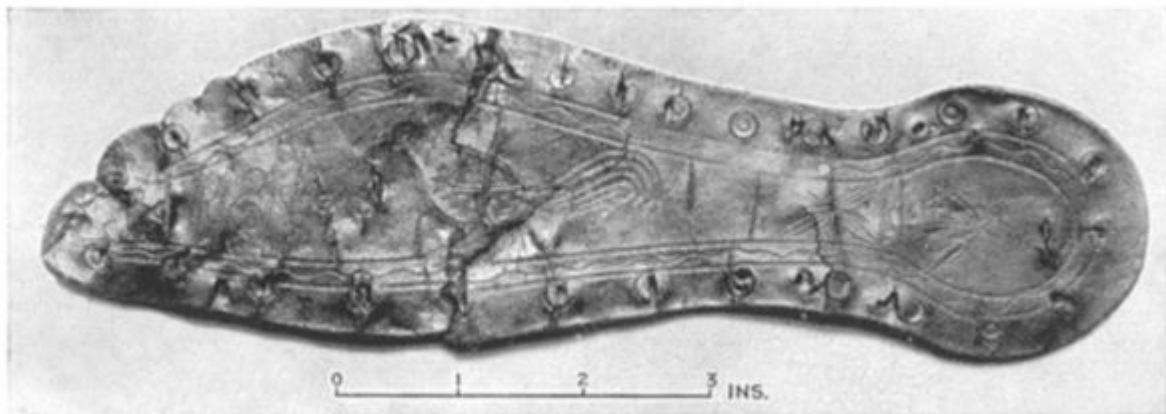
Figure 4.76 - find 1185, a sandal sole from London (Collingwood and Taylor 1934, plate XIV)

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A chicken appears on the sole of a leather sandal from the Bank of England site in London (find 1185). There may be link between feet, chickens, and the cult of Mercury (Crummy 2007), and footwear like this could have played off of the idea of Mercury the traveller.

Finally, an eggcup found on the beach at Worth, Kent (find 190) could be Roman, and the Vindolanda tablets suggest they were in use then (see 4.9), but the date of this one is unknown.

5 Critique of British data

This chapter will expand beyond the physical artefacts and explore the themes expressed in the British material. It will address some of the issues with the data, as well as how the material differs from that of France and Belgium. The chapter will first focus on the functional aspects of the objects, and whether how they were used says anything about the meaning behind their association with chickens. Next, it will explore where the objects were found. Finally, it will examine what is being depicted, both the chickens and their various physical aspects, and other figures, animals, and objects that appear with them in these depictions.

Although the survey of Britain produced less than half the total number of artefacts compared to France and Belgium, many of the latter come from a small number of sites containing hundreds of coins, and the totals from the two regions are more even when those are discounted. This does not necessarily suggest a greater density of chicken-related artefacts, however, as the British sample is more complete than the broad swath across its cross-channel counterpart (see Chapter 7).
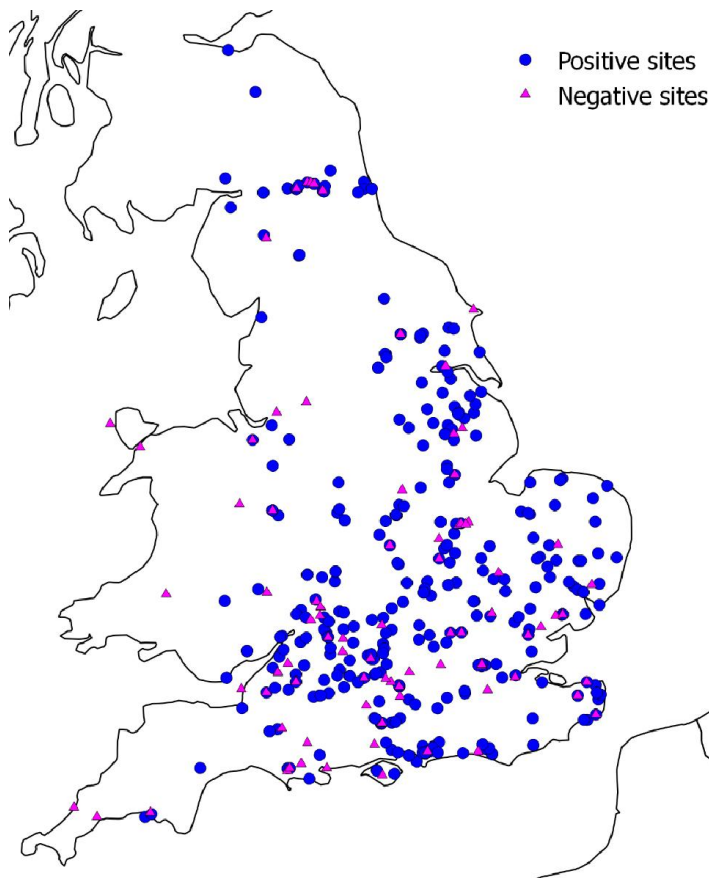
Figure 5.1 - distribution of sites with chicken-related artefacts (positive) vs. those without (negative).

Artefacts were recorded from across all of Britain, even as far north as Edinburgh (**Figure 5.1**). Negative sites – those without any chicken-related artefacts (see Chapter 3) – are spread across the same distribution. One of the primary differences between this region and France/Belgium is the presence of the Portable Antiquities Scheme (PAS), which accounted for 237 (or 46%) of the total finds and filled in much of the rural space on the map (**Figure 5.2**).
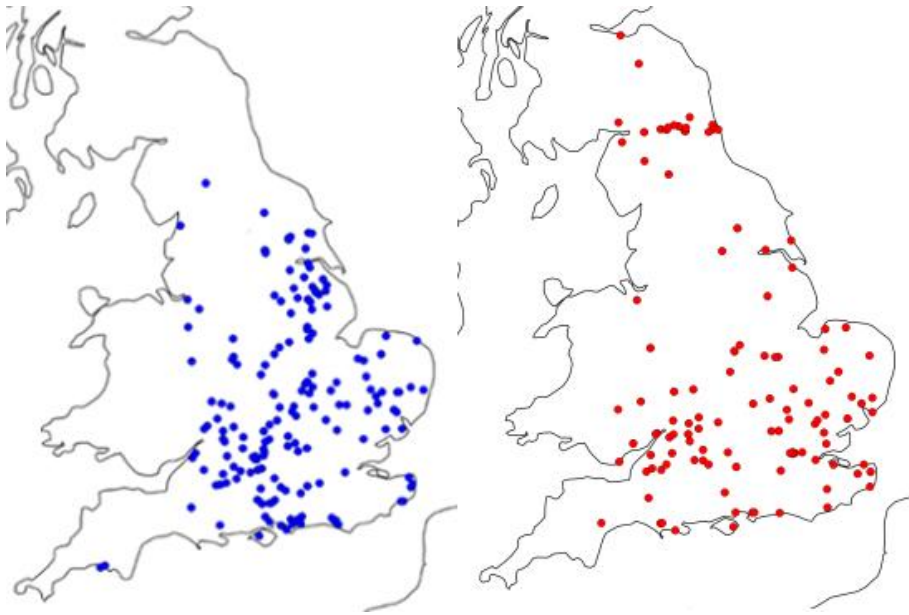
Figure 5.2 - comparison of British data from the Portable Antiquities Scheme (left) and other sources (right).

A comparison of the sites in this project to those in the recently completed Roman Settlement of Rural Britain project (Allen *et al.* 2016) shows, apart from a difference in density, a roughly similar distribution (compare **Figure 5.1** and **Figure 5.3**). This supports the suggestion seen in the relation of positive and negative sites in **Figure 5.1** that chicken-related artefacts appeared wherever Roman sites have been investigated. The discrepancies between these datasets is primarily due to a lack of sites from those areas in this study.
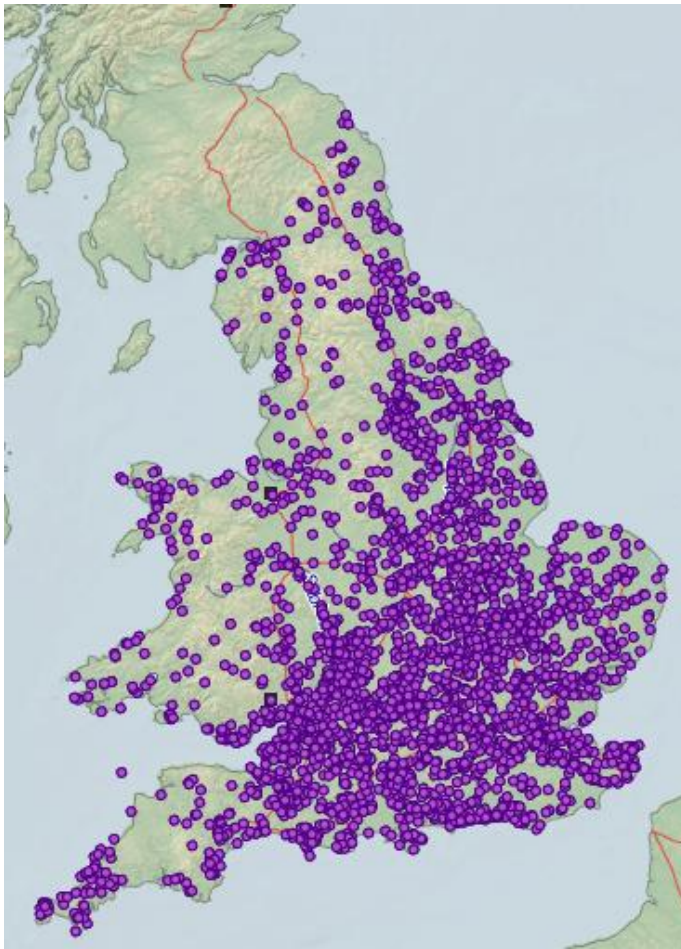
Figure 5.3 - map of sites included in the Rural Settlement of Roman Britain project (Allen et al. 2016).

The most immediately striking thing in this distribution is the clear line across Hadrian's Wall. While this strip, by its clear and linear nature, has been more intensely investigated than much of its surroundings, the relatively intense concentration of the military, a group rich in culture from across the Empire, along it almost certainly means this distribution is real, and not merely excavation bias.

5.1 Function

Every artefact will have had some function, even if that function was simply to be displayed. By examining how they were used, one can gain some understanding of how people viewed both the artefact and the chickens associated with it. The types of use break down into three fairly broad categories: display and decoration, personal adornment, and use in some formalised ceremony. Some objects do not fit easily into

one of the above, or may have a less clear link between the object's function and chickens, and these will be discussed last.

5.1.1 Display and decoration

Many of the artefacts in this collection were either free-standing images of chickens or included an image of them as an element of decoration on another object. It is not always clear if these objects were primarily meant for display or had some other, less clear purpose tied in with their underlying meaning. Even when appearing on objects with a clear primary use, such as pottery or altars, it is difficult to tell how important or laden with meaning the iconography was.

The display-oriented objects were mostly figurines (section 4.2) and sculptures (section 4.6), but the four mosaics from the region (section 4.10) also fit into this category. They are made of strong materials that survive well, but even so, many of them have not survived in great condition. Many of the sculptures were quite damaged and the depictions of birds were difficult to identify, and one of the mosaics (find 724) has since been lost. It is entirely possible that many more decorative elements existed in more perishable materials, such as on wooden furniture or on architectural elements or wall paintings. Because of this, this type of object is almost certainly under-represented.

In these depictions, the chicken is clearly an object of interest, even if that interest is secondary to another figure, such as a deity. In Britain these objects were primarily manufactured from bronze or stone, with relatively fewer ceramic figurines compared to France and Belgium. However, these still varied in style and quality, suggesting that the smaller examples, namely the figurines, catered to a range of economic and, possibly, social groups. Whether this was due to shared religious beliefs or affiliations with certain cultural groups or even simply a shared appreciation for the bird itself is difficult to determine from the objects themselves. It becomes necessary to look at their context (see 5.2) and what exactly they depict (see 5.3) to delve further into their meaning.

Those objects with a more clear primary function that included chickens as decoration, such as pots or lamps, are easier to accept as having a purely decorative aspect. It is easy to dismiss the decorative aspects as being unrelated to how the object was used, but that is not necessarily the case (see below 5.1.4). The decoration may have played a

prominent role in that object's use in the society that used it, and this will have been affected by how the object itself fitted into that society. How much attention that object receives from modern archaeologists could also affect how the decoration is interpreted, which may or may not reflect the actual importance it had in the past.

This may be best explored by thinking of artefacts as either high- or low-impact. The high-impact object is one that is more rare and expensive or owned by a prominent member of society, and not a routine interaction for most of the public, while the low-impact object is generally smaller, more common, and a more everyday experience. This does not suggest that high-impact objects were necessarily more important, and they may in fact have been a response to more numerous low-impact artefacts that had a far greater role in shaping a symbol's meaning. France and Belgium have a greater proportion of the former than is seen in Britain, and this concept is further discussed there (see 7.1.1).

The high-impact objects in Britain include the sculptures and mosaics, but smaller objects belonging to important people, such as their signet rings, could also have possessed a prominence that the find type alone would not suggest. The low-impact objects are much more common, including figurines, pottery, brooches, and ceramic lamps. Some of the more rare objects are less clear, such as the patera, which could have had a ceremonial use. Although difficult to quantify without a more complete biography of each artefact, the British assemblage breaks down into roughly 5% high-impact and 95% low-impact objects.

The presence of chickens as decorative elements on both high- and low-impact types of objects suggests a common view of the chicken as a prominent animal in the culture of Roman Britain.

5.1.2 Adornment

Artefacts that were meant to be worn as a form of personal adornment or clothing were quite common in Britain. These were primarily brooches (section 4.3) and rings (section 4.5), but also included hairpins (section 4.7) and a single sandal sole (section 4.12). Some of the figurines, usually referred to as fittings or mounts, were described as possibly being attached as some form of adornment, but this could have been to attach

them to another object as well, or they could have been part of the harness for a larger animal. As these objects were uncertain, they are largely excluded from the following discussion.

The enamelled "sitting chicken" brooches (see 4.3.1), which appear across the country in quite high numbers, representing 60 of the 73 brooches, are unusual in that they appear to be a uniquely British artefact. None appear to have been found outside of the country, in spite of their frequency across the region, including two found beyond the frontier in Scotland. Most lack enough contextual detail to know what type of site they came from, but they have been found on urban, military, religious, and villa sites. Crummy (2007) has suggested that these brooches, along with others taking the shape of shoes, purses, and flies could indicate membership in a cult of Mercury, which could explain their wide distribution across a variety of sites. In this light, the sandal sole that includes a chicken image (find 1185) takes on a new significance, representing another link between shoes, chickens, and potentially Mercury. If so, this particular cult must have had a widespread presence which, strangely, only extended across Britain based on the restricted range of these objects. These brooches bear a superficial similarity to an Iron Age brooch found in a 4th century BC tomb at Reinheim (see section 6.1.9), and it is possible that some connection exists, but how it survived over four centuries and over such a distance, or why it did not reappear in France, far closer to its origin, is unknown.

Rings were the second most common piece of jewellery, with 42 in total (see 4.5), and, given their small size, many more have probably been lost or destroyed than survive. As rings were used to seal important documents, they created a strong association between the individual who owned the ring and the image it contained (Henig 1974a, 24). While all of the artefacts worn on the body suggest a positive association with chickens, it is this incredibly personal connection that makes rings particularly interesting.

Some of these objects could have had an amuletic significance, serving as a supernatural defence against evil influences. The bizarre hybrid images on some of the intaglios in particular are mentioned in this regard (Henig 1974a, 142), but even the more traditional images of deities like Mercury could have had a similar purpose, much like a Christian wearing an image of St. Christopher today (Henig 1974a, 89). Some of the later

Abraxas intaglios have what appear to be Gnostic words inscribed on the reverse of the gem, which, as they would have been hidden when mounted, could also have served an amuletic purpose (Boon 1974, 172). The unusual phallic hybrid objects, recorded as an amulet (find 599) and a mount (find 596) have also been interpreted as protective devices (Crummy 2006, 63).

It is difficult to assign a gender to the wearers of these artefacts. The hairpins are a more definite indicator of female use of chicken imagery, based on Roman portraiture depicting elaborate female hairstyles requiring their use (see Stephens 2008 for discussion and recreation of some of these), but the other artefacts are less clear. The rings in the Backworth hoard (find 287) appear to be sized for a male and female (Henig 1974a, 67). In a male dominated society, it might be expected that the male provider of the household would be the person most likely to need ring for its legal and fiduciary purposes, but there is no reason why a woman could not have used one for family or even personal business. In fact, the so-called "National Geographic Lady" from Herculaneum was found wearing a ring with chicken imagery (Roberts 2013, 288).

The use of these images on articles of personal adornment could have simply been fashionable, but they could also have indicated membership in a larger social group, secular or religious, such as the chicken brooches and a possible cult of Mercury discussed above. The rings in particular indicate a strong personal connection to the concept of a chicken, and a closer look at what these images depict can reveal more about what this deliberately invoked association was (see below, 5.3)

5.1.3 Ceremonial

Most of the artefacts in this collection could have been used for religious purposes, but this section focuses on those that were more definite. This group of four objects is much smaller than in the French and Belgian data (see 7.1.3) due to the much smaller number of sculptures and a corresponding reduction in the number of altars.

Although some of the incomplete sculptures could have been part of altars or otherwise functioned in a religious ceremony, only two definite altars featuring images of chickens were found in Britain, both of them from the temple of Mercury at Uley, Gloucestershire. Both were quite damaged and reused as structural elements in later

buildings. One is more complete, with only the surface of the image sheared away (find 308), and it is still possible to make out a figure of Mercury with a chicken and goat standing on either side. The other (find 309) is very fragmented, with only the two companion animals and pieces of the deity surviving above the mostly intact base. It contains an inscription with the name of the sculptor, however; one Searigillus, son of Searix. The names suggest native craftsmen were used instead of Roman immigrants (Green 1998, 24).

The altar to Mithras from the temple at Carrawburgh lacked chicken imagery, but it did cover a small pit containing a Castor-ware cup (find 645) containing the head and two cervical vertebrae of a chicken, as well as a tin cup and pieces of burnt pinecone (Richmond and Gilliam 1951, 35-36). While this only shows a single ceremonial act, presumably the dedication of the altar, the chicken bones found deposited in other parts of the building (Richmond and Gilliam 1951, 16, 24) suggest a continued structured use of the real birds at the site (see 8.5.2).

The patera from the Capheaton Treasure, Northumberland (find 918) could also have been used during public or private ceremonies. The religious elements it depicts suggest a certain awareness of the divine even if it was used for less overtly ceremonial purposes.

5.1.4 Other functions

Some objects had uses unrelated to their association with chickens. The use of chickens as decorative elements has already been discussed (5.1.1), but it is possible that this decoration may have had a more subtle association with how the object was used.

The most "functional" artefacts in the British data are the pottery and lamps, with both types occasionally including chicken imagery as decorative elements. The lighting equipment, which includes lamps and candlesticks, could be seen as excellent objects for carrying symbolism relating to light, and images of cockerels could fit into this as creatures associated with sunrise. However, with over 2,600 of these objects known from British collections (Eckardt 2002, 27) and only 11 containing images of chickens (see 4.8), none of which are crowing, this symbolism does not seem to have existed. This lack of symbolic imagery seems to be normal for these objects in general (Eckardt

2002, 118), however, so perhaps this merely reflects the trend.

Pottery was much more common, and was undoubtedly used in the preparation and serving of chickens as food. However, the chickens that appear on them as decoration do not appear to have any deeper meaning relating to this process. Samian ware in particular, which is the most decorated of these objects, is quite varied in what it depicts. The decoration appears to be simply that. Likewise, the pottery found holding chicken remains was quite variable, seemingly being whatever pottery was in use locally, repurposed for deposition.

The Late Iron Age coins in this collection are more complex, potentially having multiple functions, including simple exchange, control of trade, storage of wealth, or as a form of propaganda. The iconography on coins reflects some aspect of that culture, but without knowing precisely how the coins were used in that time and place it is more difficult to fully understand their meaning and how, or whether, it relates to that function. These objects are more fully discussed elsewhere (see 8.2).

5.2 Context

The type of site an artefact came from and where on that site it was found can tell something of that object's use, especially when combined into a larger dataset. With so few of these finds having that level of detail, interpretations based on context are quite limited. However, most have at least the place name of where they were found, which can be of some use. At a more detailed level, it is votive or funerary contexts that are particularly informative.

5.2.1 Site type

Nearly half of the objects from Britain lacked enough detail to be sure of the type of site they were found (see 3.1 for details of site types). Discounting them, urban sites were the most common, which is not unexpected (see Chapter 4, **Figure 4.4**). These sites would not only have been prominent and densely populated in antiquity; many of them still are, and will have been intensely investigated for both reasons. Evidence from even a small urban excavation may be expected to make it into a larger publication, while information about a small rural site may remain firmly in the grey literature. Military

sites share a similar prominence, although for their purpose rather than their population, and make up the next largest site type. These types of site would almost certainly have been highly represented in any case, being centres of trade and administration with large population densities, but this may be enhanced by a recovery and publication bias. In Britain, this may be somewhat offset by the Portable Antiquities Scheme, which accounts for many of the finds in the "other" site type.

While this "other" category could include any site type, it probably most represents the non-urban site types, which are less likely to have undergone extensive investigation due to their size and location. Of these, religious and rural sites were most common, followed by villas and small towns.

The presence of chicken-related artefacts on all of these sites suggests that whatever meaning lay behind the iconography, it extended across society as a whole, apparently from an early date based on the limited dating evidence. If they predominantly came from villas or wealthy townhouses, it might suggest an importance to the rural or urban elite. Likewise, if they appeared primarily on military sites, it could suggest a more martial or official meaning. While the meaning of chickens may have been founded on religious, military, or agricultural beliefs, it seems to have become universal enough to appear across the different sites of Roman Britain and in different regions.

5.2.2 Votive

Labelling an object as votive is difficult, since it requires an assumption that it was deliberately deposited as an offering, which necessitates a strong understanding of the object's individual context and the site where it was found. Only five objects were recorded as possible votive deposits, but the lack of context for so much of the dataset may be more responsible for their apparent rarity rather than a genuine absence of them.

The Castor-ware cup from beneath the altar at the Carrawburgh mithraeum (find 645) and the ring from the Backworth hoard dedicated to the Matres (find 287) were the only positively votive objects. However, a ring with an amethyst intaglio depicting Mercury and his companion chicken (find 380) found buried beneath the entry hall at Fishbourne palace seems likely to be votive, especially considering the belief that amethyst was helpful in dealings with a ruler (Henig 1971, 87).

Two artefacts found at or near religious sites were thought to be votive deposits by their discoverers. One was a bird-headed pin from the temple of Nodens at Lydney Park (find 677), and the other was a ceramic chicken figurine found in the Walbrook near the London mithraeum (find 1145), found with a very small shoe sole and other potentially votive objects (Leary and Butler 2012, 84).

Some objects types may have been used for votive purposes, but this is not reflected in where they were found. For example, it has been suggested that small figurines may have been created as votive offerings in lieu of the animal depicted, or to be used in small household shrines as a representation of a deity (Crummy 1983, 143; Leary and Butler 2012, 13). The lack of large concentrations of these objects, at religious sites or elsewhere, sheds some doubt on the former, and, short of discovering the item in a shrine, the latter is difficult to prove.

Personal objects, such as brooches and pins, are also sometimes suspected of being votive (Hattatt 1982, 158; Simpson and Blance 1998; Crummy 2006, 56). Pins in particular are often found bent or broken in a way that suggests they were ritually "killed" before deposition (Crummy 2006, 65), and while some of the pins in the British dataset are damaged in a way that could suggest this practice (finds 104, 198, 441, and 470), the one from the Lydney Park temple appears to be intact.

Brooches have been found in large numbers at the shrine site at Springhead (Schuster 2011, 290) and near the suspected temple site at Great Walsingham (Smith 1999, 22), although none were associated with chickens. Crummy (2006) has looked at chicken-shaped brooches, as well as those depicting soles of shoes, purses, and flies and their possible connection to the worship of Mercury (see 5.1.2), but the lack of context makes it difficult to say if they were primarily offerings or worn as a symbol of devotion.

The dataset includes many examples of the types of objects often thought to be deliberately deposited as a form of sacrifice, such as hairpins and brooches, but with most of these there simply is not enough contextual evidence to support the assumption that they were votive offerings.

5.2.3 Funerary

Funerary deposits are much easier to identify, although there can be difficulty in identifying exactly which objects were part of the burial, particularly from older excavations. Commonly, this is a problem of documentation, and even in modern reports it can still often prove difficult to cross-reference funerary deposits and artefacts. Even large objects like grave markers or more substantial funerary monuments could have been moved or destroyed. As such, funerary-themed objects are almost certainly underrepresented.

These objects, having been found within a grave or marking it, will have either had an association with the deceased or with death itself in some manner. If it was the latter, such deposits would be both common and relatively widespread. The deposition of food remains in the grave, often in pots, which make up a large portion of these objects (see 4.4.2), fits into this category. However, the pots appear to be a very minor component of this practice, seeming to be whatever was conveniently available, with the chicken remains or eggs being the focus of the activity. Of course, the animal selected could represent a favourite food or even a pet and not simply a habitual deposit.

Objects having a more personal connection with the dead would be those less common, more unusual grave goods. If, in a cemetery of 100 graves, only three contained chicken figurines, then those probably represent something more personal rather than a wider cultural practice. As funerary deposits associated with chicken-related artefacts in Britain are widespread but small in number, most of the artefacts here probably fall into this category.

Only one grave marker in Britain contained chicken imagery (find 541, see 4.6.3), and it almost certainly reflects an individual association. Carved rather crudely into the gravestone of a young girl are a chicken and a small dog, which have been interpreted as her pets rather than chthonic symbols (Adams and Tobler 2007, 38).

Nineteen other artefacts were recovered from funerary contexts, with twelve included due to their association with chicken remains or eggshell. Of the others, one was a reused Roman ring from the tomb of a medieval bishop (find 437), three were brooches (finds 194, 598, and 760), and three were figurines (finds 1146, 1148, and 1181).

Most contained at least a little information about the burial they accompanied, although it was not always complete. Where the type of burial was known, inhumations were more common, with 13 compared to five cremations. Nine included the sex of the individual, but it was not always clear how this was determined or with what degree of confidence. There were five male burials, included a ring from a, presumably male, bishop's tomb in Chichester (find 437), a young man with a pot containing chicken remains (find 546), another adult with a pot holding eggshell (find 552), both from York, an adult with a pot containing bones from Winchester (find 674), and a possibly male cremation containing a brooch from St. Albans (find 760). Female burials were less common, with a pot with chicken bones from Ilchester (find 554) and another holding eggshell from Winchester (find 559). One grave from York held remains of an adult male and an adolescent female and included a pot holding chicken bones (find 549). In addition to the child's gravestone discussed above, another child was represented in a burial from Cirencester, which contained an enamelled figurine (find 1181).

With funerary artefacts, the separation of the individual and society must be respected to obtain a true meaning behind the presence of these objects. Chicken-related artefacts appear in funerary deposits across the region in relatively small numbers. This suggests they have a more individual meaning, although this practice could have been reserved for those who died in particular circumstances. It could have been a favourite toy, decoration, or piece of jewellery, or it could be symbolic of some association with chickens, either living or metaphysical. Perhaps the deceased kept chickens or sold eggs, or maybe the figurine represents a favourite living bird. The icon may represent membership in a religious or social group, or be symbolic of a trait they possessed in life.

Although the details of the association are often obscured, this type of artefact, particularly those displaying a more personal connection, imply an intimacy between individuals and chickens, whether flesh and blood animals or as a symbol.

5.3 Depictions

What is depicted, how it is depicted, and what it appears with can be used to explore the

meaning behind an image. Often this is the only recourse, with many objects lacking detailed information on where they were found and when they were made. By examining patterns in how chickens were depicted, it should be possible to extract some idea of symbolism.

Most of the artefacts from Britain featured chickens on their own, but those that include other animals, plants, or objects are more helpful, as they provide multiple potential symbols to compare. Depictions of hybrids of chickens and other creatures are also quite useful in this area.

Some objects, mostly larger compositions like mosaics, may contain separate scenes. In these instances, only those that contained images of chickens were examined in depth.

5.3.1 The chickens

The majority of artefacts depicted chickens on their own, usually single birds. All of the find types are represented in this group.

An artefact with just a chicken can offer only the bird itself for examination. While the physical details of the chicken (or, more rarely, chickens) could be of use, these same features also occur when they appear in larger compositions. As such, all representations are considered here.

During recording an attempt was made to classify the depictions based on the shape and style of various parts of the body, but it proved difficult to do so in practice. Because of damage to the object, issues with the clarity of illustrations or photographs, stylised or abstract depictions, and simple subjectivity, it was often not possible, for example, to be certain what the comb shape was or whether the wattle was missing due to design or accident. Therefore, the focus must remain on individual artefacts and broad trends rather than an objective, detailed summary.

Some of the descriptive elements of the depictions discussed below, such as colour and stance, although not obviously offering much in the way of exploring meaning and symbolism, could have offered a glimpse of what was happening with the living birds at this time. If different types or breeds of chickens were being bred or traded and had

distinguishing characteristics, then their appearance in different media may have allowed an exploration of whether they were viewed differently or had different cultural niches. Unfortunately, not enough data was available to do more than offer a brief summary of what little evidence there was.

5.3.1.1 Cockerel or hen

It was quite common for the chickens to be described as cockerels in the source material. It is the predominantly male traits that make the species identifiable, and this could have biased the interpretation. Females can possess these traits to varying degrees, or it may be that these traits represented "chicken" regardless of sex, in which case hens may be all but indistinguishable from males. Alternately, lacking these characteristics, females may be absent from the dataset because they cannot be identified to species. Because of this, it was rarely possible to be certain of the intended sex of the bird.

Only a few objects contained enough indications of male or female features to be worthy of discussion. The most prominent male features are spurs, which seem to appear in four depictions. Two are mosaics (see 4.10) from villas at Withington (find 722) and Woodchester (find 723), both in Gloucestershire, and these similar enough to have come from the same workshop. Both have a chicken scratching its head, and in the Woodchester mosaic the leg it is standing on appears to have a spur. This image on the Withington mosaic is damaged, but another chicken in the scene seems to have spurs, as well. The image on the sole grave marker (find 541, see 4.6.3) is not particularly clear, but it has a line in the stone that could be a spur. Finally, an intaglio with an unusual chicken-baboon hybrid (find 781) also has spurs on its chicken-legs.

There are far fewer representations of hens than in the French and Belgian dataset, which is largely related to the relative numbers of ceramic figurines, and the sexing of these objects is discussed in detail there (see 7.3.1.1). Most of these figurines are, sadly, unillustrated, and only two (finds 286 and 538) appear to be hens. The Withington villa mosaic (find 722) has several birds next to the two apparent cockerels, but as they have a white neck ring, they are almost certainly doves, not hens. Many of the sitting chicken brooches (see 4.3.1) were described as hens, despite having a comb, wattles,

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and a strong, sickle-shaped tail, but it could be this is because of the shape of the brooch, which suggests a bird sitting on a nest. However, as the bottom of the bird is where the pin is, this could simply been a mechanical choice to make the brooch sit properly when worn.

While frustrating that so few chicken depictions can be reliably sexed, it is interesting that so few of them depict the most male feature, the spur. The fact that the other male features are so strongly identifiable in comparison to females means that there is an inherent bias towards interpreting these birds as cockerels. The colouration of the birds could have offered some further evidence of sex, but unfortunately this was even more limited.

5.3.1.2 Colour

Only five artefacts in the entire British dataset had any colouration, and only two of them are particularly clear. The four mosaics were, obviously, the best examples, but one is only known from an antiquarian drawing that lacks detail (find 724), and another is the bizarre hybrid image from Brading villa (find 332), which only depicts the head of a chicken in a simple brown colouration, with a red comb and wattles.

Figure 5.4 - mosaics from Withington (left, find 722, Neal and Cosh 2010, figure 206) and Woodchester (right, find 723, Neal and Cosh 2010, figure 229), showing the colouration of the chickens.

The other two mosaics, from Withington (find 722) and Woodchester (find 723), are better preserved and include the entire bird, but are both quite rough, constructed with

relatively large tesserae in relation to the size of the bird giving the image a quite "pixelated" effect (**Figure 5.4**). While one of the chickens on the Woodchester mosaic is damaged, leaving only a relatively plain brown head with reddish comb and wattles, the other is more complete, and probably the best colour image from Britain. Here the chicken is largely brown, with a mottled pattern on the wings and tail and seemingly grey legs. The chicken on the Withington mosaic is less clear, with the bird twisted in an unusual position that makes it difficult to determine its true shape. It is also mostly brown, with more mixed colours on the wing and tail, but it also has unusual white stripes on its face and along its body. Here the legs seem to be the same colour as the comb and wattles, which appears to be an orange-red.

One ceramic figurine had some colour. It was found in Wakerley, Northamptonshire, and consisted of only the head (find 1190), and had reddish-brown paint on the eyes and crest.

5.3.1.3 Stance

Since it only requires the body of the chicken to survive, it is much easier to study the stance of the bird than its other physical aspects. Most were chickens in their natural stance, although there was some variability in how their legs were depicted, and some without legs in this stance could depict sitting or nesting birds. It appears that the nature of the artefact may have had more of an effect on how the legs were depicted than remaining true to life. The stability of the object and difficulty of creating a strong point of attachment, most apparent with free-standing objects like figurines, dictated how they appeared. For example, most metal figurines of chickens had relatively simple, but often long, legs, while ceramic figurines tended to have shorter legs for a low centre of gravity and a stable base more appropriate to that material. Some objects, like the sitting chicken brooches (see 4.3.1) may lack legs because the pin was on the bottom of the bird, and legs would only have overcomplicated the structure of the artefact and gotten in the way.

Chickens in a more erect stance were quite common, with 56 recorded examples. This stance could have been intended to display the bird in a more vigilant pose, but it could also have been simply for artistic purposes, or even an attempt to portray a specific type

of chicken, like some of the modern gamecocks which adopt a similar standing position.

Figure 5.5 - ceramic figurine (find 532) of a chicken in the crouched "combat" stance (Green 1976, plate IV).

Perhaps most interesting are those birds in a more crouched position, as this is the stance the cockerels take during combat, often with the feathers around the neck stuck out (**Figure 5.5**). Only 11 artefacts seem to show this, all but one of which were on samian ware pottery (see 4.4.1). These chickens all appear to be depicted on their own, often surrounded by a border, and do not interact either with each other or other figures. The other artefact was a ceramic figurine from Lowbury Hill, Berkshire (find 532).

Although none of these figures appear to confront another in an explicit cockfight, it seems likely the image was meant to evoke a sense of the cockerel's more confrontational side.

Four rings have images of chickens in a similar stance (finds 420, 431, 434, and 439), but in these they appear to be pecking at the ground. It is possible that some of these were meant to depict the same crouched stance or a bird with its head bowed in defeat, but if so, the stance appears more awkward and less natural than the above.

5.3.1.4 Multiple birds

There were 14 artefacts that depicted more than one chicken. Half of these were samian ware pottery, most of which had repeated images of chickens which did not interact with each other. One, however, was more unusual, and has a "bird charmer" holding a bird as if offering it to a larger bird that appears more likely to be a goose (find 1182, **Figure 5.6**). A smaller bird stands by the figure's feet. The species of these birds is

uncertain, and none of them match the more familiar samian depictions of chickens, but it is possible that they are more simplified representations. Whether the bird charmer is meant to be interacting with the larger bird or if it is simply a placement of separate decorative elements is unclear. Two chickens appear on the mosaic from the villa at Withington (find 722), but as with the pottery, these figures do not interact.
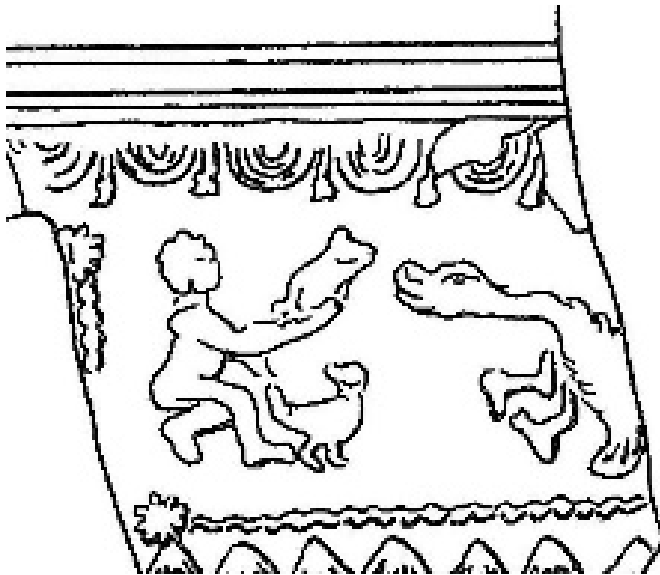
Figure 5.6 - find 1182, samian ware pot featuring a "bird charmer".

Four rings included more than one chicken (finds 302, 396, 420, and 434). All appear to be a variation of the same image, with one chicken standing upright while the other apparently pecks at something on the ground. Alternately, these could be images relating to a cockfight, with one bird standing proud in victory and the other bowing in defeat. Another potential scene of combat appears on the magpie brooch (find 760, see 4.3.4).

Finally, there was a single coin of type DT 519 or 520 from Belgic Gaul (find 158, see 4.1.1), which has two chickens facing each other on the obverse.

5.3.2 Hybrids

Eighty depictions were a hybrid of a chicken and some other creature. Most of these, 66 in total, were coins in the cock bronze family (see 4.1.2), which featured a chicken with a human face on its stomach. Of the 11 rings, five were the similar, but more complex

Silenus images (see 4.5.3). Another (find 436) is similar to this type, but lacks the human face, being a more typical hippalectryon, a horse-chicken hybrid.

The chicken-headed, snake-legged figure of Abraxas appears on five rings. The unusual chicken-headed man on the Brading villa mosaic (find 332) has also been interpreted as Abraxas (see 4.10), but as it lacks the snake legs, as well as the whip and shield, this interpretation is dubious. A less common head-replacement hybrid appears on another ring, but this time the head of a chicken is replaced with that of a baboon (find 781).

Phallic hybrids appear as a mount and an amulet (see 4.2.1 and 4.12), with a phallus serving as the front half of a body with what may be a chicken's tail at the opposite end, and appears to be a variation of a more common phallus and fist image (Crummy 2006, 67).

5.3.3 Humans and deities

Chickens appear with humans or deities in 35 depictions. Although it is not always clear which deity is being depicted, some 29 of these appear to have a religious association.

Mercury is the most common of these figures, appearing on 25 artefacts, including 12 sculptures (see 4.6.1), six rings (see 4.5.2), two figurines (see 4.2.2), two plaques (see 4.12), one coin (find 236), a candlestick (find 534), and a patera (find 918). Although the art is sometimes a bit crude, he usually appears in his Classical form, often nude, with clothing draped over one arm, although a relief from York (find 465) is more provincial, with a more crude, large-headed depiction of the god. Occasionally Mercury appears with other gods. In two reliefs he is accompanied by Minerva (find 93) and, possibly, Rosmerta (find 521), who he appears with more frequently in Gaul (see 7.3.3). The patera (find 918) is a more complex depiction, with Mercury seated beneath a bust of Juno and above the figures of Bacchus and Ariadne, with what appears to be a water god and a nymph reclining to either side of them.

Religious depictions without Mercury are rarer. A relief from Corbridge, Northumberland (find 461) shows two goddesses sitting beside each other. One holding a cornucopia appears to be Fortuna, while the other is less clear, but possibly represents

Ceres because of the torch she carries.

Five artefacts include Cupid, but here it appears to be less representative of the god and more an artistic device. Three are rings, with the figure running from a chicken in two of them (finds 423 and 424) and riding a Silenus hybrid in the other (find 1150). One sherd of samian ware pottery (find 500) has a figure of Cupid beside a chicken, but there is no direct interaction between them. A figurine of a childlike figure holding a chicken (find 566) could also represent Cupid. A more detailed figurine supposedly found in Sussex (find 831) also depicts a youth holding a chicken, but this one is more clearly human.

Few artefacts featured depictions of normal humans. A small sculpture of a seated figure with what may be a chicken at its feet (find 544) could be a god or goddess, but is too lacking in detail to be certain. A gladiator appears on a brooch showing two birds possibly in combat (find 760, see 4.3.4), lending some support to that interpretation. A small ceramic relief from Corbridge, Northumberland (find 509) shows a soldier with a chicken at his side.

Most interesting, however, is the gravestone of the young girl from Bristol (find 541, see 4.6.3), as the crude bust carved into it is probably representative of the individual whose grave it marked.

5.3.4 Other animals

Other animals appear with chickens on 75 artefacts. Coins depicting a horse with a chicken's head beneath make up 50 of these. This same image, usually with the head of the chicken replaced by a chariot wheel, is quite common on Late Iron Age coins (see 4.1.3). Another coin, this one a Roman sestertius of Marcus Aurelius (find 236) has a temple of Mercury on the obverse, with a chicken, ram, and tortoise depicted on the pediment.

Other Mercury-related artefacts make up much of the rest of this collection, with that god's other primary animal companion, the ram or goat, appearing in 11 depictions. Eight of these were on sculptures (finds 93, 307, 308, 309, 462, 463, 465, and 790), one on a plaque (find 543), one on a ring (find 380), and one on a patera handle (find 918).

Usually the ram appears at Mercury's side, although the patera shows it with a shepherd to one side of a bust of Juno. Although the two animals were separate objects and therefore had no direct association reflected in the *animals* category or the above total, figurines of a chicken and a goat were found together in Colchester (find 132), and it is quite possible they were displayed together.

Mercury's other companion animal, the tortoise, is very rarely depicted in Roman Britain. Of course, with many depictions, particularly those in stone, being in poor condition, an animal that could be presented with quite a simple, and easily lost, depiction may have been more common than it appears. Regardless, only two artefacts in the collection depicted both a chicken and a tortoise, as well as Mercury's goat in both cases. One was the coin of Marcus Aurelius mentioned above (find 236), and the other was a figurine of Mercury found near the King Harry Lane cremation cemetery in St. Albans (find 595). It is interesting that these are both small, easily transportable items that could well have come from other parts of the Empire, which adds further proof that the British Mercury had lost his tortoise.

Most of the large cats that appear on several artefacts alongside chickens also have a religious or mythological theme. On the patera handle (find 918), a panther stands at the side of a figure assumed to be Ariadne, as the one beside her is Bacchus. The mosaic from the Woodchester villa (find 723) included several large cats in the rings around a central figure of Orpheus, and the chicken-headed mosaic from Brading villa (find 332) had some kind of catlike creatures, possibly winged, off to one side. Exactly what religious or mythological associations the latter had is a matter of some debate (see 4.10). The final object is less clear in its associations, and is likely to be of Etruscan rather than Romano-British origin (see 8.1), and features a large cat seeming to climb the shaft of a candelabra or incense burner, seemingly in pursuit of a chicken mounted higher up (find 1187).

The other animals appearing with chickens have less overt religious connotations. Snakes, although tangentially linked to Mercury through his caduceus, are not clearly included on depictions of that device. They appear on only three objects. A chicken confronts a snake on a ring from County Durham (find 435) and a baboon-headed chicken was depicted on another from Caerleon (find 781). A chalk candlestick from

Silchester (find 534) has a snake on one face with a chicken on the other, with a depiction of Mercury between them.

Birds of various sorts appear in four depictions. The mosaics from Withington (find 722) and Woodchester (find 723) both feature other birds in the frieze containing the chickens, both of which appear to be depictions of Orpheus. At Withington the birds appear to be doves and at Woodchester there are both quail and doves. The Etruscan candelabra (find 1187) features ducks perched atop the legs. A series of Anglo-Saxon friezes from a church in Breedon-on-the-Hill, Leicestershire (find 627) depict several eagles alongside chickens, and shows that both birds continued to feature in religious art past the end of the Roman period.

Rodents appear on two rings alongside chickens. One is a rather playful image of a mouse or rabbit driving a chariot pulled by a chicken (find 429). The other is a more complex image and includes, amongst plants and other objects, a rabbit and what appears to be a butterfly (find 430).

Two images include depictions of fish. A ring from the Cheapside hoard (find 1149) has a fish next to a trussed chicken. On the patera handle (find 918), a river god rests one arm on a fish or dolphin.

Dogs feature on only one artefact, the gravestone from Bristol (find 541), with the small dog possibly, along with the chicken, representing the pets of the deceased.

5.3.5 Plants

Some variety of plant appears on 13 artefacts associated with chickens. It was often difficult to make out enough detail to determine species, and the interpretations of the source authors provided most of this information.

Ears of corn or grain made up the largest group of plant material, appearing on seven rings (see 4.5.1), usually in front of a chicken (finds 408, 432, 833, and 869). One is a more complicated scene, with a basket, grain, and fruit in front of the chicken (find 430). Two rings (finds 302 and 396) include two chickens, one of which is pecking at the ground while the other stands upright holding what could be grain in its beak. Four

rings do not show the grain, but depict the birds pecking at the ground (finds 420, 431, 434, and 439).

Palm leaves, which are much more common in the French and Belgian material (see 7.3.5) appear for certain in only one artefact. This ceramic lamp (find 1188) is probably of the same type found in France in larger numbers, and may be an import. However, the two rings mentioned above with one bird bent over and the other standing holding something in its beak could have another interpretation. If the first bird is pecking at the ground, the second holding grain makes sense. However, if the birds are combatants, with the loser bending its head in defeat, the victor may be standing upright and holding a palm leaf of victory in its beak. Unfortunately, it is not clear which plant the object is meant to represent, but the size is more suggestive of grain.

Fruit is less easy to identify. A patera (find 918) and a ring (find 430) both include round fruit of some sort. Grapes are easier to spot, and appear on the patera (find 918) and on an intaglio (find 423), where a Cupid dangles a bunch of grapes in front of a chicken that he appears to be running from.

Although it is not clear what the creatures to the right of the chicken-headed man in the Brading mosaic (find 332) are, it has been suggested that what appear to be wings may in fact be millet stalks, which appear in North African mosaics as good luck symbols (Witts 1994, 111-112).

More general plant material appears on three artefacts. Two mosaics (finds 722 and 723) have images of trees as part of the broader scene. The sandal sole from London (find 1185) is said to include an image of a plant, but the image is not clear enough to identify it.

5.3.6 Objects

There are a few other objects appearing with depictions of chickens that are worth further exploration. Few images were complex enough to contain many objects, especially when compared to the French and Belgian data (see 7.3.6), but those that do were often repeated across the dataset. Mercury's attributes, especially the caduceus and purse, were the most abundant and often served as the basis of identification of the

deity. In Britain, these always appear with a depiction of the deity (see 5.3.3).

Containers were the most common repeated motif, and appear to build on the grain theme, possibly representing agricultural abundance and fertility. Baskets appeared most often, occurring on a ring with other plants and animals (find 430), the patera (find 918), and possibly on a seal impressed on the base of a pot from Richborough, Kent (find 400). Cornucopias appeared on a ring from Silchester (find 433) and in a relief to Fortuna and Ceres (find 461). A relief of Mercury and Rosmerta from Gloucester (find 521) includes a bucket at the goddess's feet.

One particular theme that is missing from the British material is the chicken on the column, which is more common in other parts of the ancient world (see 7.3.6). Exactly why this particular image does not appear in Britain is unclear. It may simply indicate a lack of local familiarity with a predominantly Greek image, but it could indicate a deeper variation in symbolism (see Chapter 8).

6 French and Belgian data

As with the preceding British material, the French and Belgian data will be summarised by find type. There are differences between the datasets from these two main project areas. While there are undoubtedly cultural reasons for much of this variation, some may be due to differences in archaeological practice and recording between the two regions. Reasons for this will be discussed in Chapter 8.

In total, 1368 individual chicken-related artefacts were recorded from France and Belgium, representing roughly 16 different find types (**Table 6.1**).

Table 6.1 - number of artefacts by find type, France and Belgium.

Find type	Number of artefacts	Find type	Number of artefacts
coin	851	brooch	7
figurine	325	mosaic	3
sculpture	59	plaque	3
lamp	38	painting	1
pottery	31	tile	1
rings	28	box	1
silver plate	10	punch	1
pin	8	graffiti	1
		Total	**1368**

The find type label used in the original source was assigned to each find during recording unless a more appropriate alternate alternative was already present in the

dataset. Some find types have been grouped together as described in section 3.3.
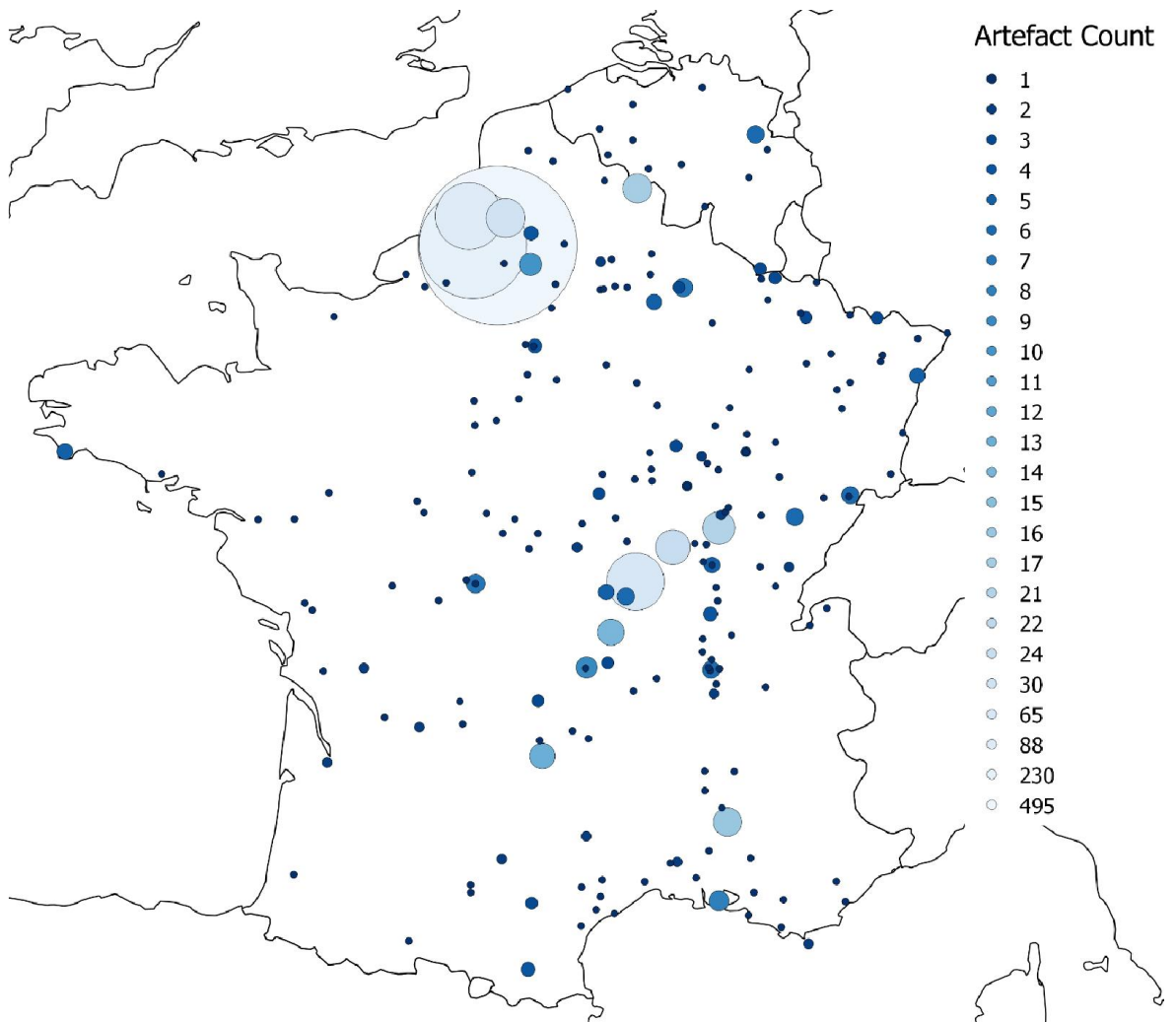
Figure 6.1 - distribution of artefacts with density weights.

Chicken-related artefacts were found across France and Belgium, but were more common in the central and eastern regions (**Figure 6.1**). Many of these appear to follow the lines of road and river networks. The majority of find spots were of individual objects, but there are a few sites with high concentrations of artefacts. Many of these represent workshops or, particularly in the case of coins, religious sites, and will be more fully discussed below.

The number of objects tagged with each of the main categories varied considerably, with those that are broader in scope being more common (**Figure 6.2**). As with the British material, the *iconographic* category is the most abundant, which is not unexpected, and the *association*, *funerary*, and *votive* categories, being highly

dependent on context, and likewise probably underrepresented.
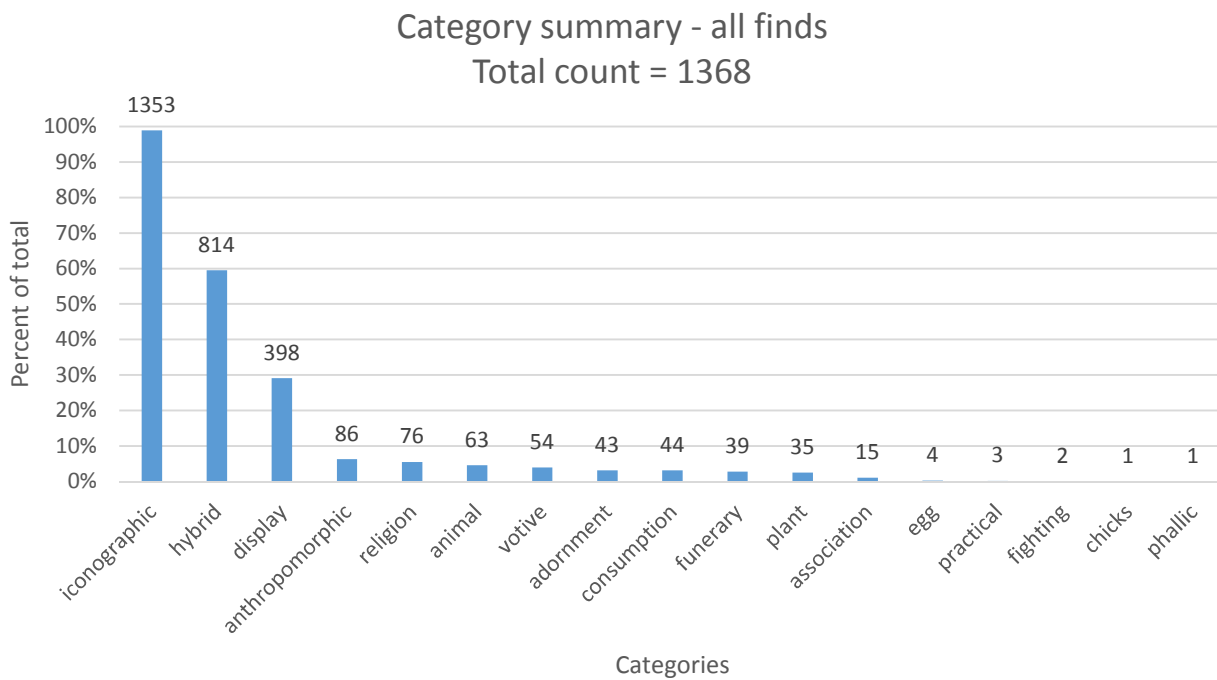
Figure 6.2 - percentage of total finds by category.

A comparison of the association, context, dating, and overall strengths assigned to each artefact (**Figure 6.3**) reflects the importance of associating a depiction with an animal. Simply by identifying an object as a probable chicken, demonstrated here by approximately 70% of artefacts having a "strong" rating in association, gives it a strength that is often lacking in other areas. Context strength is often poor due to how the artefact was recovered and recorded, which balances out the high association score to some extent. The dating scores look quite high, but as will be seen below, this is largely due to the large number of coins in the sample. The poor context of most finds more often led to a similar low dating score.
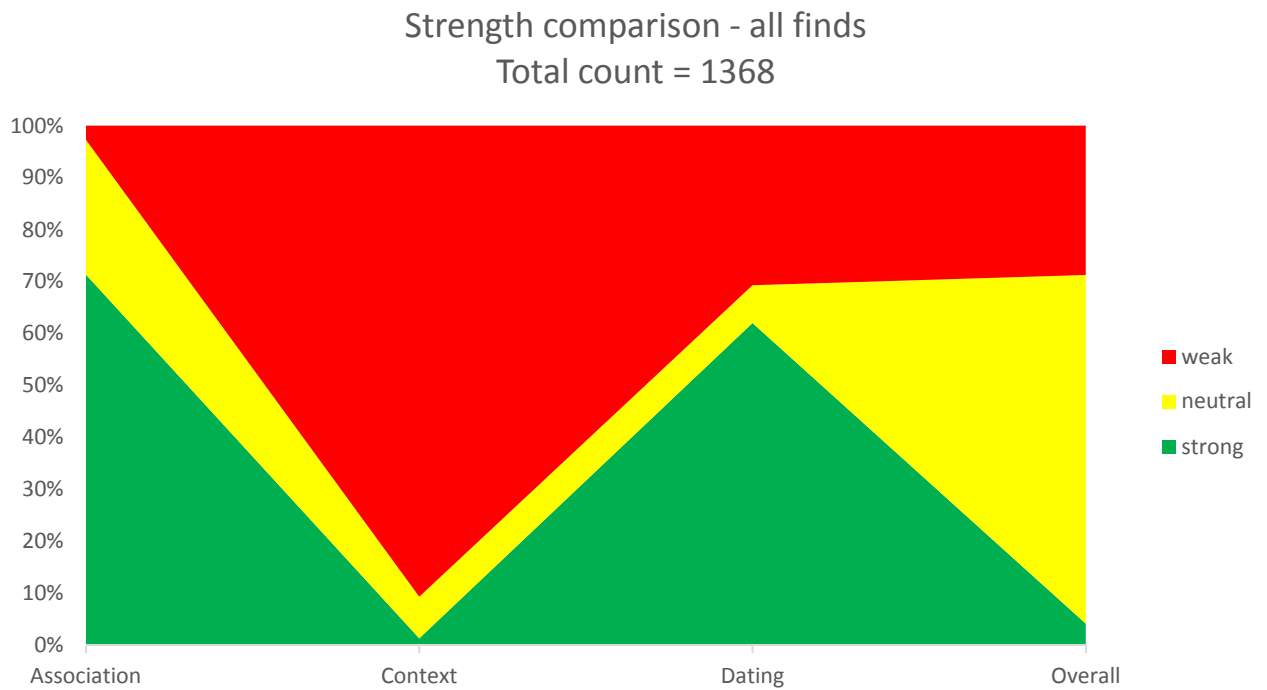
Figure 6.3 - comparison of strength ratings for all find types.

The difficulties of identifying the type of site are the same as discussed with the British data. Objects from religious sites dominate the dataset (**Figure 6.4**), but once again this reflects the large number of coins found on a few temple sites in northeast France. Apart from this, urban sites are the most represented, followed by "other" sites; those lacking information on what type of site it was. Rural and villa sites are much smaller in number, but likely represent many of the aforementioned "other" category. Objects from military sites are oddly low, but this may reflect the growth of previously military sites into urban sites in later periods combined with a poor understanding of where the objects fit into that sequence. It is possible that a more focused search of sites along the Germanic limes would return more.

Location type - all finds
Total count = 1368

- religious
- urban
- other
- rural
- small town
- villa
- military
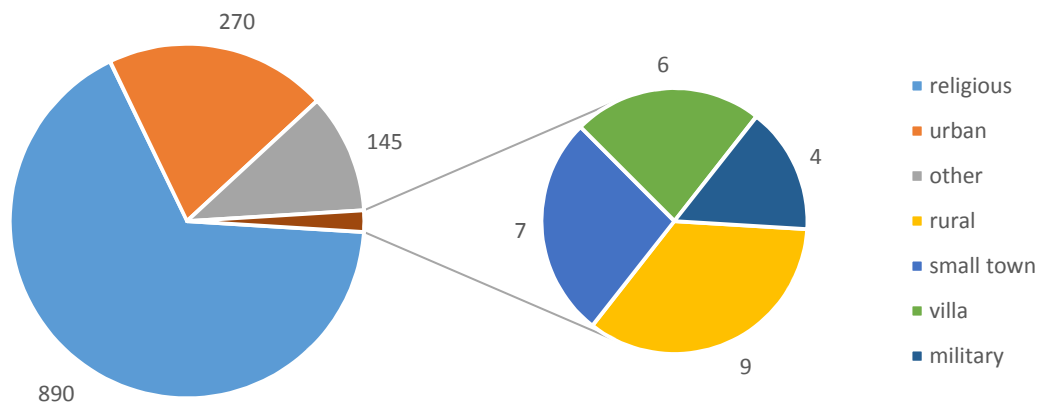
Figure 6.4 - Finds by location type. "Other" includes isolated metal-detected finds and those with an otherwise unknown find site.

As mentioned above, the abundance of coins in the French and Belgian sample has skewed the overall dating scores, which is reflected in a comparison of date ranges across the various find types (**Figure 6.5**). Like the British data, there are spikes where some find types are more tightly dateable, but overall the pattern tends to be for longer, and thus flatter, date ranges, reflecting the placing of objects into broader periods, such as "second century AD."

There was an early spike in chicken-related material culture during the later first century BC, once again reflecting coins, all from a small area of Belgic Gaul. Outside of this region, there were a few early finds, mostly pottery, including some Attic-ware in the far south, and an unusually early brooch from the Reinheim "princess" burial in the third century BC. It is only in the Roman period that depictions of chickens become common. Many figurines have been dated to the first and, particularly, second centuries AD, but otherwise depictions continued to appear throughout the period.

The individual find types are discussed below in order of abundance.
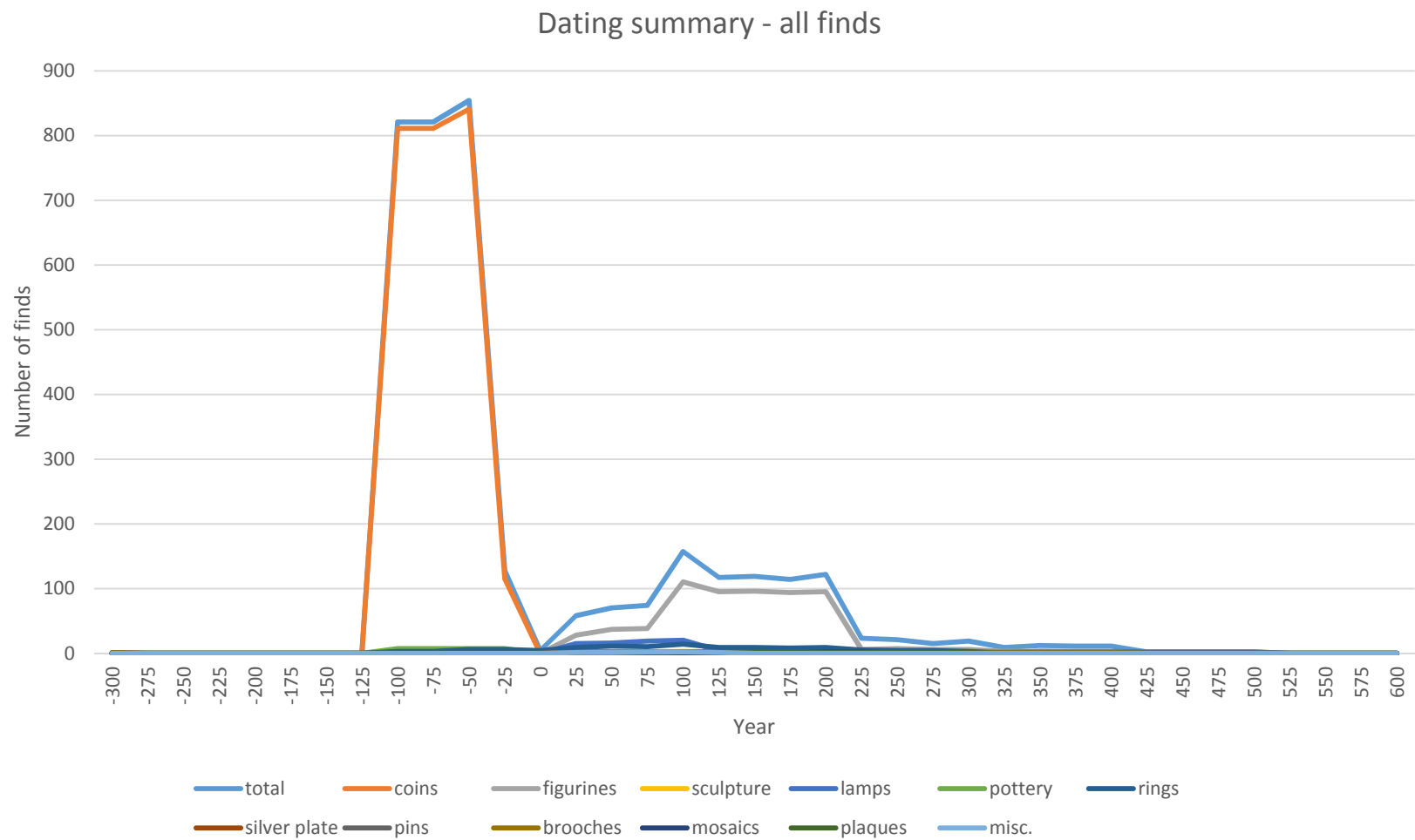
Figure 6.5 - summary comparison of date ranges for dateable finds.

6.1 Coins
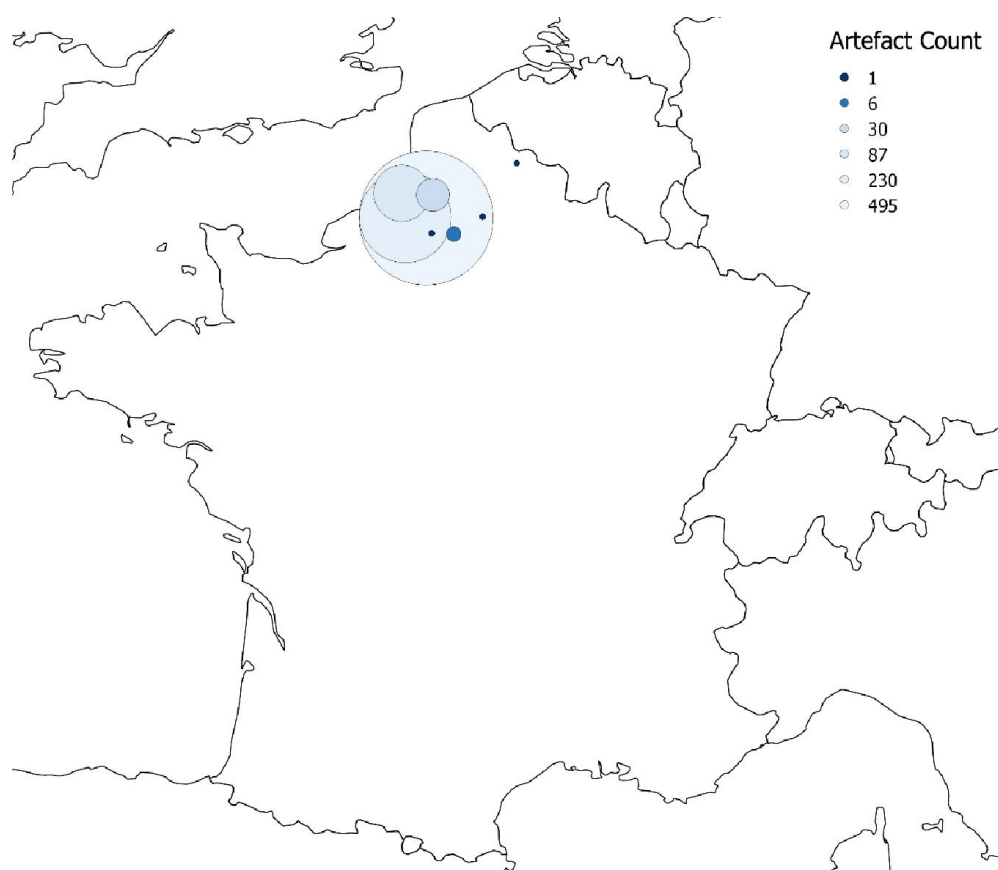
Figure 6.6 - distribution of coins in France and Belgium. Larger, lighter circles indicate a higher concentration of artefacts.

Coins were the most abundant find type in France and Belgium, but intriguingly only come from a small region of northeast France centred around modern Picardy, with the vast majority (847 of 851) recovered from five Late Iron Age and Roman temple sites (**Figure 6.6**). The rest represent isolated finds, making this the most homogeneous group of artefacts in this study. All date to the Late Iron Age and, with the exception of a single import, are made of bronze, and are remarkably similar to coins found in southern Britain. This similarity is more fully discussed below (see 8.2.2). Although there are some earlier depictions of chickens on other types of artefacts further south, these appear to be the earliest ones created in the north.

Category summary - coins
Total count = 851
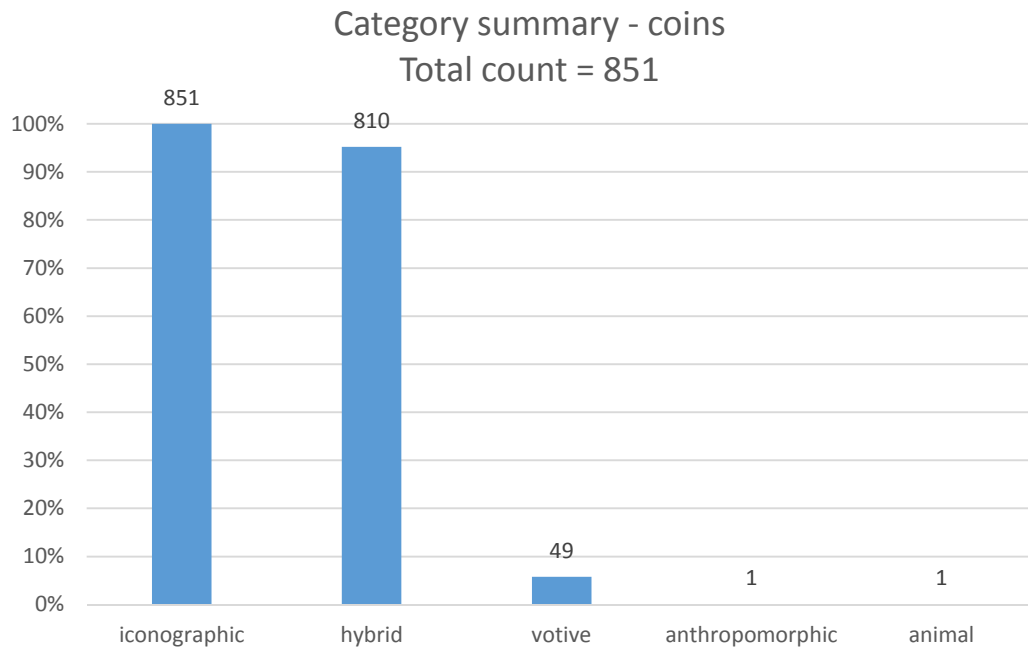
Figure 6.7 - percentages of coins by category.

All of the coins were recorded because they depicted chickens, reflected in the *iconographic* category (**Figure 6.7**). The vast majority of these (810 of 851) were *hybrid* images of chickens with human faces on their stomach. Some 49 coins were retrieved from contexts on religious sites that made it likely they were intended as part of a votive deposit. Two coins included separate depictions of a human or another animal. One, rather than depicting the human face as part of the bird, had a face separate and facing the chicken, accounting for the *anthropomorphic* category. A lone imported British coin of type ABC 2012 included the head of a chicken below a horse.

Strength comparison - coins
Total count = 851
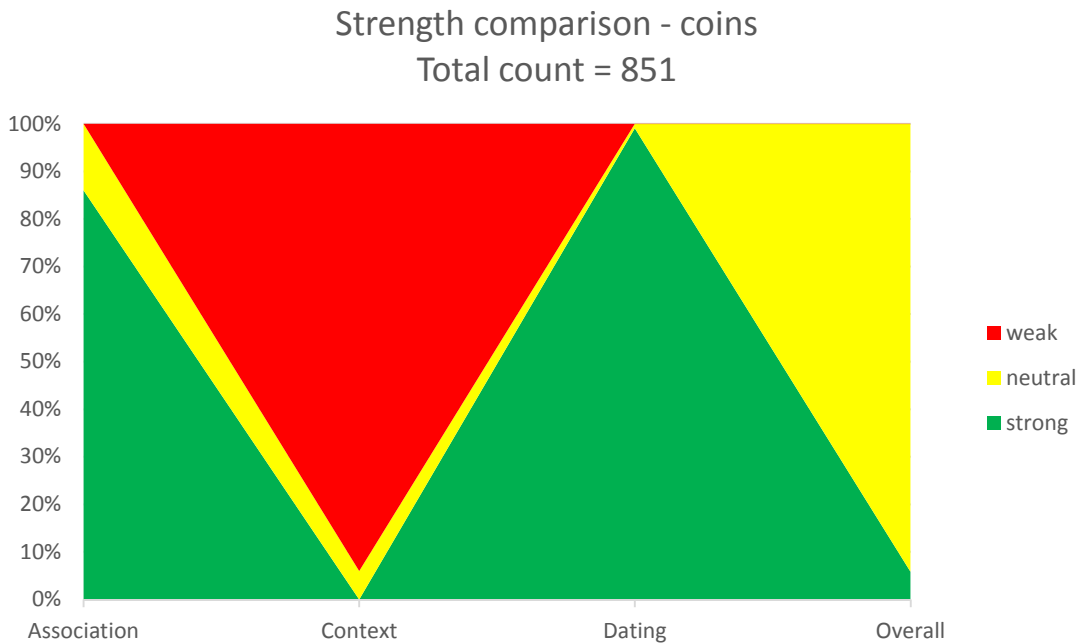
Figure 6.8 - comparison of strength ratings for coins.

Although images on coins can often be difficult to see due to wear and corrosion, most of the coins that make up this sample came from published reports and were included in large summary lists, with little individual detail. Thus the association score was nearly always based on the base coin type. However, given the uniform nature of coins within a typology, this should not be an issue. While 51 coins were recovered from known contexts, most were collected on the surface or found in museum collections or through the hands of metal detectorists, giving most a low context score.

Although the exact dates of the minting of these coins is unknown, as a group they are given a strong dating score overall. They would have been minted in large numbers during relatively brief, discrete events, where other find types tend to be made individually or in small numbers with little to link them to a particular date. While someone might make a later duplicate of a figurine or statue, it is far less likely with coins. Only where a specific type of coin was found in small numbers was it given a lower score in this category. With a strong visual link to chickens and this dating, the overall scores of the artefacts tended to level out as neutral overall.

These coins were minted in the first century BC, with most probably being made in the latter half of the century (**Figure 6.9**). The most common type of coin, the

Bracquemont type (DT 511), is thought to have been the prototype of this entire series of coins (Delestrée 1980, 57), and these were probably minted after the Gallic Wars of 58-50BC (Delestrée 1997, 285).
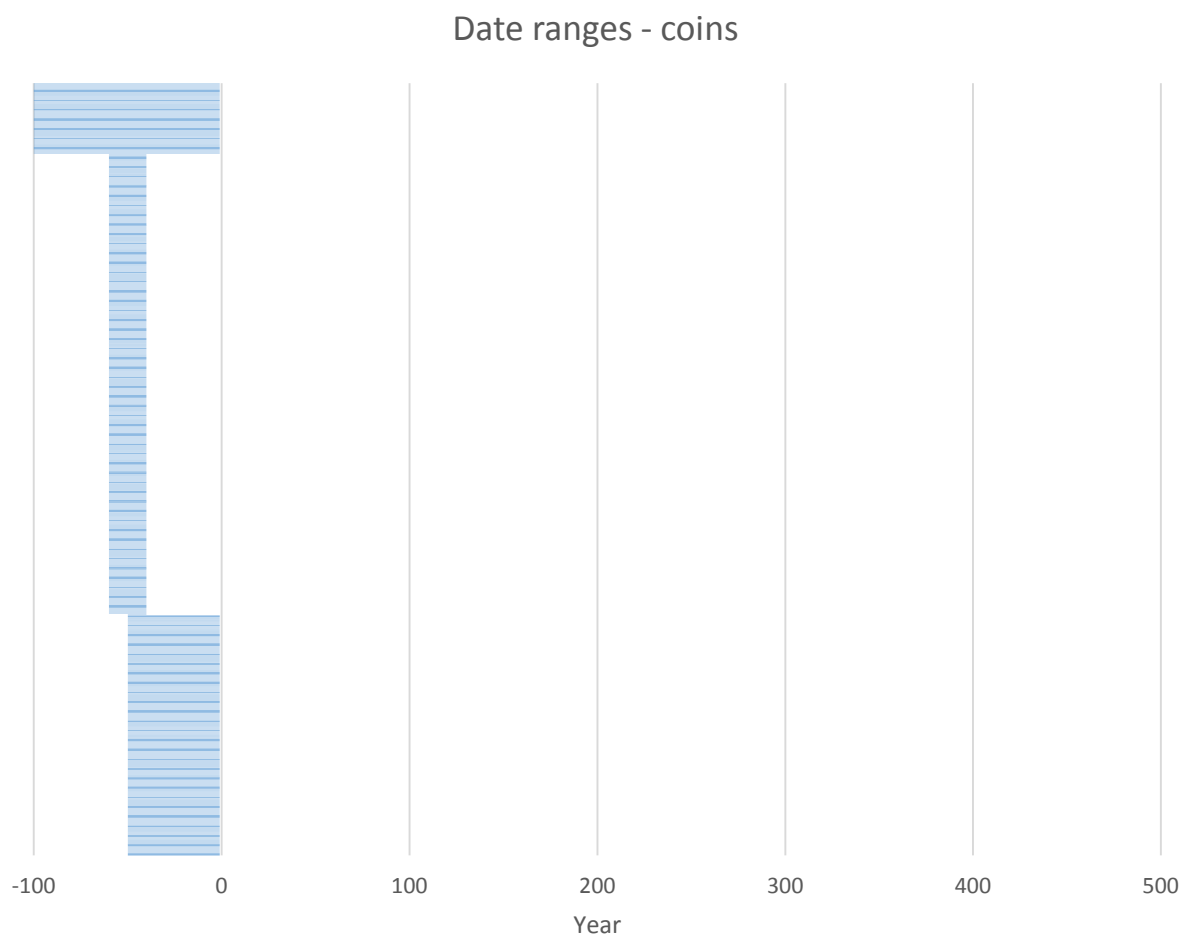
Date ranges - coins

Figure 6.9 - date ranges for dateable coins. Due to the number of finds, the individual lines representing each object are not discernible on this chart.

These coins fit into a number of different types, discussed below. The typologies used are taken from Delestrée and Tache (2002).

6.1.1 DT 511, Bracquemont type

The Bracquemont type was the most common type of coin, with 673 examples from the four temple sites of Digeon (n=443), Fesques (n=169), Bois l'Abbé at Eu (n=49), and Camp Rouge at Fontaine-sur-Somme (n=12) (**Figure 6.10**).
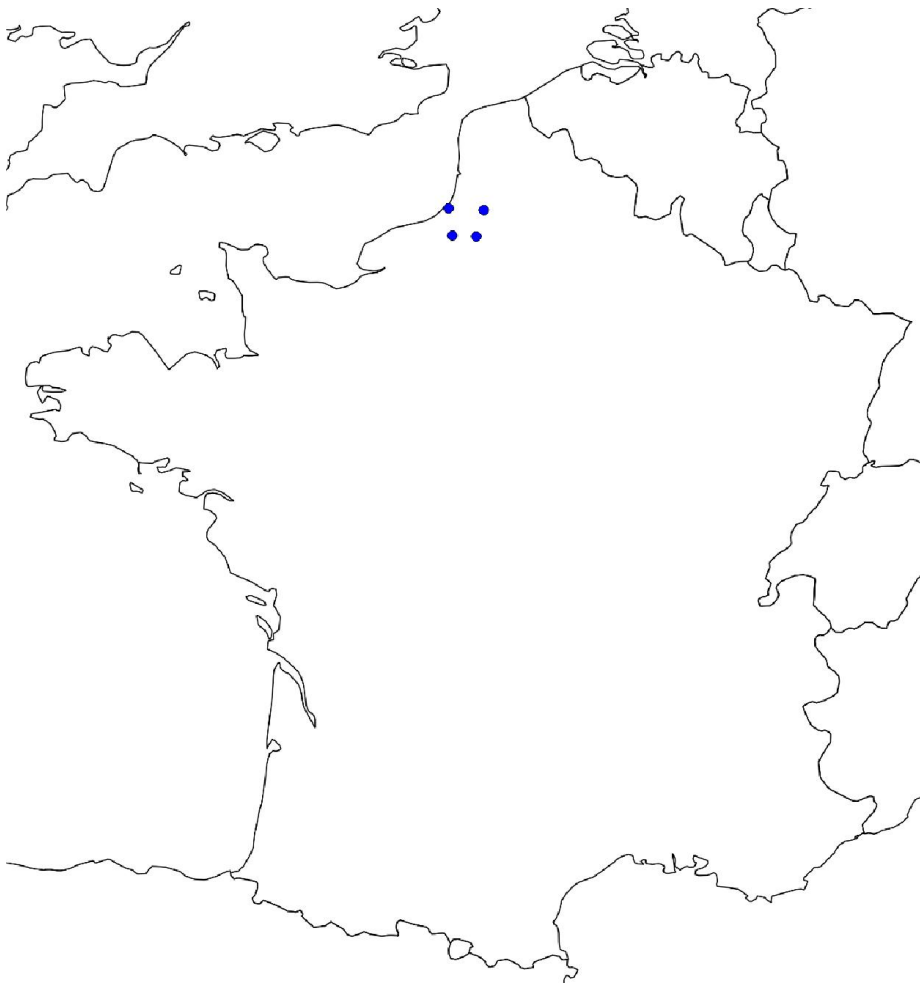
Figure 6.10 - map of Bracquemont type coins with known provenance.

The obverse side of the coin depicts a helmeted head, possibly based on a representation of Athena/Minerva (Delestrée 1980, 55-56) or Roma (Delestrée and Tache 2002, 104), while the reverse shows an erect cockerel with a human face depicted in its belly (**Figure 6.11**). In front of it is a circle with sinuous lines running up and down from it.

Figure 6.11 - Bracquemont type (DT 511), left: obverse with head; right: reverse with chicken-face hybrid (Delestrée and Tache 2002, plate 22).

6.1.2 DT 512, Bracquemont type, "petit module"

The "petite module" variation of the Bracquemont type occurred in much smaller numbers than the primary Bracquemont type, with 62 examples. The majority (57) came from the temple at Fesques, with smaller collections from Bois l'Abbé at Eu (n=3) and Digeon (n=2), but it is not impossible that some of the coins classified as Bracquemont type were in fact this derivative.

Figure 6.12 - Bracquemont type, "petit module" (DT 512), left: obverse with head; right: reverse with chicken-face hybrid (Delestrée and Tache 2002, plate 22).

Although quite similar to the Bracquemont type, this variation is both smaller and has the images reversed, so that the helmeted head and cockerel-face hybrid both face left

instead of right (**Figure 6.12**).

6.1.3 DT 517, Bois l'Abbé type

The DT 517 type coin is sometimes referred to as the Bois l'Abbé type, with 34 of the 35 examples known from that site. The remaining coin was found at Fesques.

Figure 6.13 - Bois l'Abbé type (DT 517), left: obverse with head; right: reverse with chicken (Delestrée and Tache 2002, plate 22).

The obverse of the coin shows a human face surrounded by curves, some of which may represent a helmet. The reverse of the coin has another of these curved shapes in front of a cockerel (**Figure 6.13**).

6.1.4 DT 516

Type DT 516 had 32 examples, with 19 from Digeon, 12 from Camp Rouge at Fontaine-sur-Somme, and a single example from Fesques.

Figure 6.14 - coin type DT 516, left: obverse with head and lyre; right: reverse with chicken-face hybrid (Delestrée and Tache 2002, plate 22).

The obverse of the coin depicts a helmeted figure similar to the Bracquemont types described above, but this one possesses what appears to be a lyre horizontally in front of it (**Figure 6.14**). On the reverse is a chicken-face hybrid with an unusually high amount of corded and circular ornament in front of it.

6.1.5 DT 509

There were 22 examples of coin type DT 509. Most were found at religious sites, with 14 from Digeon, 6 from Vendeuil-Caply, 1 from Fesques, and an additional loose coin was collected from Saint-Maur.

Figure 6.15 - coin type DT 509, left: obverse with head; right: reverse with chicken-face hybrid (Delestrée and Tache 2002, plate 22).

The obverse of the coin is a stylised face, surrounded by a wild mass of hair and beard (**Figure 6.15**). The reverse is a stylised chicken-face hybrid, with a star or sun to the

right.

6.1.6 DT 519, Hallencourt B

The Hallencourt B type coin had 16 examples; 13 came from Digeon, and the remaining three were found at Bois l'Abbé at Eu. There is an additional coin from Fesques which could be either this type or the similar DT 520.

Figure 6.16 - Hallencourt B type coin (DT 519), left: obverse with head; right: reverse with two chicken-face hybrids (Delestrée and Tache 2002, plate 22).

The obverse is of a bearded face (**Figure 6.16**). The reverse depicts two chicken-face hybrids facing each other, holding what may be a worm or snake between their beaks.

6.1.7 DT 514

Only two examples of coin type DT 514 were recorded, both from the Camp Rouge temple at Fontaine-sur-Somme.

Figure 6.17 - coin type DT 514, left: obverse with head; right: reverse with chicken-face hybrid (Delestrée and Tache 2002, plate 22).

The obverse of the coin is a helmeted head (**Figure 6.17**), while the reverse is a chicken-face hybrid. Above the hybrid is a sinuous object that may represent a snakelike creature.

6.1.8 DT 518

Two coins of type DT 518 were found at Chilly, near the site of a temple, and Hornaing, a rural site far to the east of this distribution.

Figure 6.18 - coin type DT 518, left: obverse with head; right: reverse with chicken above triangular shape, triskele to the right (Delestrée and Tache 2002, plate 22).

The obverse of the coin is a helmeted head with two sinuous shapes in front of it (**Figure 6.18**). On the reverse is a chicken. Below it is a triangular shape over "wolf's

teeth" decoration, and to the right is a triskele.

6.1.9 DT 510

Figure 6.19 - coin type DT 510, left: obverse with head; right: reverse with chicken (Delestrée and Tache 2002, plate 22).

A single type DT 510 coin was found at Digeon. The obverse image is of a stylised face with flowing beard and hair, with a vague shape in front of the mouth somewhat reminiscent of the lyre from type DT 516 (**Figure 6.19**). The reverse depicts a chicken, with a sinuous, figure-eight shape to the right.

6.1.10   DT 515

Figure 6.20 - coin type DT 515, left: obverse with head; right: reverse with chicken confronting a human face (Delestrée and Tache 2002, plate 22).

One type DT 515 coin was found at Camp Rouge at Fontaine-sur-Somme. The obverse

depicts a helmeted head (**Figure 6.20**). On the reverse is a stylised cockerel facing left. Facing it from the left is a separate human face.

6.1.11   DT 521, Boar cock

Figure 6.21 - boar cock type coin (DT 521), left: obverse with boar; right: reverse with walking chicken (Delestrée and Tache 2002, plate 22).

One coin of the boar cock type (DT 521) was found at Digeon. This type differs from the others in that the obverse depicts a boar rather than a human face (**Figure 6.21**). The obverse shows a walking chicken, with a cross to the right. Three possible examples or derivations of this coin type have been found in Britain (see 4.1.1).

6.1.12   ABC 2012, Cotswold cock

A single example of a British coin type, the Cotswold cock type, was found at Bois l'Abbé at Eu. Unfortunately, further details of its discovery are not known. It is the only silver example from this collection. See 4.1.3 for more details of this type.

6.2 Figurines
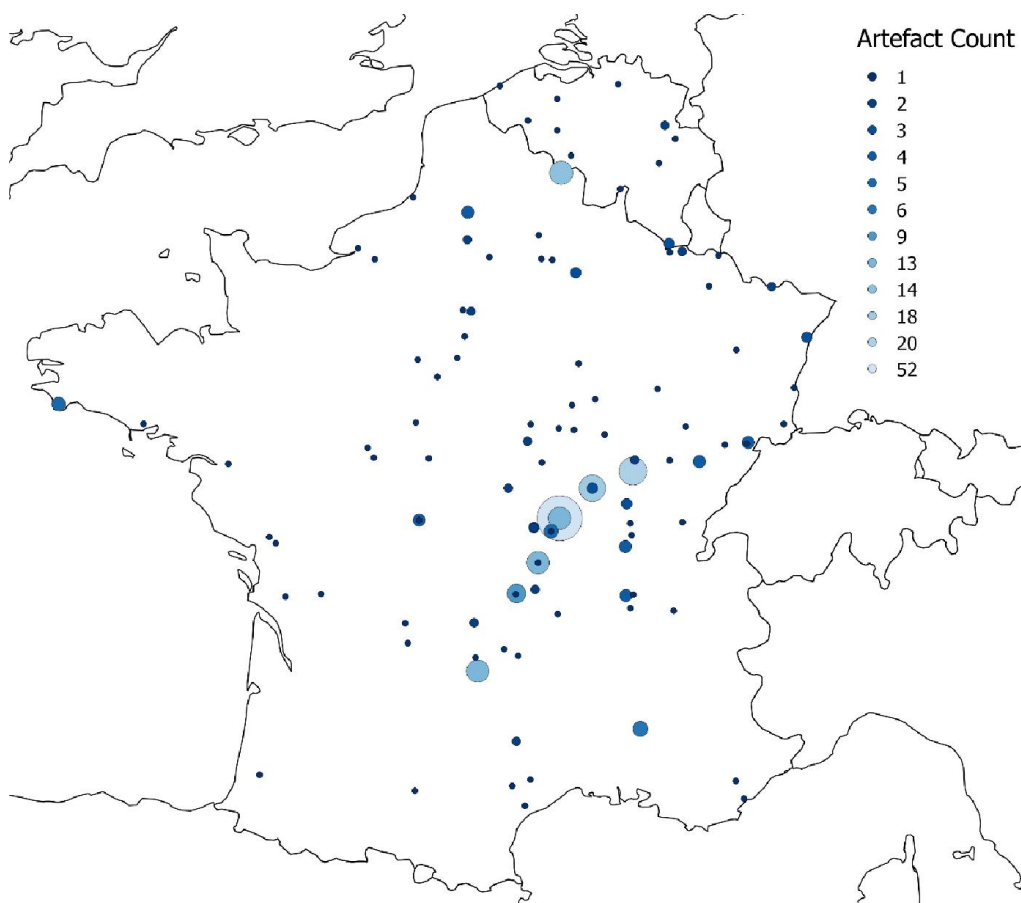
Figure 6.22 - distribution of figurines in France and Belgium. Larger, lighter circles indicate a higher concentration of artefacts.

This find type includes various chicken-shaped small, portable objects made out of metal or clay, namely figurines and the moulds used to make them, fittings, and an object attached to a lid. This group of objects makes up the second most common type of artefact from France and Belgium, with 325 artefacts in total from across the region (**Figure 6.22**). Approximately two thirds of these objects are ceramic, and the rest are metal; primarily bronze, but with a single example each of gold and silver and three cast out of lead. It is possible that similar figurines were also made out of more perishable materials, such as wood or, if they were particularly short-lived, wax.

There are a few sites with a high concentration of these objects. Of these sites, Autun (Saône-et-Loire), Bavay (Nord), Clermont-Ferrand (Puy-de-Dôme), Vaison-la-Romaine (Vaucluse), and Vichy (Allier) were urban settlements. Les Bolards at Nuits-Saint-

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Georges (Côte-d'Or), is the site of a temple and cemetery, and the assemblage from Arpajon-sur-Cére (Cantal) is thought to have come from a local cemetery. Bourbon-Lancy (Saône-et-Loire), the site with the largest collection of figurines, all ceramic, appears to have been a workshop where they were manufactured. Several moulds were found there, and moulds have also been recorded from other sites, including Autun and Vichy.
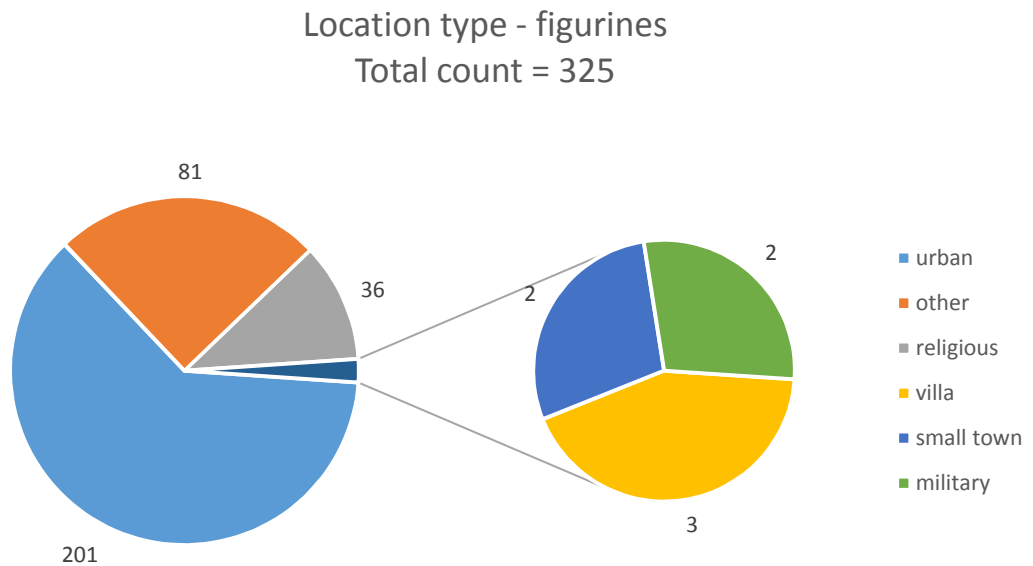
Figure 6.23 - figurines by location type.

Finds from urban sites were most common, followed by sites with either an unknown find spot or found where little was known (**Figure 6.23**). Religious sites were the next most common, mostly representing the temple site at Nuits-Saint-Georges, which had 20 figurines on its own. Villas, small towns, and military sites were only lightly represented.

Category summary - figurines
Total count = 325
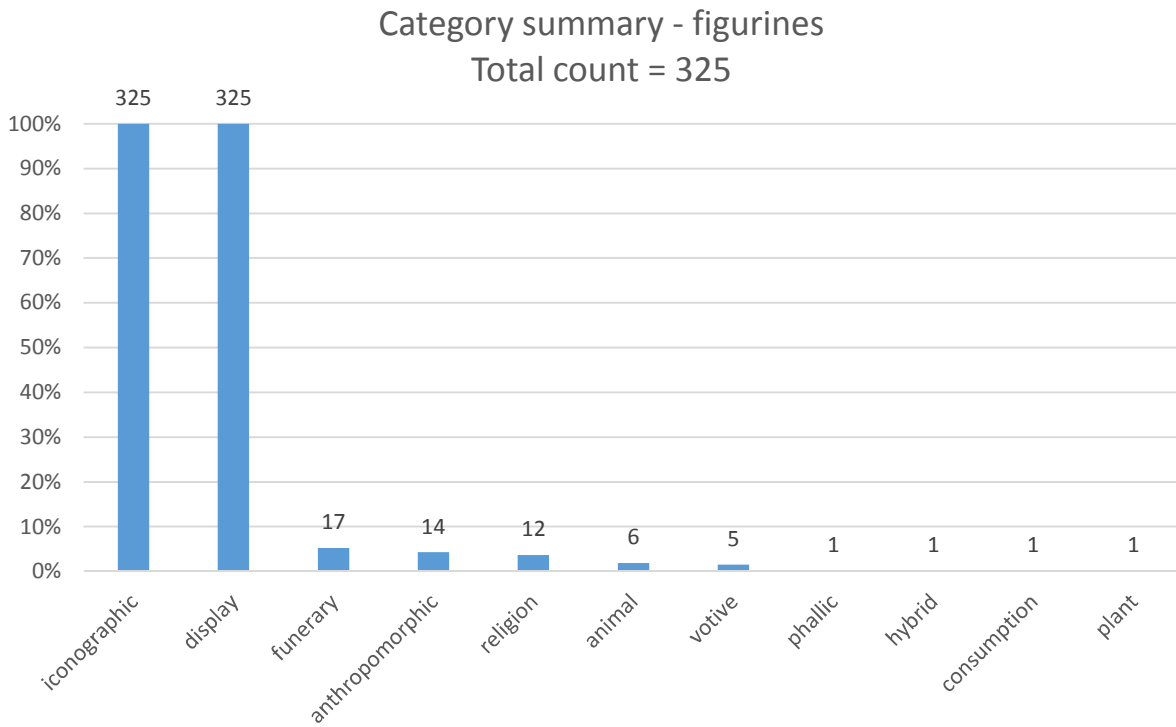
Figure 6.24 - percentage of figurines by category.

All of the artefacts in this find type were recorded because they depicted chickens, so all of them were tagged with the *iconographic* category, and, likewise, all of them were likely to have been intended for display, even if only briefly (**Figure 6.24**). Most of the figurines had very little contextual data, so the number associated with the *funerary* and *votive* categories may be lower than was in fact the case. Some figurines included *anthropomorphic* depictions, often *religious* figures, or other animals. A single figurine of Mercury included *phallic* imagery, and there was an unusual cockerel-headed man *hybrid*. A figurine of a trussed fowl makes up the *consumption* category, and a figurine of a seated goddess holding fruit represents the *plant* category.

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Figure 6.25 - comparison of strength ratings for figurines.

Figurines in general were fairly clear in what they were intended to represent, but a large number of the ceramic examples were fragmentary, which resulted in lower *association* scores than might be expected (**Figure 6.25**). Additionally, many of the ceramic figurines depicted hens, which lack the strong identification features of cockerels and these can be difficult to differentiate from doves, and therefore scored lower. Only 25 were recovered from known contexts, with most known from regional surveys or museum collections, giving them a weak *context* score, but several of these were dated, and still other examples were datable by the period of occupation on the sites they were found. Overall, scores for figurines were quite weak due to the lack of contextual data and poor dating.

Many of the figurines could only be dated to a broad range, with most falling into the first two centuries AD (**Figure 6.26**). The vast majority were stylistically dated, but the more securely dated finds tend to fit into this period as well, and likely form the basis of this dating. The workshop at Bourbon-Lancy had an active period of deposition during the second century AD, with 65 ceramic figurines being dated by their recovery from this site. Occasionally, a ceramic figurine contained the name of its maker, giving even contextless finds a date range. Associated finds date examples from the cemetery of

Bolards at Nuits-Saint-Georges to the late first century AD.

One figurine in particular shows another problem with dating this find type; a Mercury group found with a hoard of other metal objects (find 1260, **Figure 6.34**). It includes a Classical Mercury on a hexagonal base, on which also stand a far more stylised cockerel and goat. Mercury holds a crude caduceus at odds with the rest of the composition. It is thought that this was the work of one or more ancient "antiques restorers", who placed an early first century figurine of Mercury onto a later base, then even later added the animal figurines, which perch awkwardly on the edge of the base. The caduceus was likewise a later addition, with the latest of these changes coming in the third or fourth centuries (Santrot 1996, 267-276). This shows not only that a figurine may be altered during its existence, but that it may have continued being used, perhaps even for different purposes and with different symbolism, long after its creation.
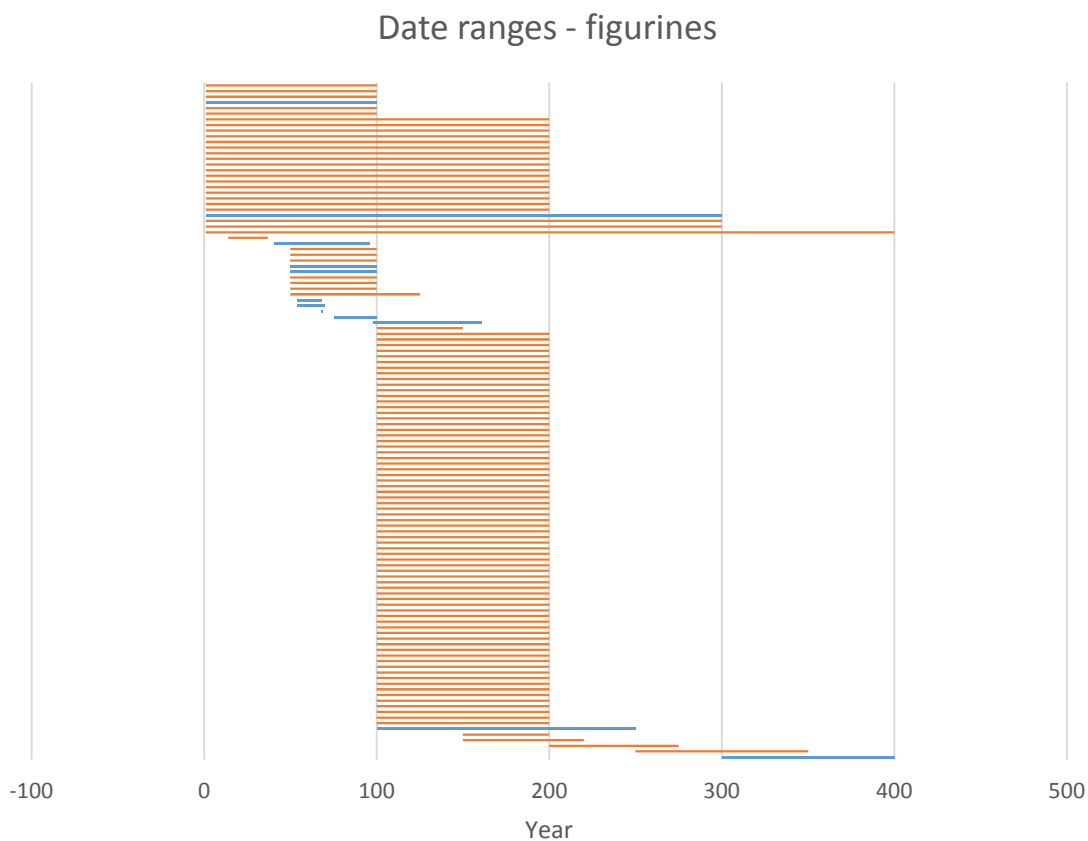
Figure 6.26 - date ranges for dateable figurines. Each line represents a single artefact. Objects in blue were dated by stratigraphy or associated finds; objects in red were dated stylistically.

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As with the British material, figurines are a strong visual indicator of chickens in material culture, but the lack of contextual and dating information is somewhat limiting. While ceramic figurines have been broken down into different typologies (Jeanlin-Rouvier 1972, 377; Camuset-le Porzou 1984, 134), this approach tends to focus on variation in decoration, and adds little to a summary such as this. Therefore, the following section simply separates the figurines into two broad categories: firstly depictions of chickens on their own; and secondly those where they accompany a human figure.

6.2.1 Chickens

Nearly all of the figurines depicted chickens on their own or, more rarely, with other animals. Within this group are two primary divisions - those made of clay and those cast in metal – and the two will be discussed separately.

Figure 6.27 - assorted ceramic chicken figurines and mould. From top left, find 1242

(image copyright Claudine Massard), find 1244 (image copyright Claudine Massard), find 1239 (image copyright Stéphane Prost), and find 2314 (image copyright Jeanlin-Rouvier 1972, pl. 1162).

Ceramic figurines were the most common type recorded, making up approximately two thirds of the total number of figurines at 200 objects. Many of these were only fragmentary, however, and it was not always possible to be certain what species they represented. Hens in particular are difficult to identify. Ceramic figurines were generally more uniform than metal ones, possibly due to being a cheaper, often mass-produced type of object with a more limited structure. Apart from minor variations in decoration and the shape of various body parts, they all show a bird with erect tail and head and no feet (**Figure 6.27**).

Along with the figurines, 22 moulds for the creation of such figurines were also found. These moulds, especially when accompanied by a large assemblage of figurine fragments, show the probable location of workshops where they were created. The largest such site, although the workshop itself has not yet been found, is the Roman spa town at Bourbon-Lancy with 52 figurines and 13 moulds. This workshop appears to have branched out from pottery to figurines and operated sometime during the second century. From here, they could be traded up and down the River Loire or sold to visitors to the baths (Rouvier-Jeanlin *et al.* 1990, 211). Similar moulds were found in smaller numbers at other sites, with 3 from Autun, 2 from La Guerche-sur-l'Aubois (Cher), 2 from Toulon-sur-Allier (Allier), and one each from Saint-Pourçain-sur-Besbre (Allier) and Vichy. These workshops are concentrated in central France (**Figure 6.28**); a pattern seen for ceramic figurines in general (Camuset-le Porzou 1984, 14). Some figurines and moulds contained stamps, providing the names of the workshops responsible for them (Santrot 1993).
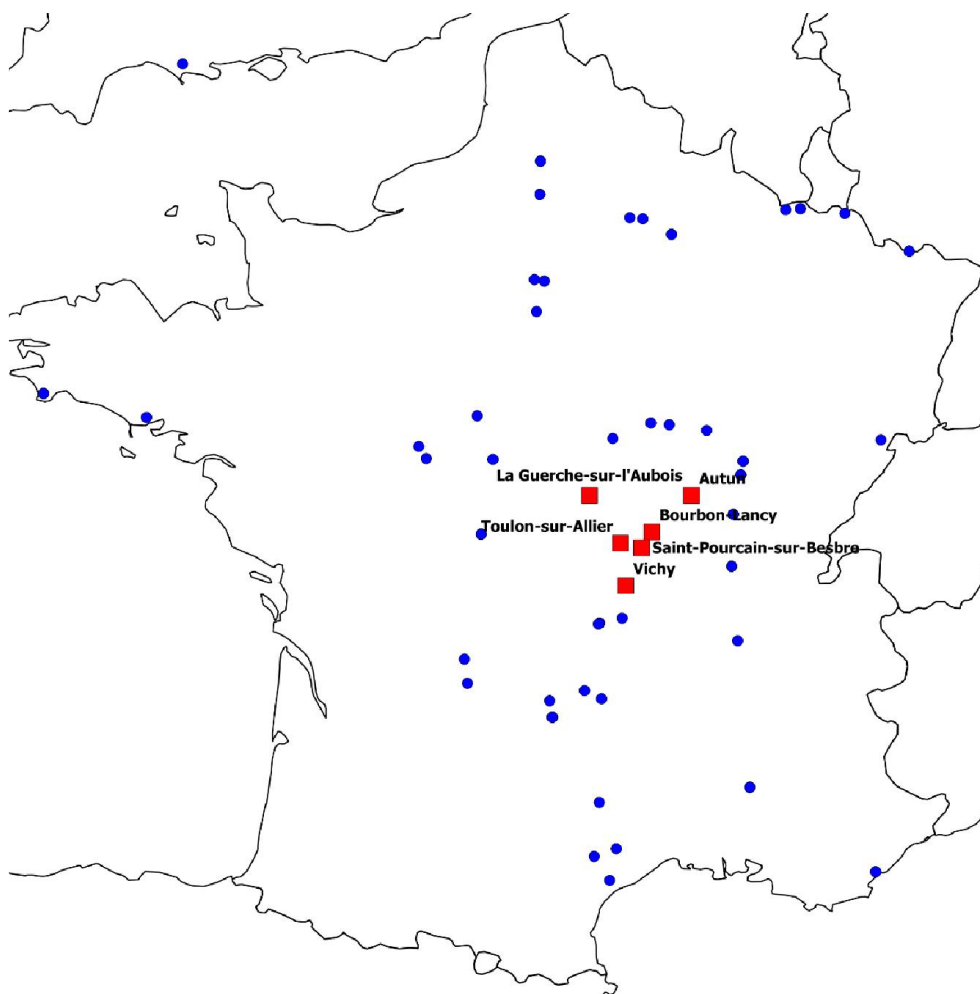
Figure 6.28 - map of ceramic figurines and workshops. Blue dots indicate figurine find spots; red squares indicate mould/workshop locations.

Some ceramic figurines have been found with traces of paint on them (Jeanlin 1993, 100), and at least one cockerel figurine had such traces (Fauduet and Rouvier-Jeanlin 1992, 173), but unfortunately it is not known which one. This additional decoration would have made the objects far more striking, and could possibly have allowed even more variation than is seen in the shape of the artefacts.

Twenty-seven ceramic figurines, or fragments of them, were found at religious sites. Most sites had only one or two, but the site of Bolards at Nuits-Saint-Georges had at least 20. Most had no context information, so it is impossible to say if they were in fact votive offerings, but the number of them present is suggestive of this. The site was in use from the Late Iron Age through to the end of the Roman period, with no particular god apparent as the primary deity being worshipped (Pommeret 2001). The site also

contained a cemetery dating to the late first century AD where some of the figurines were found, but none of them were recovered from the graves. Some 13 figurines were recovered in small numbers from other funerary contexts across the region, however, and some of the poorly documented finds may have come from cemeteries excavated in antiquity, as is suggested for some figurines found in Arpajon-sur-Cére (Provost and Vallat 1996, 69).

Figure 6.29 - ceramic figurine from Melos, Greece (British Museum number 1842,0728.1131, image copyright Trustees of the British Museum).

Ceramic figurines like these have a long history in Egypt and across the Greek world (for example, British Museum number 1842,0728.1131, **Figure 6.29**), and it is likely those objects had some influence on these. These locally made figurines display a Gallo-Roman style, however, so it was not simply mimicry behind their creation (Camuset-le Porzou 1984, 15-16).

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Figure 6.30 - assorted metal chicken figurines. From top left, find 1342 (image copyright Provost 2009, fig. 453), find 1363 (image copyright Emilie Doucet), find 2539 (image copyright Faider-Feytmans 1979, pl. 61), find 2448 (image copyright Monnier 1990, 25), and find 2450 (image copyright Boucher and Tassinari 1976, 97).

Metal figurines were also quite common, with 103 examples. Most are made of bronze, with only three of lead, and one each of gold and silver. As a group they are more varied than the ceramic figurines, with a mix of stylised and naturalistic forms as well as differences in quality (**Figure 6.30**).
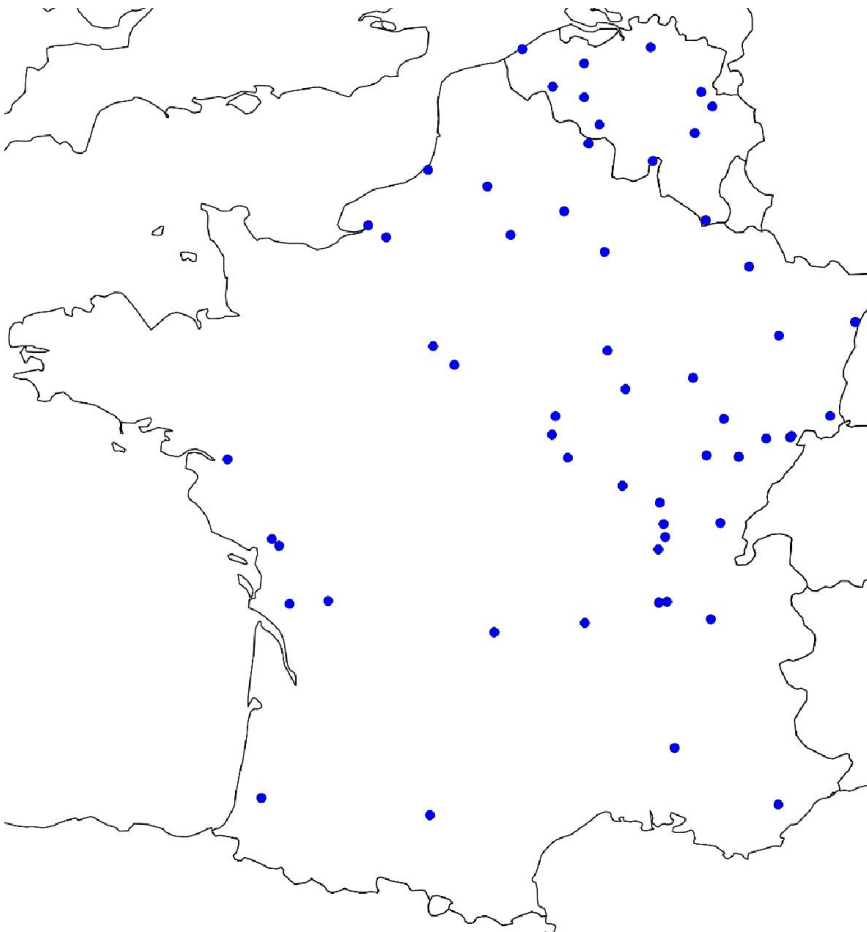
Figure 6.31 - map of metal figurines.

Metal figurines appear to be concentrated in the north and east, but it is unclear if this represents a recovery bias or is a true reflection of their past distribution. This is quite different from the more centrally distributed ceramic figurines (**Figure 6.28**). They were usually found individually or in very small numbers, but the site of Bavay had an unusually high number of them at 14 examples. Most of these objects lacked any contextual data, with many being found in antiquity.

A few artefacts are worth further attention because of their unusual decoration or construction. One (find 2545) is a large, enamelled figurine from Tongeren, Belgium, which appears identical to several British examples (see 4.2.1). A small lead figurine of a trussed chicken (find 1342, **Figure 6.30**) was found outside the baths at Vertault (Côte-d'Or) in the late 19th century. A cockerel figurine from Lyon (find 2447) appears unremarkable, but was found with a matching figurine of a ram or goat, which is oddly elevated with a rod at either end. The cockerel sits neatly in the space left beneath the

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other animal (**Figure 6.32**), and, although the exact details of where the objects were found are unknown, it was stated that they were discovered in this position. Finally, a rather charming figurine of a cockerel (find 1428, **Figure 6.32**) blowing a horn was found in Strasbourg.

Figure 6.32 - left, find 2447 (Boucher and Tassinari 1976, 94). Right, find 1428 (Baudoux et al. *2002, 333, fig. 302).*

One figurine stands out as particularly unusual. Found in the river Saône at Lyon in 1858, this figurine (find 1229, **Figure 6.33**) is currently in the Louvre Museum and is thought to be from the second century. This figurine is surprisingly large at 0.56m, and quite superbly detailed and naturalistic. However, it is so unlike any of the other artefacts found during this survey that the date of this object must be questioned, and whether it is a more modern artefact ascribed to the Roman period simply because of the number of cockerel figurines being made then. Stylistically and in form, it does not match the rest of this assemblage, being more similar to modern creations. If it is genuinely Roman, then it must have been a truly meaningful object.

Figure 6.33 - find 1229, found in the river Saône at Lyon (image copyright Musée du Louvre).

Some objects included in this section may have been more than simple figurines, as they included some means of attaching them to another object. One (find 1331), known only from its description, was said to have been attached to the lid of some other artefact, and others (finds 1943, 1944, 2460, and 2461) had pegs on the bottom where they could have been attached to something similar or to a larger piece of furniture. Two artefacts (finds 1317 and 1431) had a similar mount, but were smaller and very stylised, quite like several British examples which may have, at least in some cases, been hairpins (see 4.7.1).

6.2.2 Chickens with humans

Fourteen figurines included chickens in scenes with humans, with all but two of these human figures being deities, and one figurine was an unusual hybrid chicken-headed man. Most are bronze, but there was a single silver figurine of Mercury, a ceramic figurine of a seated goddess, and a rare ceramic Mercury.

Figure 6.34 - find 1260, figurine of Mercury from an "antiques restorer" hoard in Dax. Right, detail of the cockerel and goat, added at a later date (Santrot 1996, 275, 281).

As discussed above, a figurine of Mercury found in Dax (Landes) (find 1260) is an interesting example of longevity and reuse of an artefact, with various components being replaced over decades or even centuries. In this example, the ram and cockerel are quite visibly of a different style than the Mercury, being much more stylised compared to the more Classical deity and placed awkwardly on the edge of the base (**Figure 6.34**). These appear to have been added to a first century figurine sometime in, perhaps, the third or fourth century (Santrot 1996, 267-276).

Although not as obvious as the Dax figurine, some of the others also appear to have had animals added at some later date. Three (finds 2210, 2458, and 2537) have Mercury and a cockerel mounted on a base that looks like it could have been added later, but two others are more convincing (**Figure 6.35**). Part of the Mâcon Treasure, dating to the late second or early third century and currently in the British Museum (find 919), has a Mercury with an especially tiny cockerel mounted beside him. The other was found in

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Bavay (find 1965) with coins dating from the end of the third century, and contains both a cockerel and a goat. Here it is the ram that is unusually small, but, again, these figures seem less naturalistic than the accompanying human figure. Whether this is because the deity was deemed of more importance, with the animals getting a different treatment, possibly even being made by other artists, or because, as with the Dax example, they were added later is uncertain.

Figure 6.35 - left, find 919, figurine of Mercury from the Mâcon Treasure (image copyright Trustees of the British Museum). Right, find 1965, figurine of Mercury from Bavay (Faider-Feytmans 1957, pl. VI).

While most of the depictions of Mercury show him standing upright as in the previous examples, there is one of him in repose on a rock (**Figure 6.36**). This figurine was

found near Nimy in Belgium with coins from the end of the first to mid-second century (find 2538). In this example, the accompanying cockerel is not free-standing, but is instead in relief on the surface of the rock. An even more unusual depiction of Mercury is a figurine from Tongeren (find 2476), where the seated god, holding a cockerel and purse, has a phallic nose and a second phallus as a crest atop his head.

Figure 6.36 - unusual Mercury figurines. Left, reclining Mercury from Nimy (find 2538; Faider-Feytmans 1979, plate 27); right, phallic Mercury from Tongeren (find 2476, Faider-Feytmans 1979, plate 28).

Ceramic figurines of Mercury are relatively rare (Faider-Feytmans 1979, 28), and a survey by Talvas (2007, 31-32) appears to have included none with his companion animals. One ceramic Mercury figurine (find 1952) was found with a cremation at Cutry (Meurthe-et-Moselle), and includes what appears to be a cockerel against the god's right leg. If the figurine was painted, this object would almost certainly have been more obvious.

The only other ceramic figurine with a human and chicken together is a seated goddess found near a spring at a possible villa in Saint-Eloy-les-Tuileries (Corrèze) (find 1437). Known only from its description, it depicts a female figurine on a throne, holding fruit in one hand and with a cockerel at her feet.

Bronze figurines of hunchbacked dwarves are known from other parts of the Classical

world, especially Egypt, and such "grotesques" go back to Hellenistic times (Picard 1958, 83-84). One was found in Strasbourg, depicting the traditional "pygmy" holding an amphora or laygnos in one hand and a cockerel in the other. See 7.3.3 for further discussion of this image.

An unusual bronze figurine of a cockerel-headed man (find 1354) was found at Troyes around 1900, but unfortunately no image of it was found.

Figure 6.37 - dubiously dated figurine of a nude women with a chicken (find 2547, Faider-Feytmans 1979, plate 195).

Finally, there is a figurine of a nude woman with a cockerel from Middelkerke in Ghent University's Archaeology Museum (find 2547, **Figure 6.37**), but it is listed as a "doubtful object." The scene certainly does not seem to match any other depictions of chickens from the period.

6.3 Sculpture
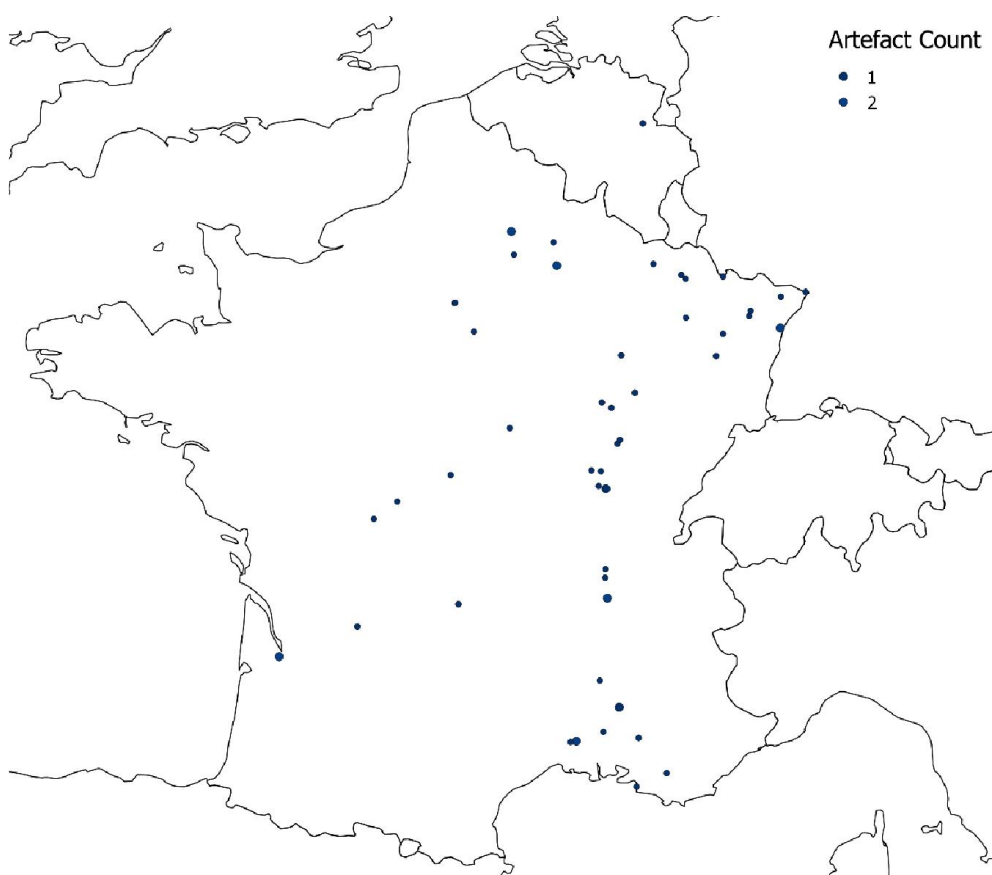
Figure 6.38 - distribution of sculptures in France and Belgium. Larger, lighter circles indicate a higher concentration of artefacts.

Sculptures include free-standing statues, reliefs, fragments of architecture, sarcophagi, and other relatively large carved pieces of stonework. There were 59 such objects, spread across the region with a higher concentration towards the east (**Figure 6.38**). Although some there were some regional concentrations, no individual site held more than three sculptures of chickens.

Location type - sculpture
Total count = 59
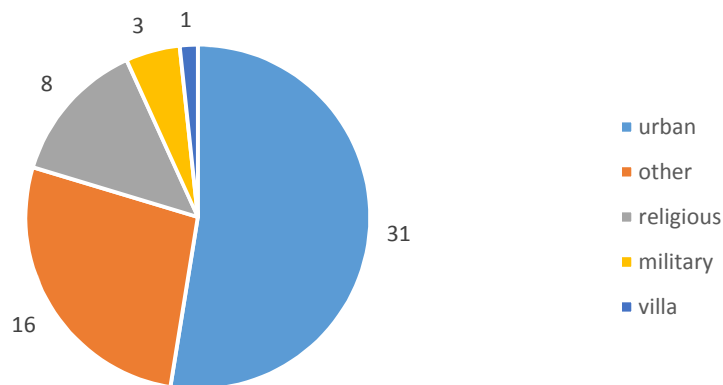
Figure 6.39 - sculptures by location type.

The majority of carved stonework came from urban sites (**Figure 6.39**). Over a quarter came from sites that are either unknown or had an uncertain use. Religious sites made up the next most common type, followed by military sites and a single villa. This distribution is to be expected, as monumental architecture would have been far more common in urban and religious sites than in rural settlements. Additionally, the distinction between urban and military sites is not always clear, particularly in the earlier period or in the area close to the Germanic border.
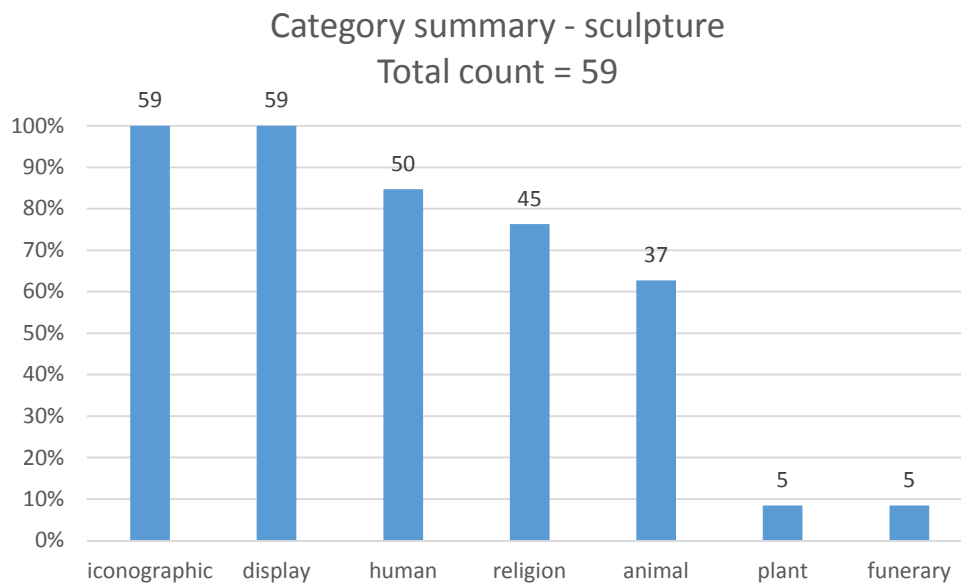
Figure 6.40 - percentage of sculptures by category.

All of the artefacts in this group were identified through a visual depiction, and by their very nature were meant for display, so the *iconographic* and *display* categories are fully represented (**Figure 6.40**). Associations with religion or *anthropomorphic* depictions occurred in over 75% of the objects, and 37 included other *animals* as well as chickens. Five included depictions of *plant* material, and five were *funerary* monuments or sarcophagi.

Strength comparison - sculpture
Total count = 59
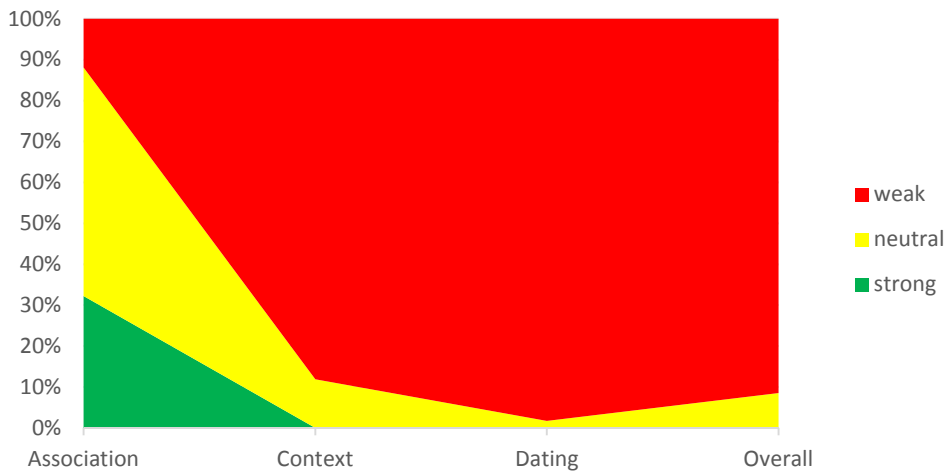
Figure 6.41 - comparison of strength ratings for figurines.

Due to a mix of damage over the years and poor quality images of the artefacts, it was not always possible to be positive of the species of the animal depicted, so the *association* score tended towards neutrality (**Figure 6.41**). Although such objects are heavy and would be expected to not travel very far from their original placement, it must be remembered that they could have been reused in later stonework rather than left where they lay. One such example is a relief of Mercury that was found as part of the Pont au Change in Paris. Additionally, many of these objects were recovered in antiquity and lack detailed information on where and how they were recovered. Because of this, most objects had a low *context* score and were only dateable on stylistic grounds and suffer in this score as well. Combined, all of this gives this find type a low overall score.

Date ranges - sculpture
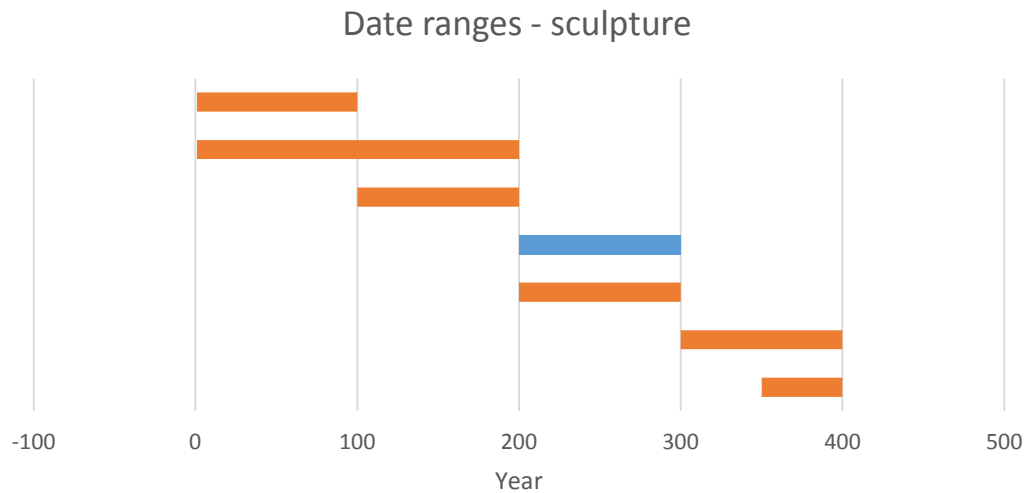
Figure 6.42 - date ranges for dateable sculptures. Each line represents a single artefact. Objects in blue were dated by stratigraphy or associated finds; objects in red were dated stylistically.

Where it was possible to give a date range for an object, they tended to be quite broad, usually just to century (**Figure 6.42**). All but one were dated stylistically apart from the Sarcophagus of the Holy Innocents (find 1227), which dates to sometime in the 3rd century AD. Although there are only a few dateable objects, they include examples from the entire Roman period.

Many sculptures were found and recorded in antiquity, and some have since been lost or destroyed, and the damage, both deliberate and accidental, over the years has sometimes made it difficult to identify what is being depicted. This makes them somewhat less useful, but they do have an advantage in that they usually show chickens alongside other figures, and sometimes, as with altars, the type of object itself can offer some meaning, as well. Although the objects themselves may be out of context, they sometimes have a context of their own, which are broken down into several groups below.

6.3.1 Mercury

About two thirds of the sculptures (39) are related to Mercury, and are a figure of traditional style holding a caduceus and purse with a cockerel standing nearby, often at

his feet. It is not always clear that Mercury is the figure being depicted, and there does seem to be an assumption that a human accompanied by a chicken must be Mercury, creating the possibility of a circular argument that Mercury has a chicken therefore chickens equal Mercury in some of the interpretations. However, given their clear relationship in many pieces of art, this may not be too much of an interpretive stretch, and it is possible that figures who do not match the traditional image of Mercury may still represent local versions of the god. One of these (find 2501) is a clay relief, but otherwise fits into this collection.

Five of these objects were found on religious sites, and while the highest proportion came from urban sites (n=18), many of these could have come from temples or shrines within the towns. Two were found in antiquity at sites that finders thought may have been temples; a stele of Mercury from Aubigny-la-Ronce (Côte-d'Or) (find 2510) and a now lost stele from Mellecey (Saône-et-Loire) (find 2512). A damaged statue of Mercury, possibly with a cockerel at his side (find 1259), came from a temple near some springs in Margerides (Corrèze). A stele from Langres (Haute-Marne) (find 1386) was thought to be from the site of a sacellum, or small shrine. The base of a statue, showing a cockerel next to a foot assumed to be of Mercury (find 1269), was found inside a temple complex in Tongeren, Belgium. Altars to Mercury have been found at Vaison-la-Romaine (Vaucluse) (find 2481), Caveirac (Gard) (find 2504), Bordeaux (find 2507), and Saulny (Moselle) (find 2525), suggesting that temples were located there, as well.

Rosmerta is a Gallic goddess who is often associated with Mercury (see 8.4.3), and she appears with him, and his cockerel, in seven artefacts. A stele pulled from the Oise River in Condren (Aisne) (find 1348) has worn male and female figures, one of whom is holding what appears to be a cockerel and the other a caduceus, and may represent the pair. A similar image appears on stelai from Reims (Marne) (find 2521) and Strasbourg (find 2529), but with the chicken appearing below and above the couple, respectively. An altar from Montigny (Moselle) (find 2524) has Mercury and Rosmerta, here holding what appears to be a cornucopia, on one side, and an image of Apollo on the opposite. Another altar, this one from Lyon (find 2223), shows Mercury with a female figure holding a cornucopia, but there she was interpreted as his mother, Maia.

A cippus (marker for boundaries or graves) or altar found in what was referred to as a

small tomb in La Malmaison (Aisne) (find 2523, **Figure 6.43**) depicts a seated god and goddess who may represent Mercury and Rosmerta, although, apart from the cockerel, none of Mercury's attributes appear. Unusually, the top of the object is carved into a bearded head with three faces. Tricephalic figures like this are often associated with Mercury, but may be a local god, possibly Lugus, who shared traits with him (Ross 1967, 74; Webster 1986, 33).

Figure 6.43 - tricephalic depictions of Mercury; left, find 2523 (Espérandieu 1913, 72). Right, find 1352 (Espérandieu 1938, 36).

A sculpture from Soissons (find 1352, **Figure 6.43**) has a tricephalic face over a ram's head and a cockerel, which seems to reinforce the Mercury connection. A damaged piece of stone from Senon (find 2530) shows only two faces, but the break could have destroyed the third. Here the figure holds the cockerel in the crook of his arm.

Occasionally other gods appear with depictions of Mercury. Apollo has already been

seen alongside Rosmerta, but also appears in a relief with Mercury and Minerva (find 2473), who are all identifiable by their animal companions: a dog for Apollo, an owl for Minerva, and a cockerel for Mercury. This triad appears more often in silver plate (see 6.7.1). A lost piece of stone, decorated on three sides, from Reims (find 2522) had a crude depiction of possibly Mercury and a cockerel on one face, and a nude figure, maybe Heracles, on another.

A stele from Oberdorf-Spachbach (Bas-Rhin) has a partially nude male figure holding a small child (find 1433), and has been interpreted as Mercury holding an infant Bacchus (Hutt *et al.* 1973, 144). The bird by his foot is suggestive of Mercury, but he otherwise lacks most of the god's attributes, and it may be that the identification is based on this bird being a chicken. However, the scene is similar to the statue Hermes and the Infant Dionysus, found in the Temple of Hera at Olympia, and could potentially be a local copy by an artist familiar with it, perhaps through the more contemporary writings of Pausanias (Carpenter 1991, 73).

While goats or rams are a common part of these Mercury groups, it is far more unusual to see Mercury's tortoise, and 14 of these sculptures include possible depictions of one.

6.3.2 Funerary

Five objects were potentially linked with funerary practices. One of these, a stele found in Strasbourg (find 1434, **Figure 6.44**), is less clearly funerary and may have had another use. It depicts a soldier, behind whom is a standard with a cockerel perched on it, and the name Lepontius is carved across the top. Whether this was a burial marker, a memorial, or a monument erected by this person is unclear. It has been dated to the second half of the fourth century, and is an unusual pairing of a chicken with a non-religious figure.

Figure 6.44 - left, find 1434, cast of the now lost stele of Lepontius (Schnitzler and Kuhnle 2010, 128). Right, find 1963, stele of Laetus (Valensi 1964-1965, 24).

Another pairing appears on a stele from Bordeaux (find 1963, **Figure 6.44**), bearing the inscription "To the gods Manes ... Laetus, his father ... (this monument is raised)," and apparently a memorial, possibly a grave marker, to this child. This object is particularly interesting, as it shows a child with what are presumably pets. One is the cockerel at his or her feet, but the other has been the subject of some debate, representing either a cat or a small dog (see Johns 2003b for a full discussion). A stele from Entrains-sur-Nohain (Nièvre) (find 1421) has a similar image, with a possible child accompanied by a dog and chicken, and likewise appears funerary in nature.

The two sarcophagi had a more definite use as funerary objects. One is the sarcophagus of the holy innocents in a crypt in Saint-Maximin-la-Sainte-Baume (Var) (find 1227) and shows a scene of St. Peter's denial of Christ, with one cockerel standing between

them and another perched atop a palm tree. The other, the so-called sarcophagus of Saints Chrysante and Darie in the Abbey of St. Victor in Marseille (find 2225), appears to date to the late fourth century and likewise includes a panel featuring St. Peter with a cockerel.

6.3.3 Structural

Two carvings appear to have been part of larger structures rather than standalone art. One (find 2502) may have been a transom and has an eagle fighting a snake on one side and a cockerel fighting a small dog for a bunch of fallen grapes on the other. The other, unfortunately, is known only from its description, and is two fragments of column capitals (find 2482), one of which includes an image of a cockerel.

6.3.4 Other

Chickens were associated with deities other than Mercury and his consorts, but in much smaller numbers. A stele found near Vignory (Haute-Marne) (find 2516) shows a military figure, possibly a version of Hercules, holding a crested serpent in one hand and an upside-down animal that may be a chicken in the other. A damaged block of stone from Freyming-Merlebach (Moselle) (find 2527) shows a group of figures, with one bearded man and the rest potentially women. One of the feminine figures holds a cockerel.

Human figures also appear on altars with chickens. A man holding a hammer appears on one from Vaison-la-Romaine (Vaucluse) (find 2500), with a chicken appearing on the right side face of the altar. A similar hammer-wielding figure is on an altar from Nîmes (Gard) (find 2503), but there the cockerel appears by his side. A third altar from Avignon (Vaucluse) (find 1226) has depictions of a boar and cockerel on one face, but it is unknown what appears on the other sides.

Lone chicken sculptures are uncommon, and could have been part of larger compositions. They include a block of stone found in Nîmes (find 2505), a statue from Essarois (Côte-d'Or) (find 2518), and fragments of a bird sculpture found at a temple site in Saint-Léomer (Vienne), thought to represent Jupiter's eagle or Mercury's cockerel (find 1442). A fragment of an oscillum, or round decorative tablet (find 2499),

depicting a chicken came from Vienne.

Perhaps the most unusual artefact carved from stone was a table of unknown provenance, part of an old collection in Tarbes (Hautes-Pyrénées), that showed a cockerel with a group of hens, one of which was perched atop a column (find 2506). Unfortunately, the context and date of this object remain a mystery.

6.4 Lamps
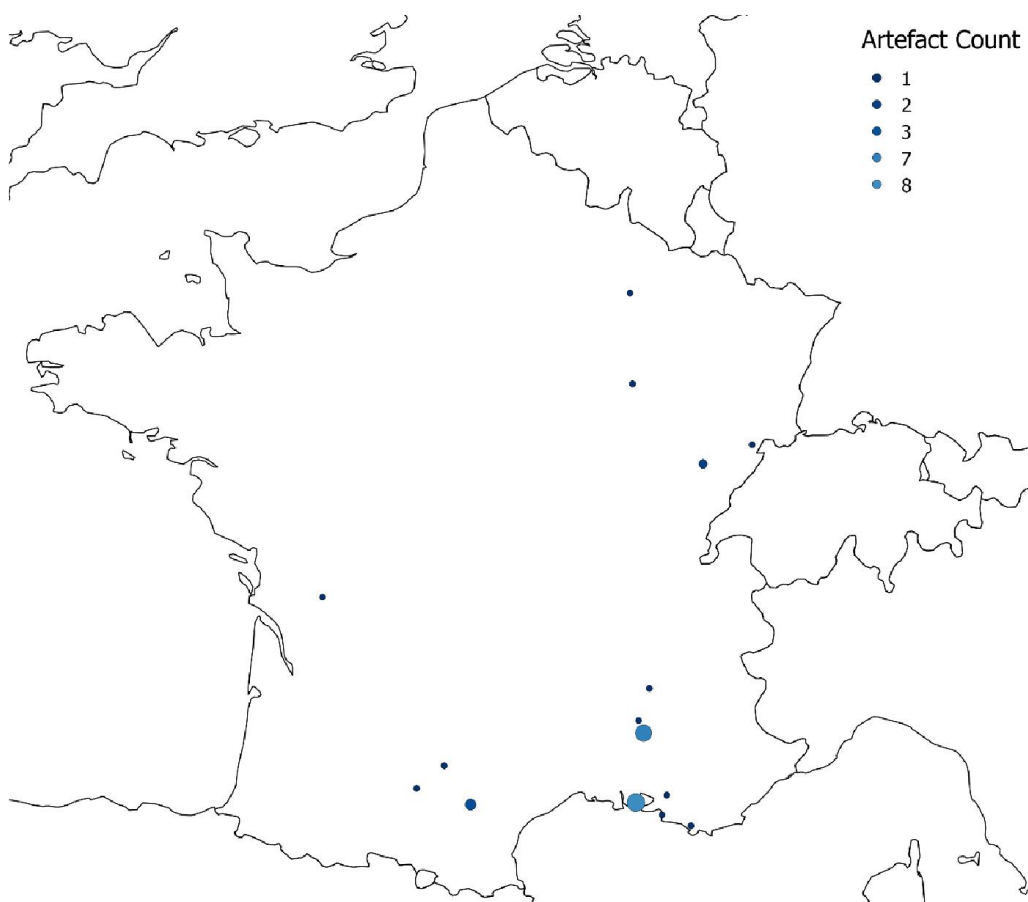
Figure 6.45 - distribution of lamps in France and Belgium. Larger, lighter circles indicate a higher concentration of artefacts.

There were 38 lamps and candlesticks relating to chickens in this region, most of which were small ceramic lamps. There were two bronze lamps, two bronze candlesticks, and a single bronze candelabra or incense burner, which appears to be an Etruscan example like those found in Britain (see 4.8.2). They were much more common in the southern part of France (**Figure 6.45**), with concentrations at some sites where they appear to

have been manufactured.   This spatial variation may be related to the period these lamps were being made, as discussed below.

Location type - lamps
Total count = 38
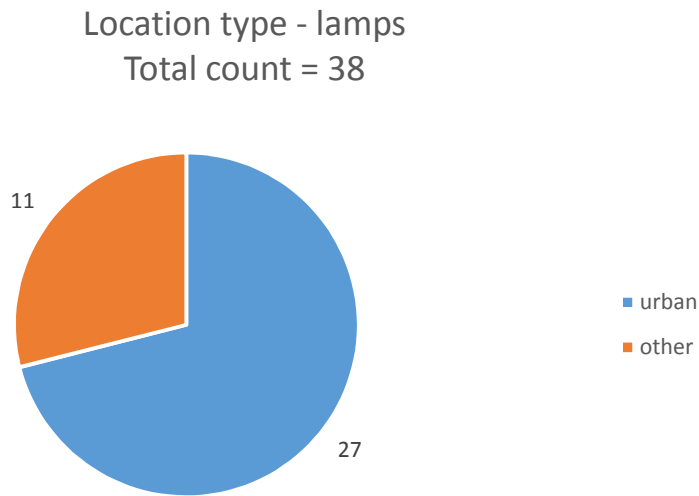
Figure 6.46 - lamps by location type.

All of the lamps came from urban sites or those with an unknown function (**Figure 6.46**). Some sites appear to have been workshops where ceramic lamps were manufactured alongside pottery, and are discussed in more detail below.

Category summary - lamps
Total count = 38
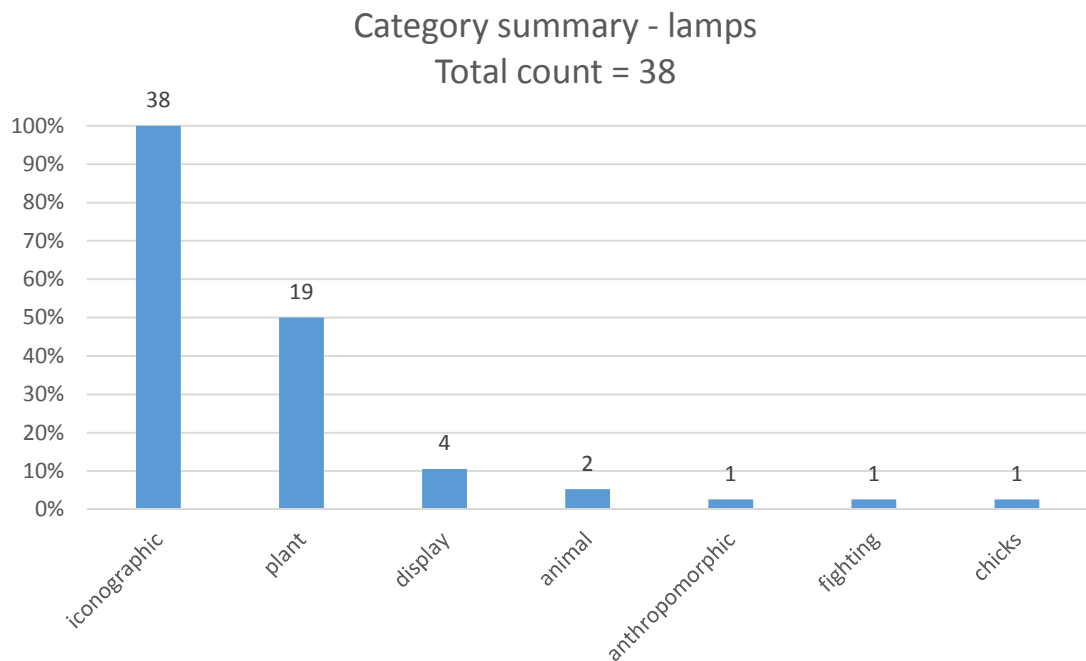
Figure 6.47 - percentage of lamps by category.

All of the lamps were recorded because they had a depiction of a possible chicken, and 19 also included plants, usually a palm leaf (**Figure 6.47**). Four of them, two candlesticks (finds 1372 and 1377), a lamp (find 2463), and a candelabra (find 1121), all made of bronze, were more fully realised as objects of display. Two contained images of other animals; a chicken confronting a snake on a lamp (find 1006) and a possible panther on the candelabra. A lamp from Vaison-la-Romaine (find 2489) showed a "pygmy" fighting a cockerel, and another from the same site (find 2487) had a hen with three chicks.

Strength comparison - lamps
Total count = 38
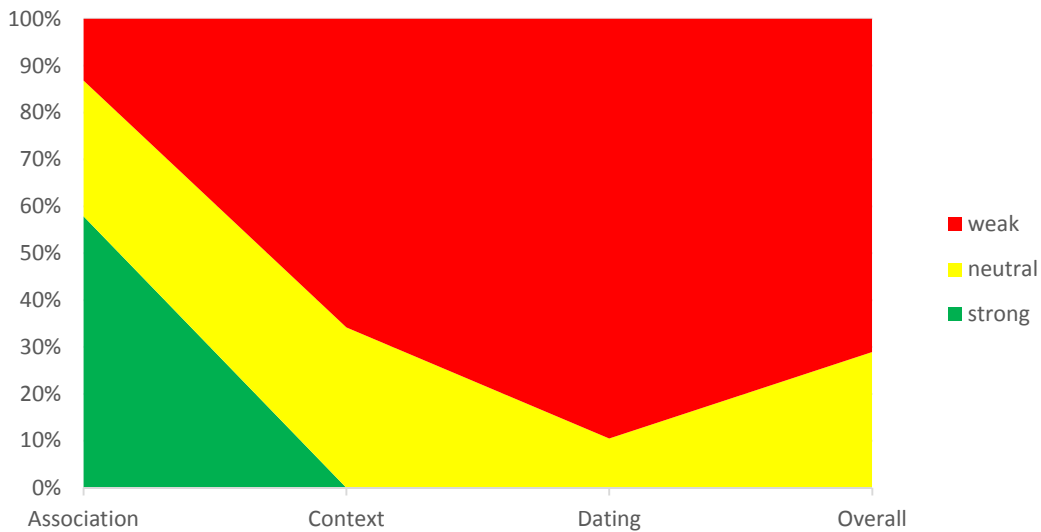
Figure 6.48 - comparison of strength ratings for lamps.

All of these objects included an image of a bird, but it was not always clear what species it represented and the figures were sometimes damaged (**Figure 6.48**). However, some of these fragments matched more complete examples found with them, making them more definitely chicken than if they had been found in isolation. Most had limited or no context information, but some were recovered from controlled excavations, and from these it was possible to date a few of them. Makers' stamps provided an additional level of dating for three of them. Most were dated only on stylistic grounds, however. This gives this find type a low overall score.

Figure 6.49 - date ranges for dateable lamps. Each line represents a single artefact. Objects in blue were dated by stratigraphy or associated finds; objects in red were dated stylistically.

Where dating was possible, it was generally a broad range of dates (**Figure 6.49**). All of these are ceramic lamps, with most dating to the first century AD. Four of these were dated by associated pottery or inscriptions, and seem to form the basis of the stylistic dates. Three (finds 1285, 1940, and 2214) are of a notably different style and were in use in the late Roman period.

6.4.1 Ceramic lamps

The largest group of lamps, with 56 recorded examples, are ceramic with decorated discs. The "victorious cockerel", a chicken with a palm leaf behind it (**Figure 6.50**), is a common image on such lamps (Rivet 2004, 243) and appears on 17 of them. Some of

the more fragmented lamps appear to include the same image based on what little remains visible.

Figure 6.50 - find 1271, lamp with cockerel and palm leaf from Fos-sur-Mer (Rivet 2003, 149).

While some of these lamps may have been imported, it appears they were also being made in local workshops (**Figure 6.51**), possibly being copied from Italian versions (Rivet 2004, 243). One such workshop is suspected at Fos-sur-Mer near Marseille based on dumps of ceramic material found there. During the 1st century AD, lamps were being made from the same clay as the local samian ware (Rivet 2004, 234), with 16 of them having images of cockerels.
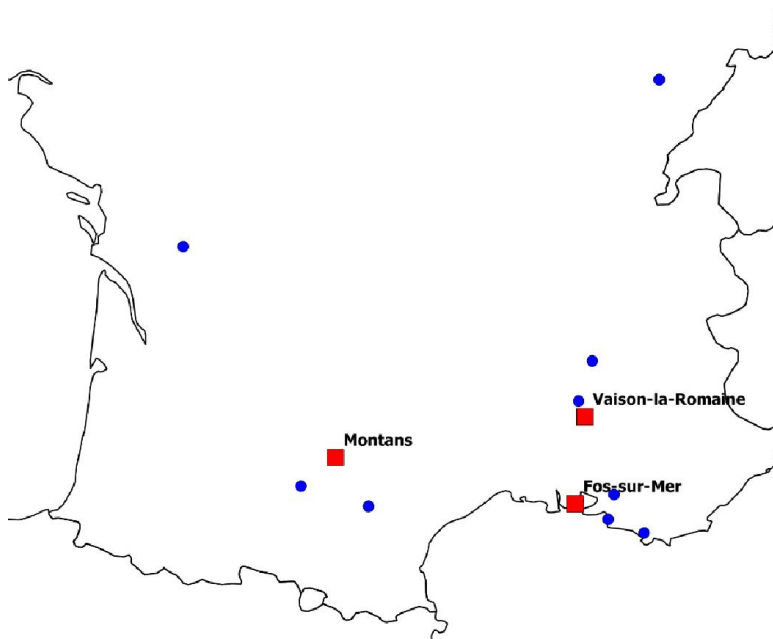
Figure 6.51 - map of ceramic lamps and workshops. Blue dots indicate find spots; red squares indicate possible workshop locations.

A disused oven at Montans (Tarn) held the remains of 21 lamps, again seeming to be copies made by taking a mould of an existing lamp (Martin 1974, 135). One (find 1327) depicted a cockerel in front of a palm leaf, but it is not clear if it is based on the same prototype as those from Fos-sur-Mer. A group of lamps were found at Les Martys (Aude), some of which had the mark of a workshop in Montans. Three (finds 2291, 2292, and 2293) had the cockerel and palm motif, but it was not stated if they were among those so marked. Additional makers' marks were found on lamps from Drôme (find 990), Vaison-la-Romaine (finds 2483 and 2484), and Aix-en-Provence (Bouches-du-Rhône) (find 1441), all of a L (ucius) Hos (idius) Cry (SPUS). Three have the palm leaf image, and the other is described as a "webbing" that likely represents the same. All of these date to the 1st century AD.

While lone cockerels make up most of the lamp decorations, there were a few unusual images to be found, all from the site of Vaison-la-Romaine. The first (find 2487) is remarkable for depicting a hen surrounded by three chicks. Another (find 2485) showed a cockerel pecking at a cornucopia, with an unfortunately damaged object possibly representing a caduceus, which would provide an unambiguous link to Mercury if that is what it was.

Most unusual was an image of a cockerel fighting a "pygmy" armed with a shield (find 2489), unfortunately unillustrated. The pairing of chickens and "pygmies" or dwarves is not unusual, but the meaning behind it is not clear (see 7.3.3).

6.4.2 Bronze lamps and candlesticks

A much smaller number of lighting implements were made of bronze, consisting of two lamps, two candlesticks, and a candelabra or incense burner.

One of the lamps (find 1946), found in Mandeure (Doubs), is an unusual image of a chicken nesting on top of a ship. The other (find 2463) is a hanging lamp of unknown provenance, possibly of later date, in the shape of a chicken, with the spout of the lamp emerging from its breast.

The designation of two of the artefacts as candlesticks is more uncertain, with one of them (find 1372) being recorded as a mount of some sort. The other (find 1377) is of a similar shape, both with large sockets for holding a cylindrical object on their back.

Finally, there was a large candelabra (find 1221), or possibly incense burner, with no known history. It has a chicken perched on the side of the main shaft, pursued by some kind of large animal, possibly a large cat. Other examples are known from British collections, and all appear to be Etruscan objects from the 4th and 3rd centuries BC. It seems likely that, rather than during having been deposited in those locations during antiquity, these objects were moved subsequently to their present locations by antiquarians.

6.5 Pottery

Figure 6.52 - distribution of pottery in France and Belgium. Larger, lighter circles indicate a higher concentration of artefacts.

The amount of chicken-related pottery from France and Belgium is almost certainly underrepresented, with only 31 recorded examples from across the region (**Figure 6.52**). Many site reports did not contain separate sections for different types of artefacts, a phenomenon further discussed in Chapter 7, and it was usually unclear if the site simply lacked pottery, which seems unlikely, or if it was just not discussed in detail in the published report. Given that samian ware was produced in this region, the latter seems more likely. Additionally, when physical remains were found in association with pottery, the pottery was not always described.
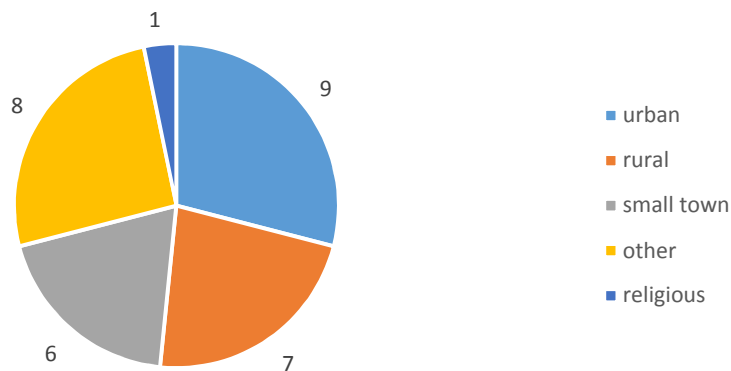
Figure 6.53 - pottery by location type.

As might be expected, pottery was found on all manner of sites, with urban and rural making up the largest proportions (**Figure 6.53**).
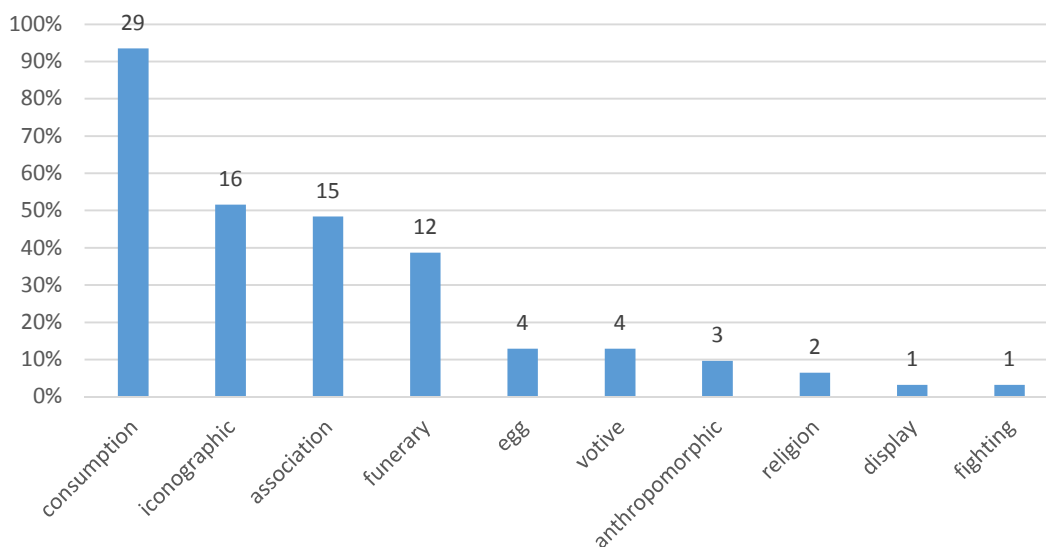
Figure 6.54 - percentage of pottery by category.

Pottery was primarily used with food and therefore linked to *consumption* (**Figure 6.54**). There was an almost even split between those selected for having an *iconographic* depiction of a chicken (n=16) and being found in association with a

chicken (n=15). Twelve came from *funerary* contexts, and four were found with fragments of *eggshell*. Four appeared to be part of a *votive* deposit. Three displayed images of *anthropomorphic* figures, and two had *religious* connotations. One object, a bronze vase (find 1373), is shaped like a cockerel and probably meant for *display* as much as use. A samian ware tray (find 1039) included images of two cockerels *fighting*.

Figure 6.55 - comparison of strength ratings for pottery.

It was not always clear how closely associated some of the physical remains of chickens, or their eggs, were with the pottery, or even what species the remains were, which lowered the *association* score for this find type (**Figure 6.55**). Those objects that depicted chickens tended to score more highly here than those found with possible chicken remains or eggs. Pottery of unknown provenance, usually in museum collections, lowered the *context* score somewhat, but almost half were recovered from well-recorded deposits, with most of these being funerary. Many of the funerary pots were poorly dateable, however, and in general most of the pottery was not as strongly dateable as might be expected, although this may simply be an issue with the published reports.

Date ranges - pottery

Years
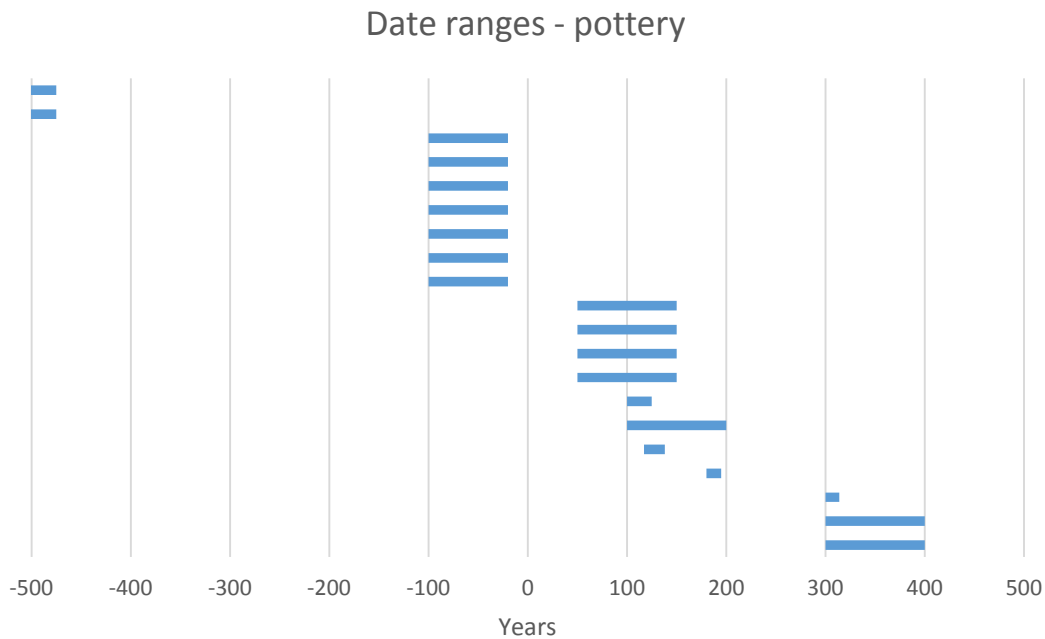
Figure 6.56 - date ranges for dateable pottery. Each line represents a single artefact.

The dates from the pottery span a long period (**Figure 6.56**). Attic pottery from the southern part of France dates back to approximately 475BC. Pottery found in a series of Iron Age cemeteries from the northeast makes up a block from the early to mid 1st century BC. Four pots found beneath a rural floor in the southwest (finds 1281-1284) were dated by the occupation of the site to between the late 2nd and early 3rd century AD. Some of the samian ware could probably be more closely dated by a modern expert.

6.5.1 Samian ware

Although only 13 examples of samian ware with images of chickens were found during this study, their images are well known through catalogues such as Oswald's (1936). The birds rarely interact with the other figures on the object, often standing alone within a medallion or other border. While other figures may be selected based on some association with a chicken, it is uncertain if this is the case or if they were simply selected for artistic purposes.

Most of the samian pots were bowls, but there was one tray (find 1039), which featured a variety of figures along its edge, including boxing boys or Cupids and cockerels

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fighting. Six others show cockerels in a crouched position which also suggests a bird in combat. One bowl (find 1086), unfortunately unillustrated, includes images of Venus, Cupid, and nude, possibly erotic, figures, with a cockerel beneath one panel, and probably not directly associated with them. On one bowl (find 1947), a cockerel perches atop a column.

Two objects (finds 2297 and 2298) in museums appear to be medallions from samian ware, but were not described well enough to be certain. Both are images of Mercury accompanied by a cockerel, one of which (find 2297) is perched on a short column.

Unlike the British material, most of the French and Belgian samian ware was of unknown context. The exceptions were bowls found in a grave at Lyon-Vaise (find 2466) and from a temple at Périgueux (Dordogne).

6.5.2 Greek pottery

Greek pottery is not an unusual find in the southern parts of France, but this survey found only two examples containing chickens. Both (finds 1435 and 1436) came from shipwrecks at the island of Porquerolles and date to approximately 475BC, and both are kylixes depicting a cockerel in the central disc.

6.5.3 Other

Almost all of the other pottery was found in association with the remains of chickens or their eggs. The exception is the base of a bronze urn shaped like a chicken (find 1373), found in a stream in Bourbonne-les-Bains (Haute-Marne).

The largest number of these pots were recovered from a series of Late Iron Age and Roman funerary sites in Champagne excavated by British archaeologists (Stead *et al.* 2006). Three bowls containing chicken bones (finds 1151, 1152, and 1153) were found in a rich cremation burial at Juniville. At Ville-sur-Retourne, one cremation included a bowl containing five eggs (find 1154), while a lid (find 1157) covered an egg in another cremation. A third egg was found in a dish (find 1158) in a later 4th century Roman inhumation. Chicken remains were found on a platter (find 1159) from another late Roman inhumation, and in a cremation burial, which contained a lid (find 1155) holding

chicken remains, covered by a bowl (find 1156).

Two other funerary deposits were recorded from other sites, and there are likely many other examples not included in this sample. A cremation burial from Argentomagus (Indre) dating to about the 2nd century AD contained an urn (find 1954) holding chicken remains. An inhumation from Tournai, Belgium, with coins dating it to early 4th century AD, held a bowl (find 2464) which contained chicken and pig remains.

The non-funerary pots in this group all come from an unusual structured deposit found beneath the floor of a rural, native-style house at the site of Pla de l'Aïgo in Caramany, which were lifted in blocks of soil and carefully excavated in the laboratory (Fabre *et al.* 1999). Four pots (finds 1281-1284) were placed beneath the floor and apparently covered by a solid floor surface. Each contained the remains of a chicken, one of which, which also included eggshell, was a male, and the partially articulated remains were positioned so that the heads of the birds were in the pot while the bodies remained outside, which could suggest that the animals were bled out into the pots as part of a complex ritual (Fabre *et al.* 1999, 288). This level of care in excavation and recording is not usual, so this practice, possibly a foundation deposit, may have been more common than it appears.

6.6 Rings
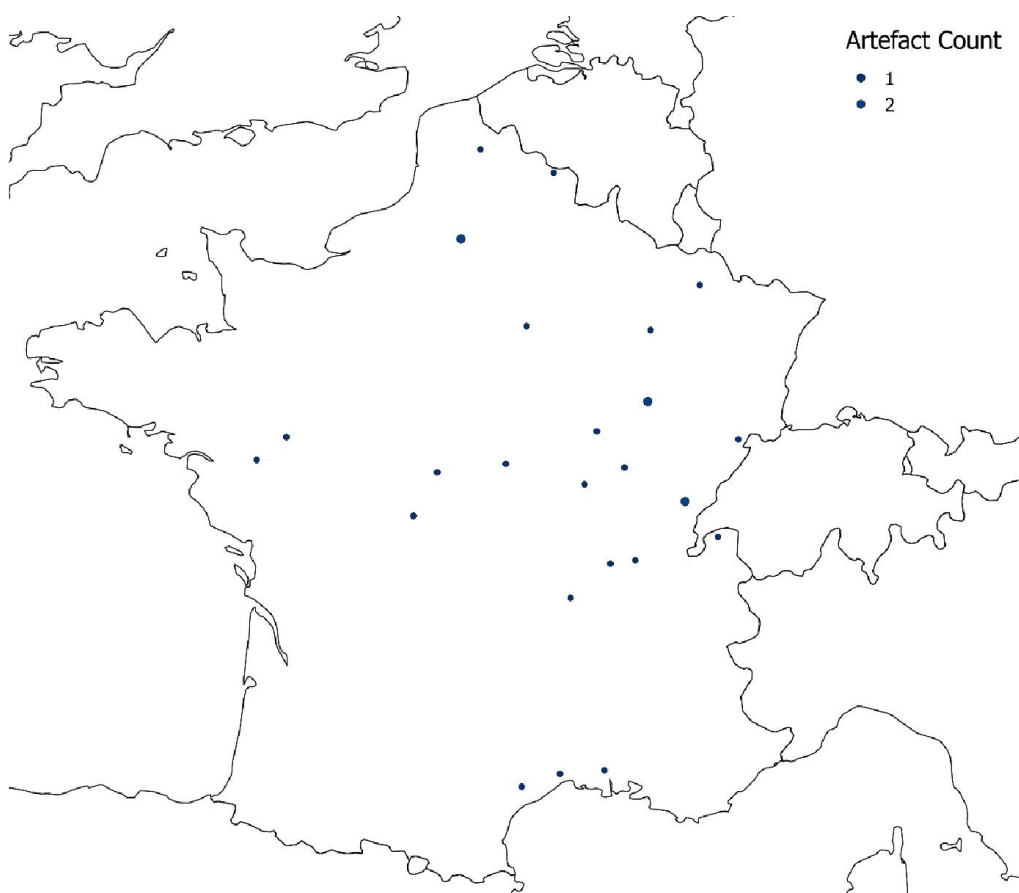
*Figure 6.57 - distribution of rings in France and Belgium. Larger, lighter circles
indicate a higher concentration of artefacts.*

Twenty-eight rings or intaglios with images of chickens on them were recorded from
across France, with a stronger concentration towards the central and eastern parts of the
country, following the pattern of objects in general (**Figure 6.57**). Only one was the
complete ring, with the rest of the collection being the stones from rings. The type of
stone in the rings varied, with examples of jasper (n=5), carnelian (n=8), and nicolo or
glass paste (n=10).
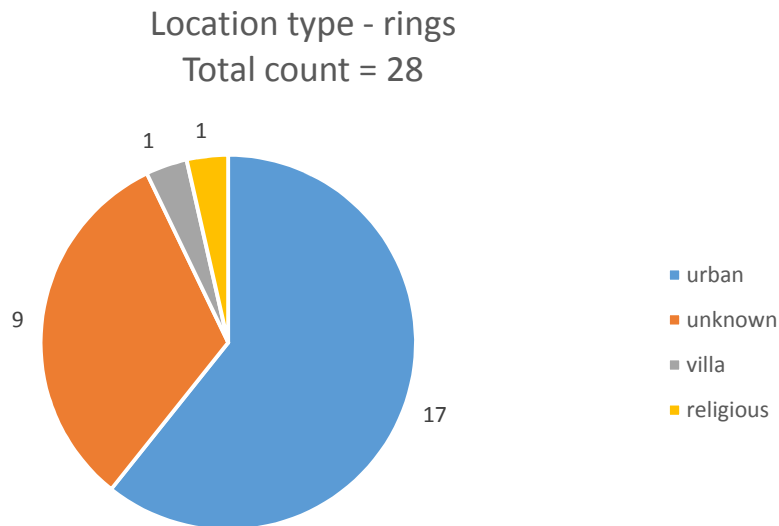
Figure 6.58 - rings by location type.

The majority of the rings were found on urban sites (**Figure 6.58**). One each came from villas and religious sites, with the remaining artefacts being found on sites of unknown use.
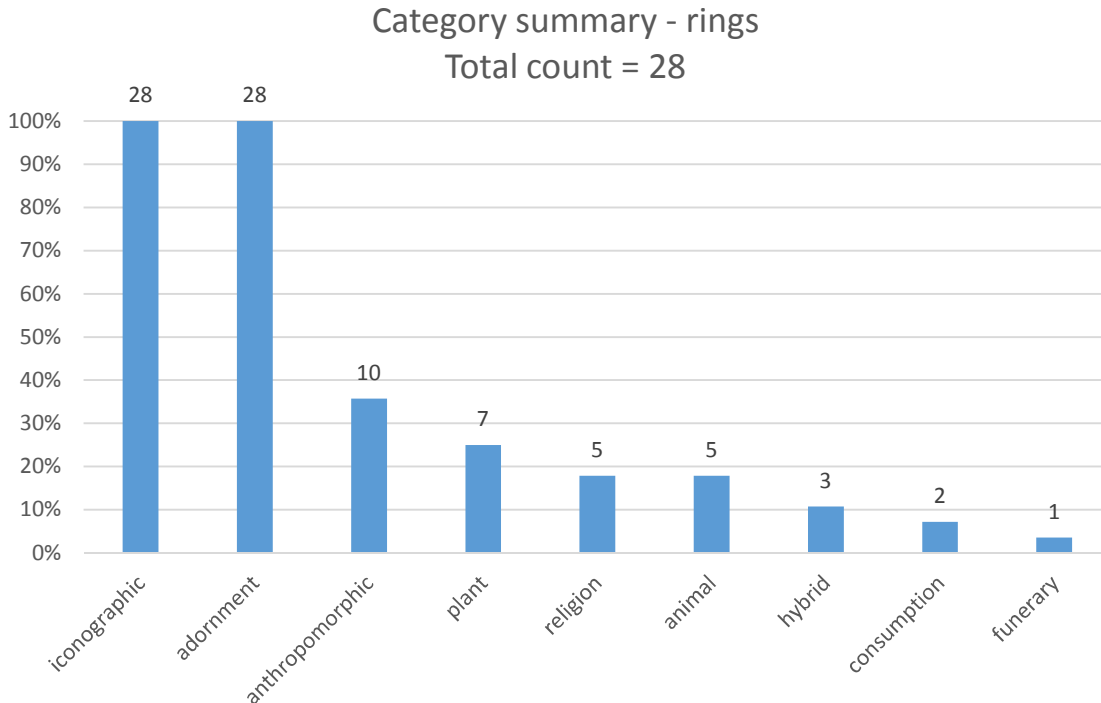
Figure 6.59 - percentage of rings by category.

All of the objects in this group were included because they depicted chickens in some form, and, as rings, they were all objects of *adornment* (**Figure 6.59**). Ten included images of *anthropomorphic* figures, seven *plants*, and five *animals*. Five were *religious* in nature, three were *hybrids* of chickens and other creatures, and two contained images suggesting the *consumption* of chicken. The one in the *funerary* category was found in a grave at Argentomagus.
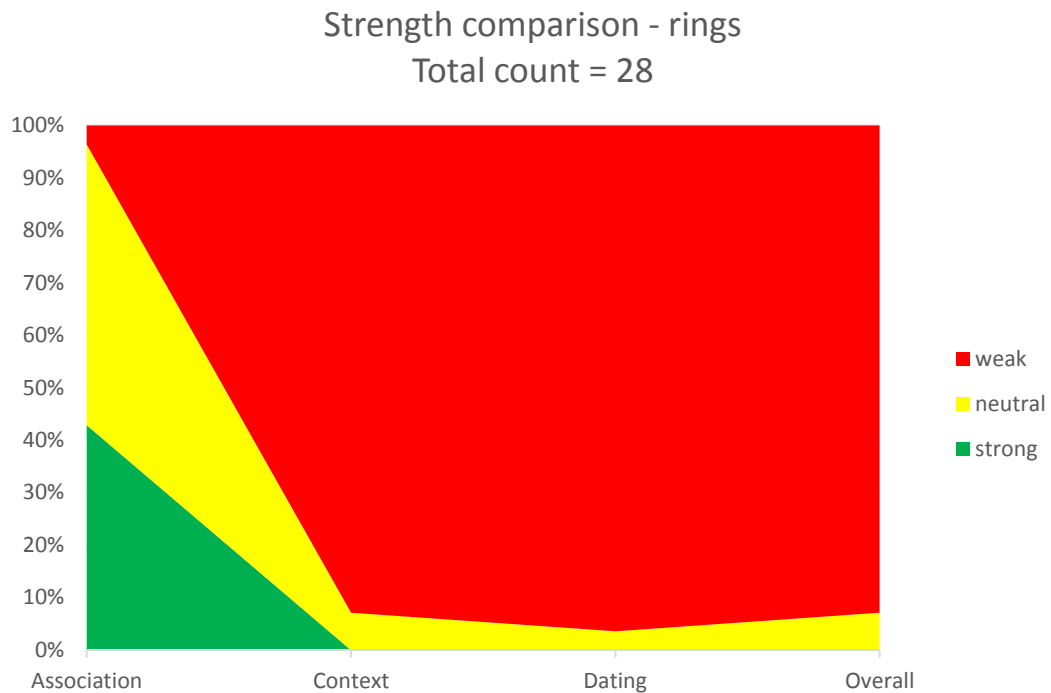
Figure 6.60 - comparison of strength ratings for rings.

Nearly all of the images were clear enough to be certain of their identity as chickens, with the exception of a hunter carrying a bird (find 1196), which seemed more likely to represent a wild species. The resulting *association* scores tended to be quite high, but only two (finds 1202 and 1252) came from known *contexts*. Most are known from catalogues of museum and private collections, and where the circumstances of the recovery were stated, they often lacked detail. Because of this, few of the rings were *dateable* on anything other than stylistic grounds. All of this combines to give this find type a low *overall* score.
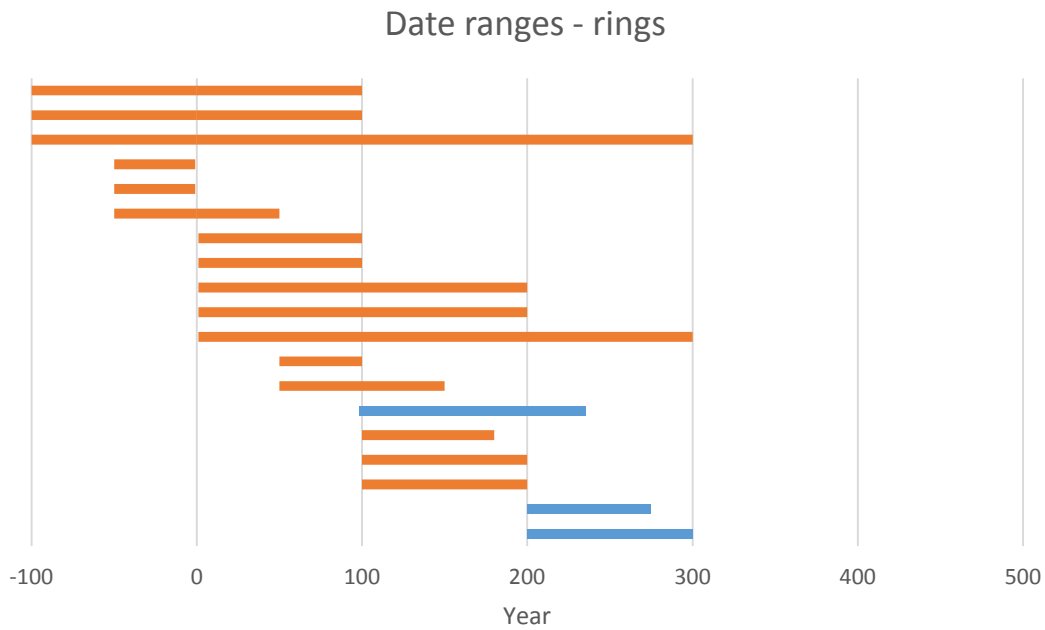
Date ranges - rings

Figure 6.61 - date ranges for dateable rings. Each line represents a single artefact. Objects in blue were dated by stratigraphy or associated finds; objects in red were dated stylistically.

Date ranges for these objects range from the 1st century BC to the end of the 3rd century AD (**Figure 6.61**). Most of these dates were estimated by style or when the site was in use, but three were found in hoards which were dateable by other objects in them. Two (finds 1203 and 1215) were buried in the 3rd century, and the other (find 1346) contained coins from Trajan to Severus Alexander (AD98-235).

The poor dating and context of these finds limits their use somewhat, but fortunately they are a rich source of iconography. As each is unique, they offer a much wider variety of images than any other find type.

6.6.1 Chickens

Figure 6.62 - rings with chickens alone or with other animals. Top left: chicken with grain, find 1203 (Guiraud 1988, plate L); top right, two cockerels and mouse, find 1207 (Guiraud 1988, plate L); bottom left, trussed chicken, find 1208 (Guiraud 1988, plate L); bottom middle, cockerel and eagle, find 1198 (Guiraud 1988, plate XLIX); bottom right, cockerel with Mercury attributes, find 1213 (Guiraud 1988, plate LVII).

Most of the images on rings (18 out of 28) were of chickens either alone or with other animals (**Figure 6.62**). Only three were lone chickens (finds 1205, 1253, 1346), devoid of other ornamentation, although another one was of a trussed bird (find 1208). Five images were of chickens with what appeared to be an ear of corn or grain (finds 1199, 1200, 1201, 1202, and 1203). Another (find 1204) included a basket and three more (finds 1209, 1210, and 1211) featured cornucopias. The last of these (find 1211) also included another bird, which was interpreted as a parrot (Guiraud 1988, 184), and two ears of grain below.

Other animals featured in a total of four of these objects, including the example above. One was an image of two erect cockerels facing each other (find 1206). Another also featured two cockerels (find 1207), this time in a more aggressive stance, but with a mouse between them. Lastly, there was an image of a cockerel facing an eagle (find 1198).

Two intaglios found near Langres (Haute-Marne) (finds 1212 and 1213) included an unusual range of objects relating to Mercury. Both featured a disembodied, winged foot and a petasus, Mercury's winged hat, over a crouched cockerel. It is noteworthy that these objects were included instead of his more familiar caduceus or purse.

Few of these objects came from well-stratified contexts. Two, both of the cockerel with grain type, were found at the grand theatre in Vendeuil-Caply (Oise) (finds 1199 and 1200), one was found in a cellar in Alesia (Côte-d'Or) (find 1202), and one came from "a domestic context" in Thonon-les-Bains (Haute-Savoie). Two were part of larger hoards, one from Saint-Georges-de-Reneins (Rhône) (find 1203) and another from Saint-Paul-de-Varax (Ain) (find 1346).

6.6.2 Accompanying humans

Figure 6.63 - rings featuring chickens with humans. Left: hunter with trussed bird, find 1196 (Guiraud 1988, plate XLI); centre: cockerel and seated man, find 2299 (Pommeret 2001, plate 2d); right: Mercury with goat and cockerel, find 1214 (Guiraud 1988, plate XII).

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Seven rings included images of chickens alongside human figures, not including hybrids, which are discussed below. Two were Mercury; one a more traditional standing figure with a cockerel and goat (find 1214), and the other seated with only the cockerel (find 1215). The latter was found in a 3rd century treasure at Chalain-d'Uzore (Loire).

Two rings (finds 1197 and 2299) included an image of a sitting old man facing a cockerel. One (find 2299) was found at the temple site of Bolards at Nuits-Saint-Georges (Côte-d'Or), but its exact context is unknown. It has been suggested that this image is representative of the story of Lucian's *Gallus* (Bruneau 1965b, 350), in which a man listens to the tale of a talking cockerel (see 7.3.3).

One of the few rings with a known context is a carnelian stone found in a grave at Argentomagus, which was dated to about AD130-180. This intaglio (find 1252) shows a hunchbacked dwarf or "pygmy" carrying a chicken and a basket, an image probably derived from Alexandria, Egypt and further discussed in the section on figurines above (see 6.2.2). Such figures may be on their way to a feast (Faudeut 1978, 33).

An unusual image of an Apoxyomenos, or "the scraper", a traditional Greek athlete in the act of bathing, appears on an intaglio from Equevillon (Jura) (find 1413). Such a figure being accompanied by a cockerel is unusual; perhaps meant to evoke virility or competitiveness.

Finally, the bird depicted on an intaglio from a villa at Pouzolles (Hérault) (find 1196) was described as a cockerel, but if it is it would be very unusual. The image is of a hunter, accompanied by a dog and carrying a rabbit over his shoulder. Hanging from his right hand by its feet is a bird. While it appears to have the crest and tail of a cockerel, it is not the expected quarry of a hunter, but perhaps that is the point of the image.

6.6.3 Hybrids

Three intaglios had images that were a hybrid of chickens and other creatures. Two were of what has been referred to as the Silenus type, which is a human face with various animal parts attached to it. One (find 1217) is a fairly typical example of this type, with the head and feet of a cockerel sprouting from the human face, and a wreath

of some sort grasped in the bird's mouth. The other (find 1216) has a cockerel's tail and feet and a horse's head emerging from the human face, but also includes an image on the opposite side of the stone. The reverse figure is female and wears some sort of wide-brimmed hat. Two letters suggest this may be an image of Isis, and it is suggested that this may be a 1st century stone which had the female image applied sometime in the 2nd or 3rd centuries (Guiraud 1988, 190).

The third hybrid image (find 1218) is similar to the first, but with what appears to be a Cupid riding it and a second, ordinary bird standing beneath the hybrid.

6.7 Silver plate
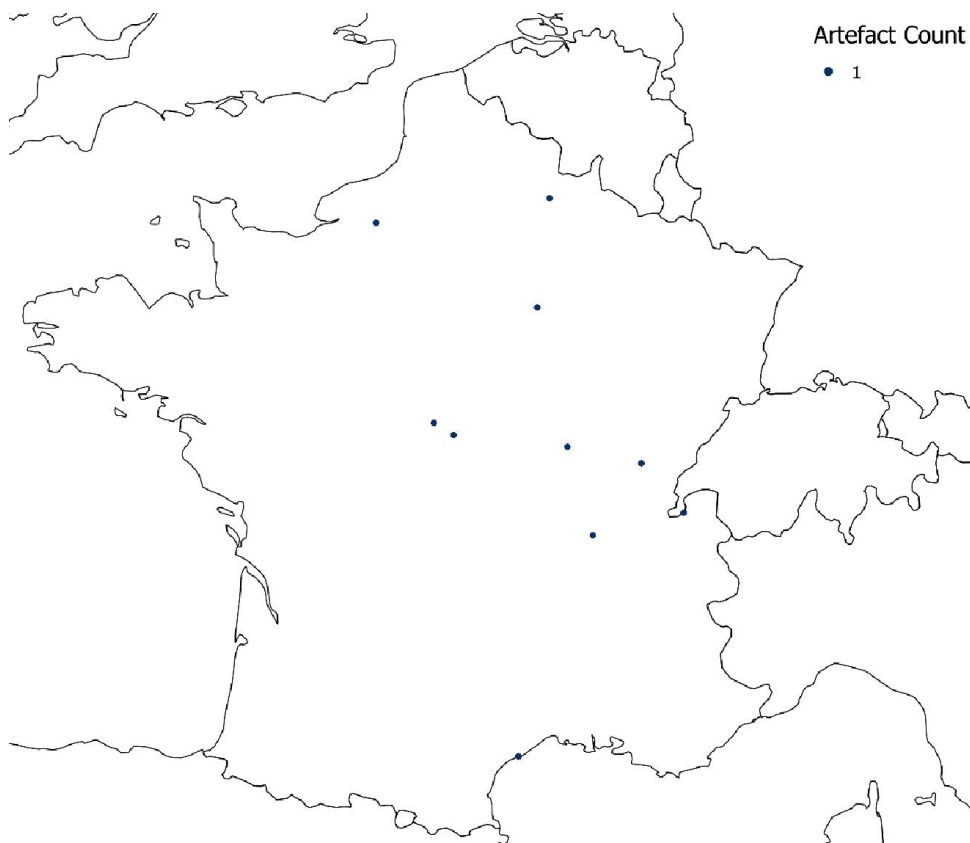
Figure 6.64 - distribution of silver plate in France and Belgium. Larger, lighter circles indicate a higher concentration of artefacts.

Objects in this group include eight paterae, or libation bowls, and a single plate. All of the paterae are represented only by their handles. The plate and one patera are silver, with the rest being bronze and probably silver plated. They were found singly, with

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most coming from central and eastern France (**Figure 6.64**).
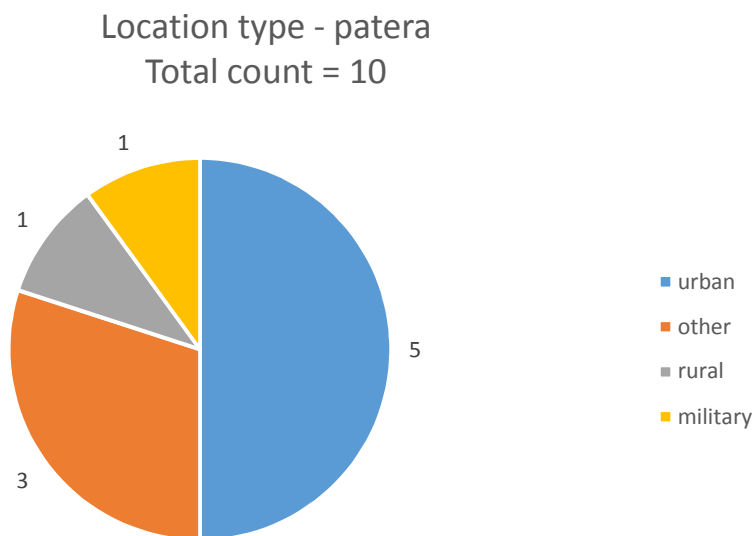
Figure 6.65 - plate by location type.

Half of these objects were found on urban sites, with a single patera each coming from military and rural sites (**Figure 6.65**). The rest were from sites of unknown use.
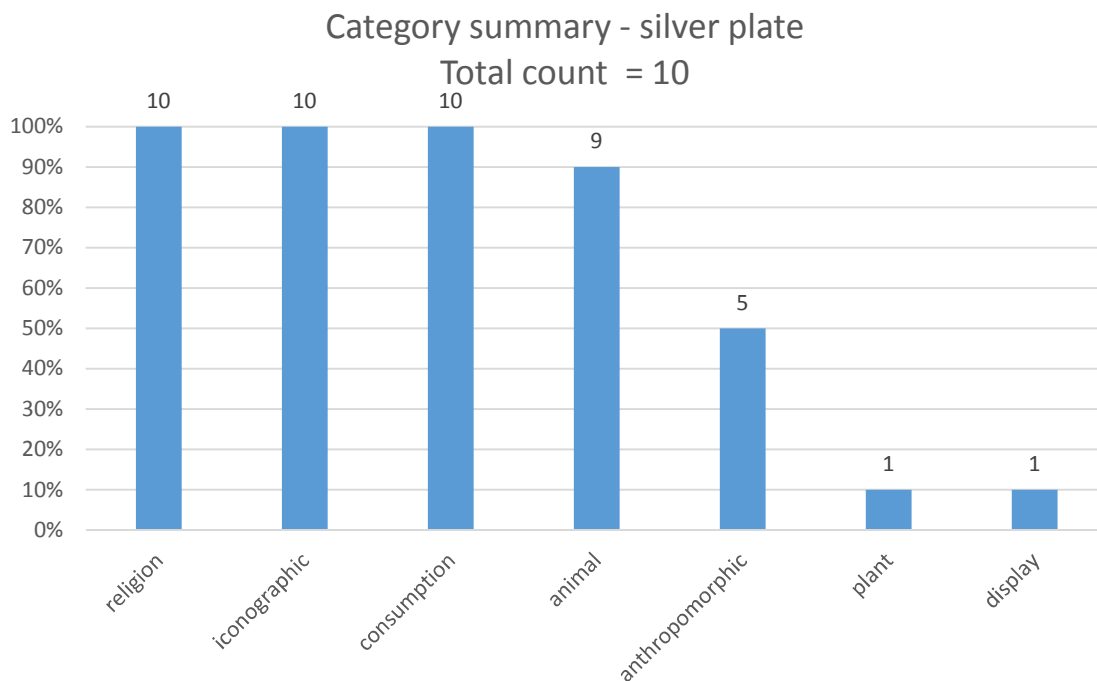
Figure 6.66 - percentage of plate by category.

All of the objects were recorded because they included depictions of chickens, and all are related to the *consumption* of food or beverages, and each of them includes a *religious* motif (**Figure 6.66**). Nine included images of other *animals*, five *anthropomorphic* figures, and one of a *plant*. The silver plate in particular was ornate enough that it was probably meant for *display* in addition to its role as a serving vessel.

Strength comparison - patera
Total count = 10

Figure 6.67 - comparison of strength ratings for plate.

The birds depicted were all quite clearly meant to represent chickens, which gave these finds a high *association* score (**Figure 6.67**). However, most are known from museum collections, with little information on their recovery, giving them a low *context* score. This carried over to a low *dating* score, but the name of the maker was stamped into two of the paterae (finds 1251 and 1262), and the plate was part of the 3rd century Chaourse Treasure, giving them slightly higher scores in this area. The *overall* scores remained quite low.
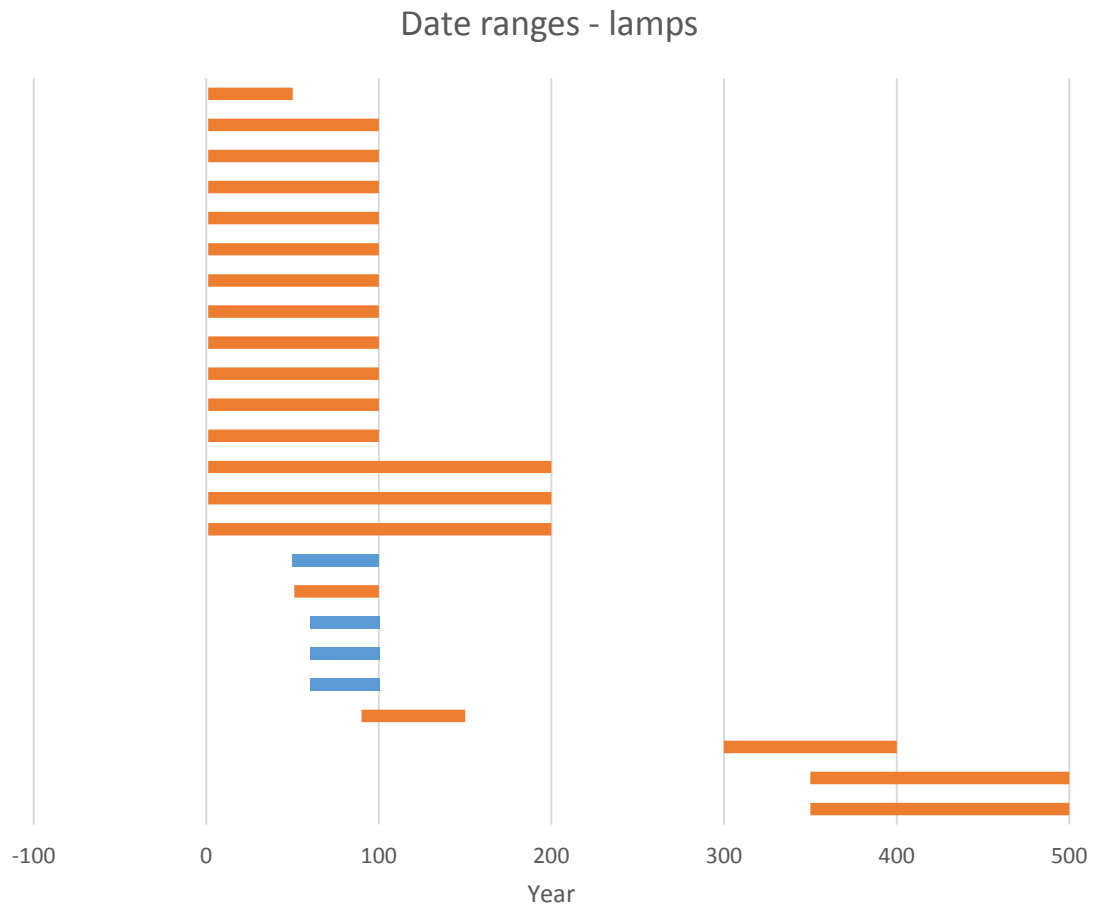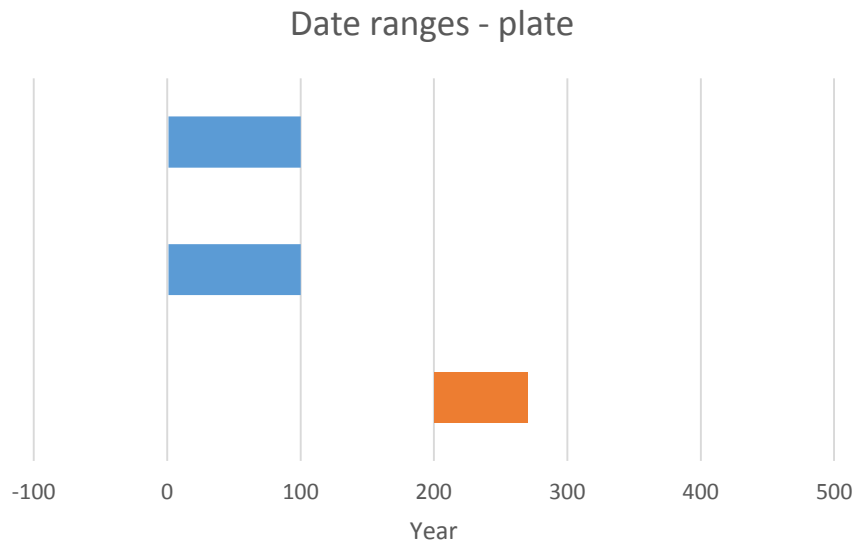
Date ranges - plate

Figure 6.68 - date ranges for dateable plate. Each line represents a single artefact. Objects in blue were dated by stratigraphy or associated finds; objects in red were dated stylistically.

Only three of these objects could be dated. Two paterae date stylistically to the first century AD (**Figure 6.68**). The Chaourse Treasure dates from about AD 200 to 270, but, as with all such hoards, the plate may have been in use for some time before deposition.

6.7.1 Patera

As libation bowls, it is unsurprising that all nine of these objects include religious imagery. Mercury is the most common deity represented, either in human form or by his attributes along with a cockerel. Five paterae (finds 1263, 1265, 1267, 1268, and 1353) appear to represent only him, with the god himself appearing in three of them.

The rest of the objects are linked to other gods as well as Mercury. Attributes of Minerva, including an owl, appear with those of Mercury in one patera (find 1264). Three more (finds 1251, 1262, and 1266) also include attributes of Apollo. This grouping of gods is unusual in this part of the Empire (Tassinari 1970, 162), and is unclear why they would appear together so relatively often in this type of artefact.

Two of these objects, one from Vierzon (Cher) (find 1251) and one from Agde (Hérault)

(find 1262), were stamped with the name JANVARIS, who appeared to be operating during the 1st century AD. The former was found in the Cher river, and another (find 1266) was found in a well in Autun (Saône-et-Loire), which raises the possibility that they were deliberately deposited.

6.7.2 Plate

A silver plate depicting Mercury, a cockerel, and a ram (find 917) was part of a hoard dating to the first three quarters of the 3rd century found in Chaourse (Aisne) in 1883. The figures appear to have been gilded originally.

6.8 Pins
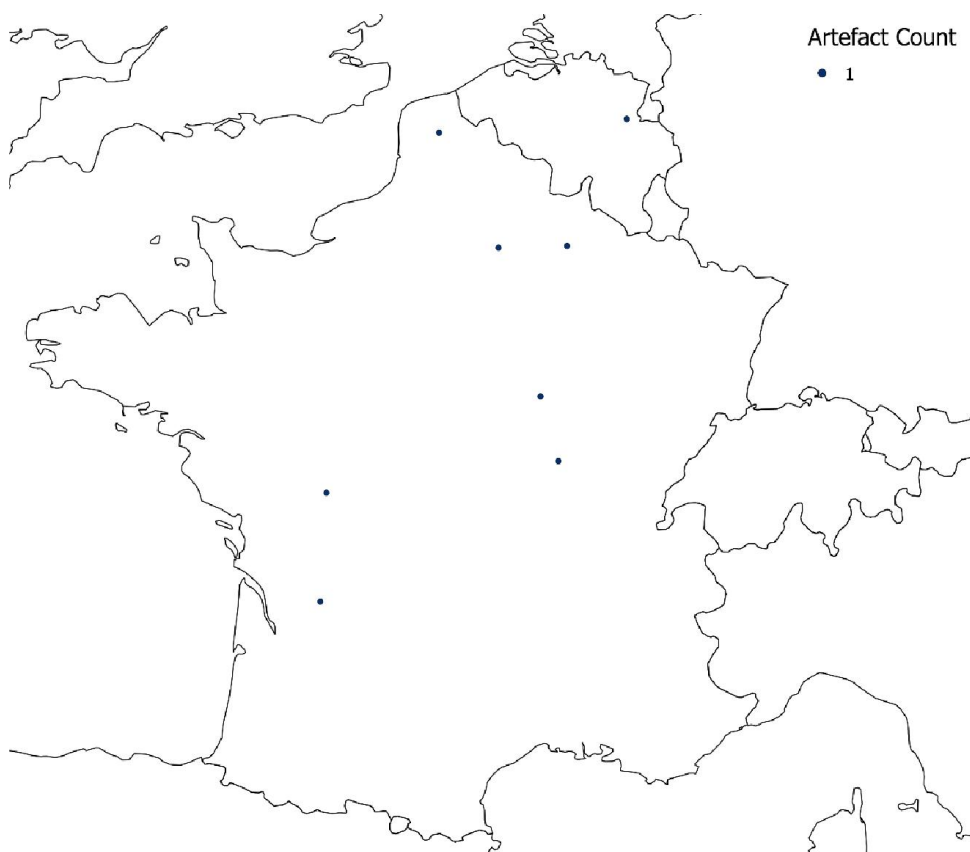
Figure 6.69 - distribution of pins in France and Belgium. Larger, lighter circles indicate a higher concentration of artefacts.

Eight hairpins, or small representations of chickens on mounts, were recorded from across France and Belgium (**Figure 6.69**). Five were made of bone, two of bronze, and

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one did not state what it was made of, although the sketch makes bronze seem most likely.
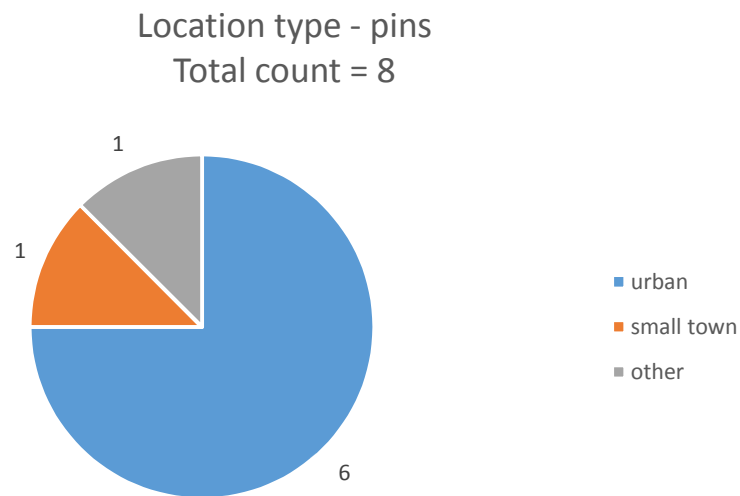
Figure 6.70 - pins by location type.

Most of the pins came from urban sites, with a single example coming from a smaller settlement and another from a site of unknown use (**Figure 6.70**).
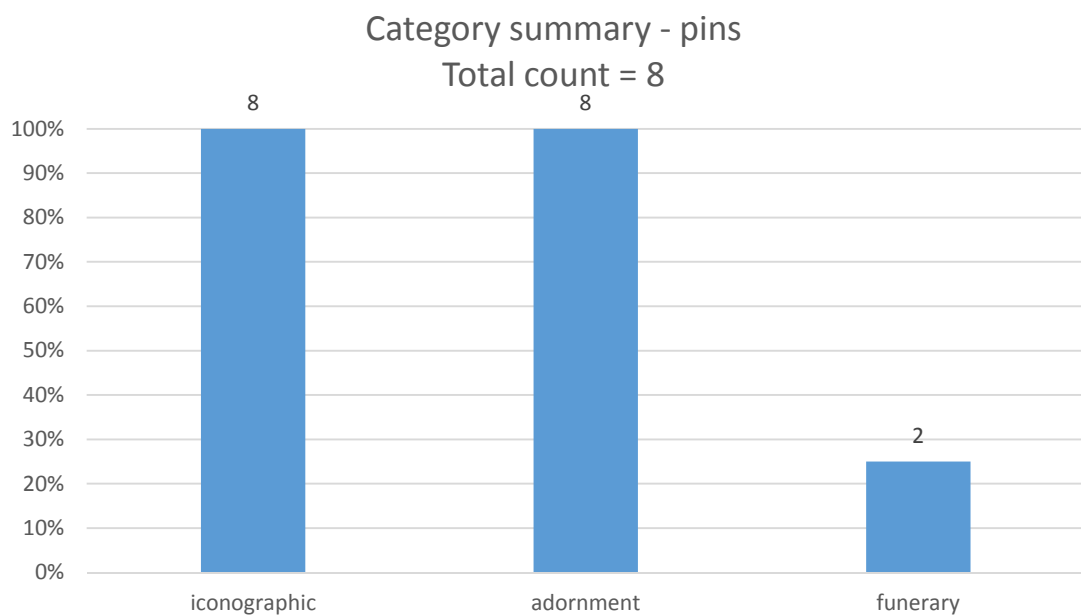
Figure 6.71 - percentage of pins by category.

All of these objects were recorded because they depicted a possible chicken, and if they were all hairpins, they were a form of personal *adornment* (**Figure 6.71**). Two came from *funerary* contexts.
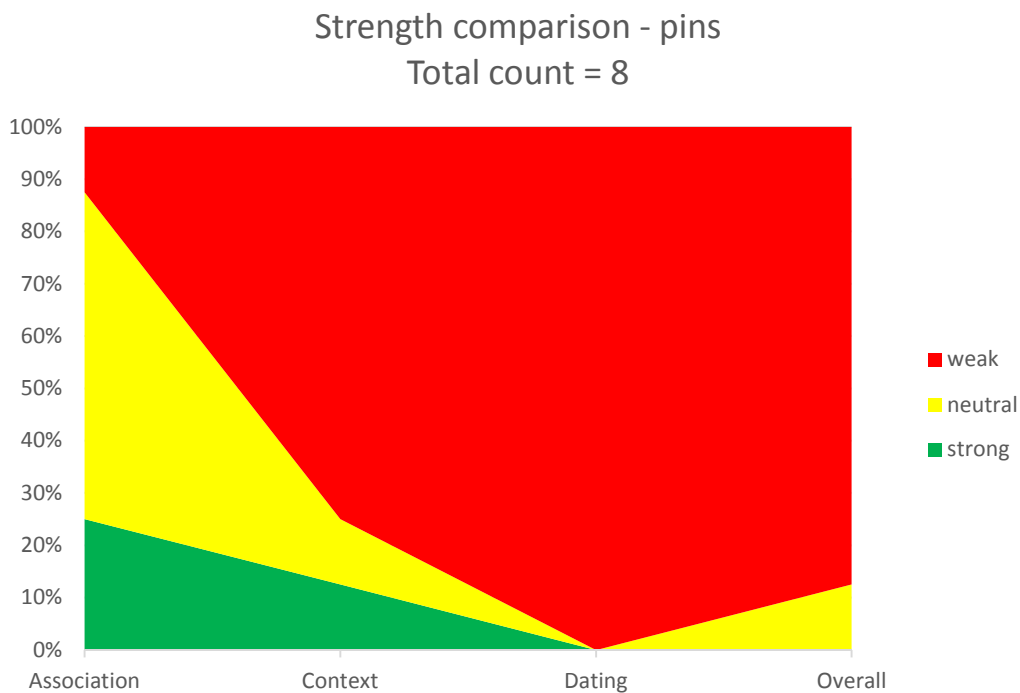
Figure 6.72 - comparison of strength ratings for pins.

Due to the size and style of the objects, it was not always clear whether the bird depicted was meant to be a chicken, giving these objects a lower *association* score than other find types (**Figure 6.72**). Most had little or no information on their *context*, and none were well *dated*. All of this led to low *overall* scores.

Only two pins have been dated. A bone pin from Ville-sur-Retourne (Ardennes) (find 1160) was found in an inhumation grave with other goods dating to the 4th century. The other (find 1371) was found in an area of Petit-Bersac (Dordogne) with other objects dating to the 1st century, but was so poorly described that it is not even clear what it was made out of.
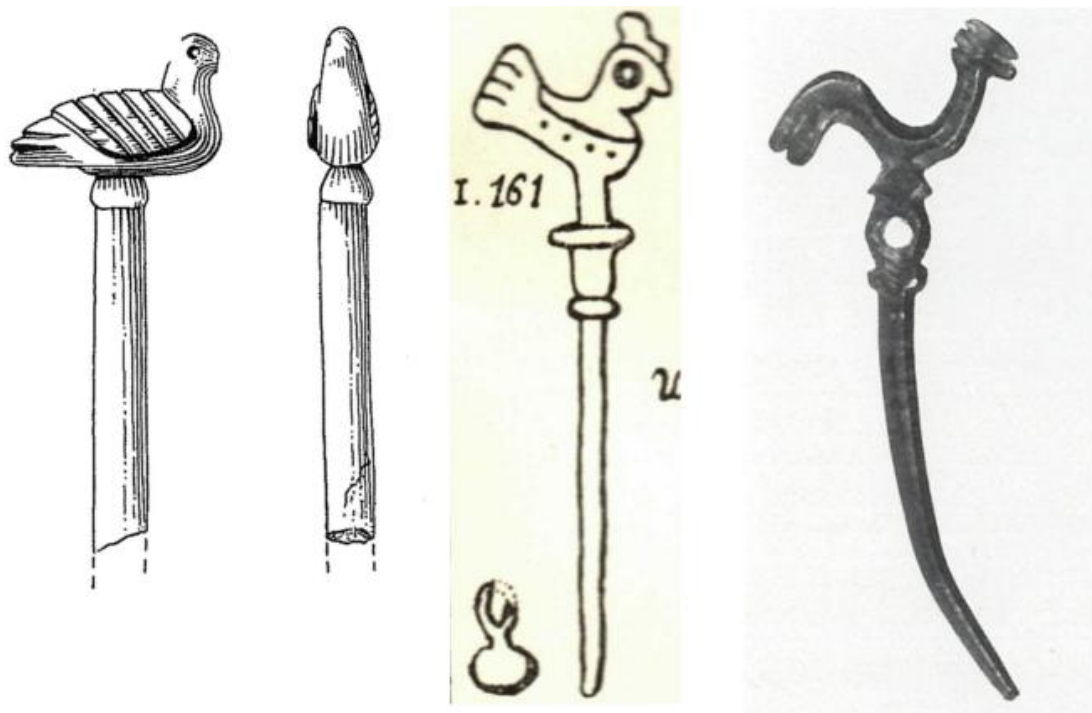
Figure 6.73 - hairpins. Left: bone hairpin, find 1160 (Stead et al. 2006, 336, fig. 171); centre: bronze hairpin, find 2467 (Eygun 1934, plate III); right: bronze hairpin, find 2546 (Faider-Feytmans 1979, plate 105).

These objects tend to be quite stylised, probably due to their small size, although the degree of stylisation varies (**Figure 6.73**). One of the bronze pins (find 1415) was silver plated, and another (find 1350) had the eyes decorated in silver. It seems quite likely that less expensive versions of these objects could have been made out of wood.

Two pins were found in urban deposits at Petit-Bersac (find 1371) and Thérouanne (Pas-de-Calais) (find 1415). A bone pin (find 1160) was found in a 4th century young female burial at Ville-sur-Retourne (Ardennes) with other pieces of jewellery. Another grave at Tongeren, Belgium, this time of a young child, held another pin (find 2467), although there it was interpreted as some form of mount or terminal.
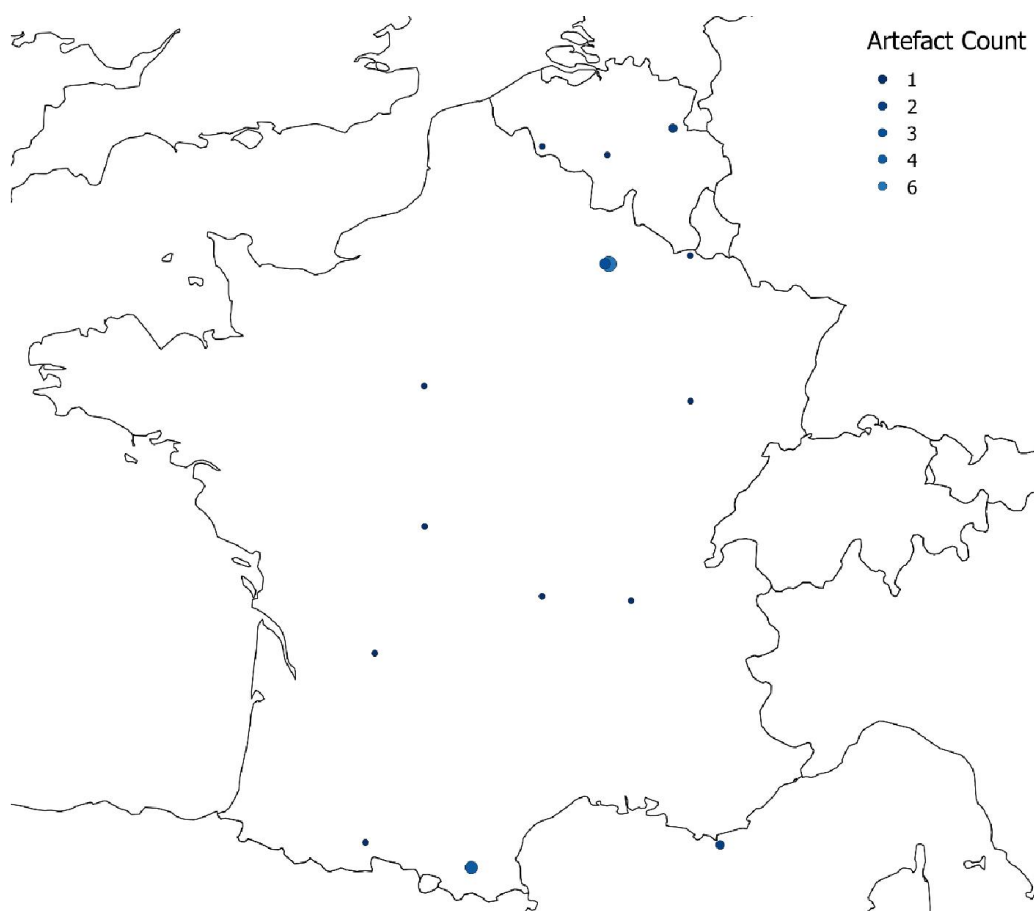
6.9 Brooches
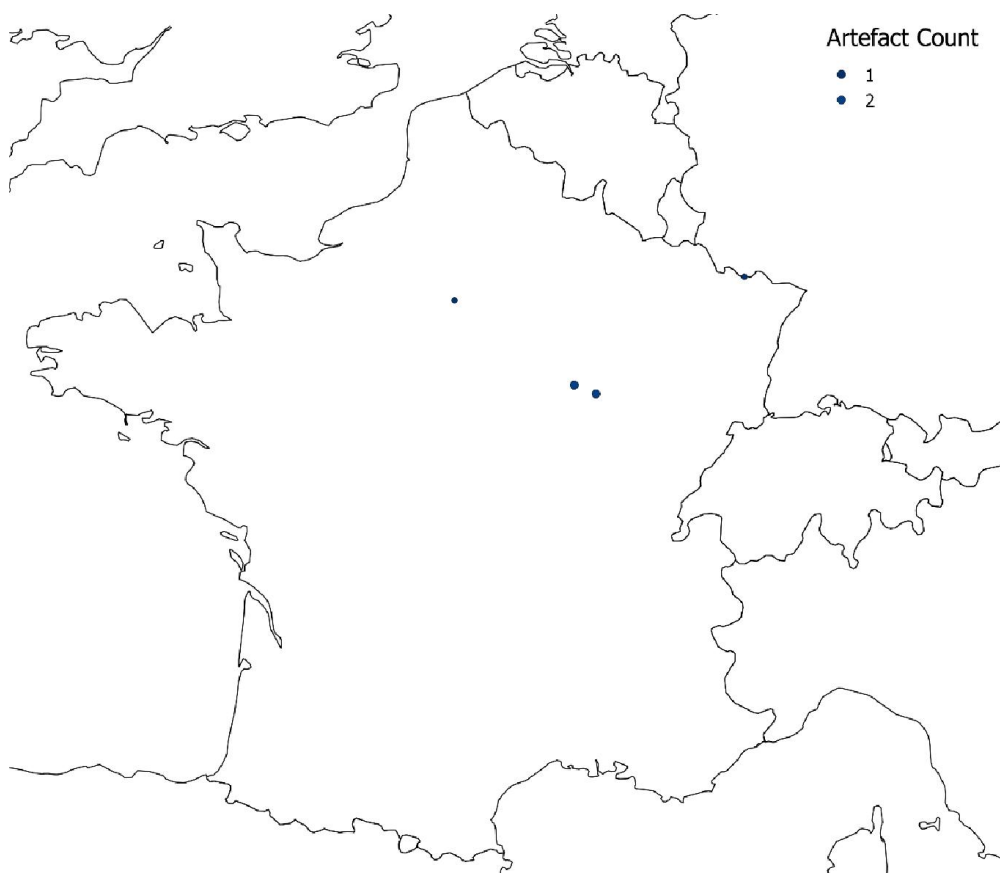
Figure 6.74 - distribution of brooches in France and Belgium. Larger, lighter circles indicate a higher concentration of artefacts.

In stark contrast to Britain, only seven brooches were found in France and Belgium (**Figure 6.74**). All were made of bronze, but one, the Reinheim brooch (find 1379), included elements of coral.
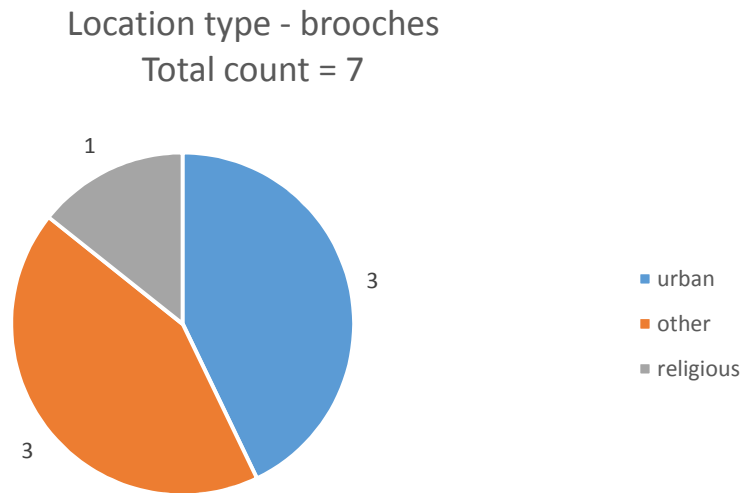
Figure 6.75 - brooches by location type.

Most brooches came from urban deposits, with only a single example, the Reinheim brooch, from a religious site (**Figure 6.75**). Three came from sites of unknown use.
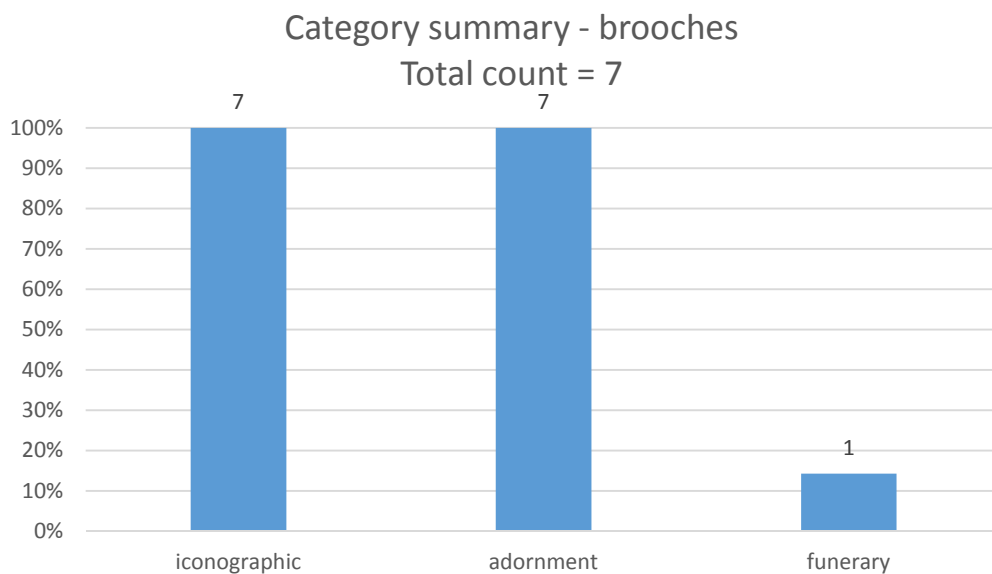
Figure 6.76 - percentage of brooches by category.

All of the brooches were shaped like birds and, as jewellery, were a form of *adornment* (**Figure 6.76**). One, again the Reinheim brooch, came from a *funerary* context.

Strength comparison - brooches
Total count = 7
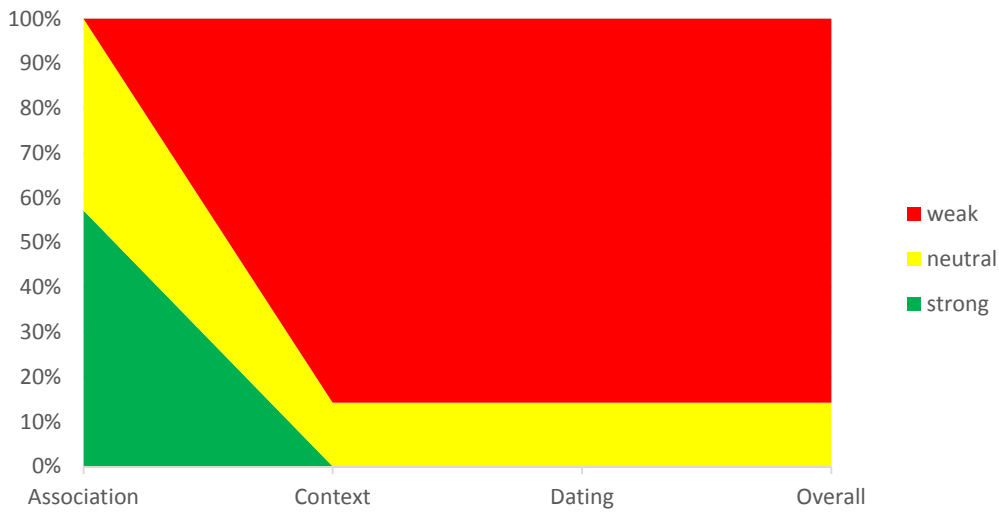
Figure 6.77 - comparison of strength ratings for brooches.

It was not always clear that the bird being depicted was meant to be a chicken, but just over half were clear enough for a strong *association* score (**Figure 6.77**). Most of the brooches were recorded from museum collections, with only the Reinheim brooch having any contextual information. It was likewise the only object with relatively good dating. All but this one object had low *overall* scores.

Figure 6.78 - the Reinheim brooch, find 1379 (Flotté and Fuchs 2004, plate 14).

The most impressive brooch, and the only one with significant background information, is a brooch found in the so-called "princess burial" at Reinheim (find 1379, **Figure 6.78**). This example is raised and fairly three-dimensional, with elements of coral decoration. Although no skeletal remains were found in the burial, it was assumed to be female because of the amount of jewellery and the presence of a mirror. This burial dates from the 4th century BC, making this the earliest known depiction of a chicken north of the Greek settlements on the Mediterranean.

The other brooches from this region are of the flat plate variety and display the bird in profile. Some lack in detail, and two (finds 1219 and 1220) may in fact represent peacocks rather than chickens. One found near Paris (find 2294) is unusual in showing two cockerels facing each other, their beaks and legs connecting the two halves. This artefact was dated on stylistic grounds to the 2nd or 3rd century AD.

6.10 Mosaics
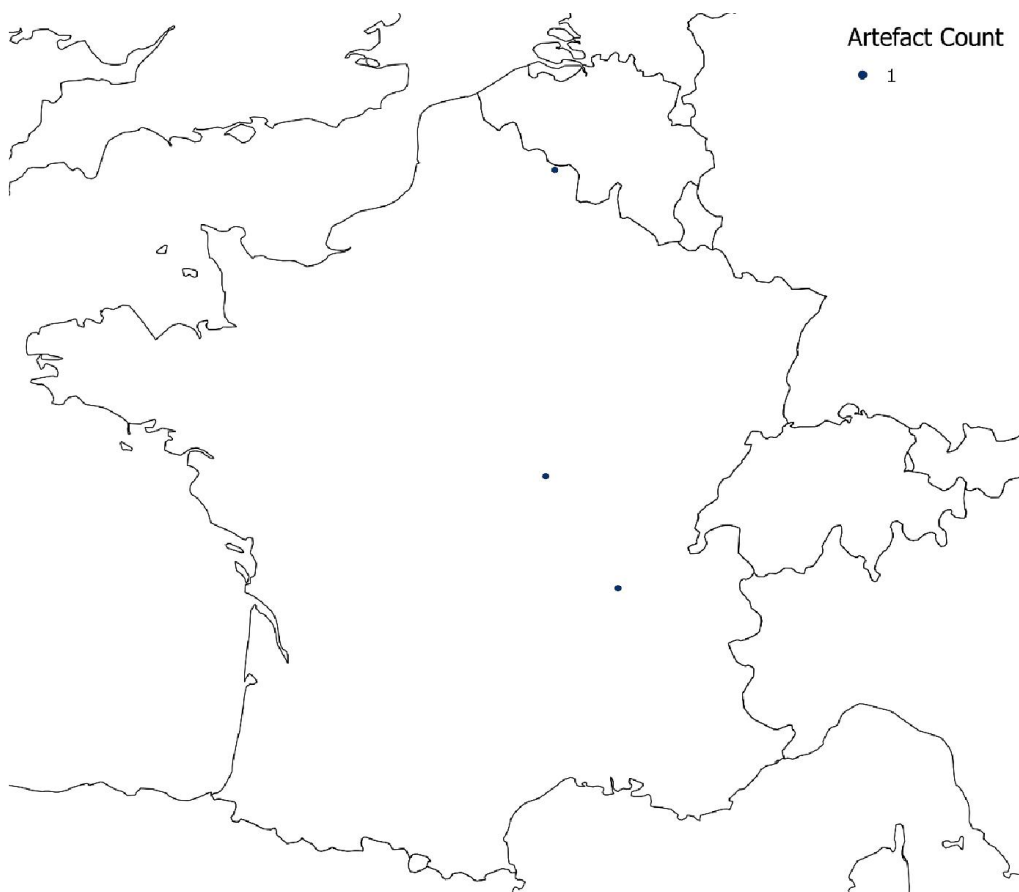
Figure 6.79 - distribution of mosaics in France and Belgium. Larger, lighter circles

indicate a higher concentration of artefacts.

Only three mosaics were found containing images of chickens from this region (**Figure 6.79**).
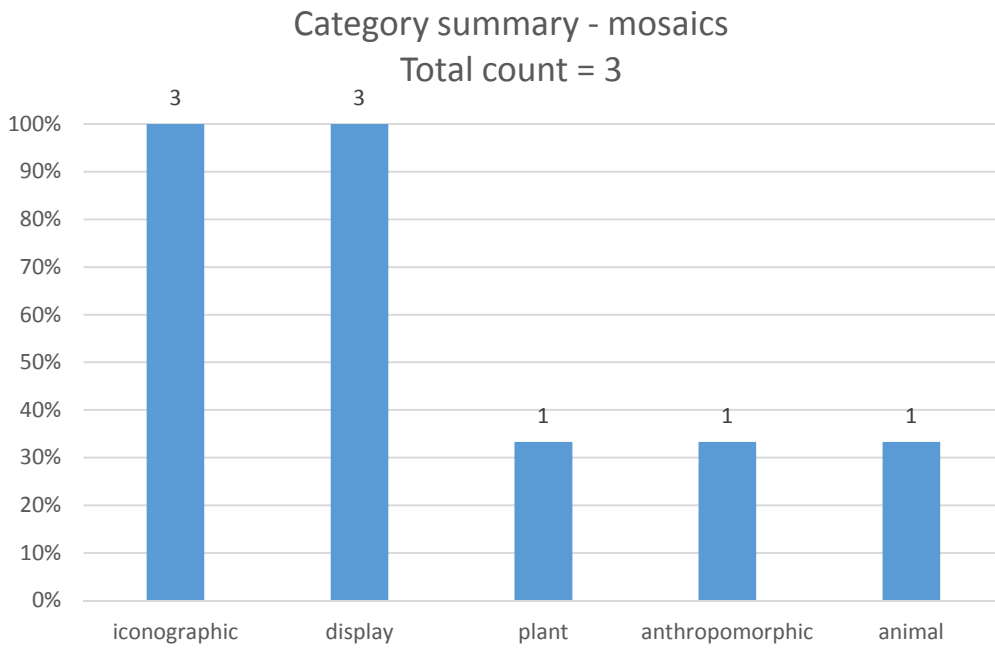
Figure 6.80 - *percentage of mosaics by category.*

Each of the mosaics included an image of a chicken, and all were meant for *display*. One also contained images of *anthropomorphic* figures, *plants,* and other *animals*.

Strength comparison - mosaics
Total count = 3
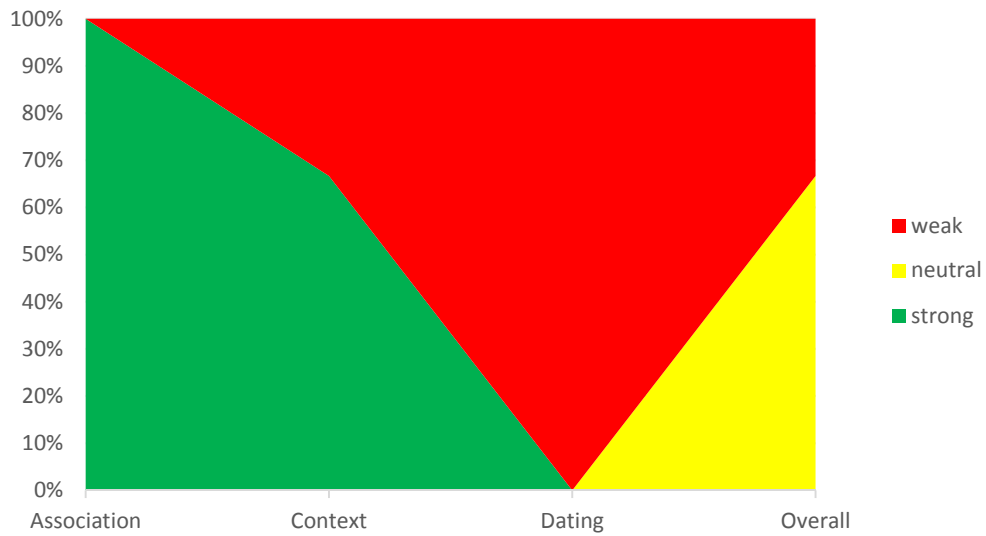
Figure 6.81 - comparison of strength ratings for mosaics.

All of the mosaics had clear images of chickens (**Figure 6.81**). Such large, static objects would be expected to have a strong *context*, but one of them was lifted in antiquity. None were well *dated*, which averaged out the *overall* score for two of them and left the third quite weak.

Figure 6.82 - mosaic from Bavay, find 2478 (Stern 1957, plate XL).

It is not know where in the city the mosaic from Bavay (Nord) (find 2478, **Figure 6.82**) was found, and therefore its date is likewise uncertain. It depicts a white chicken and what may be the tail of another one. If the latter is a chicken, which is impossible to be certain of, the tail suggests it was a cockerel, which may indicate that the white, smaller-tailed bird is a hen.

Figure 6.83 - mosaic from Ainay, find 2479 (Stern 1967, plate LXV).

The next mosaic (find 2479, **Figure 6.83**) was found beneath the north aisle of the Church of Saint Martin d'Ainay in 1829. The central scene is heavily damaged, but two images of birds survive in opposite corners. One is clearly a cockerel, standing beneath a branch that appears to bear fruit, and the other may be a hen pecking at something on

the ground. The surviving scene of a shepherd carrying a lamb or kid appears unrelated. It has been dated to sometime during the Severan dynasty, from the late 2nd through early 3rd century.

Figure 6.84 - mosaic from Biches, find 2480 (Stern 1975, plate LXXXIV).

The third mosaic was found in a villa at Biches (Nièvre) (find 2480, **Figure 6.84**). The mosaic is a checkerboard pattern filled with geometric shapes, but one square was unusual in depicting a fairly naturalistic cockerel, its wings spread and apparently crowing. Like the previous example, this one was dated to the Severan dynasty.

6.11 Plaques
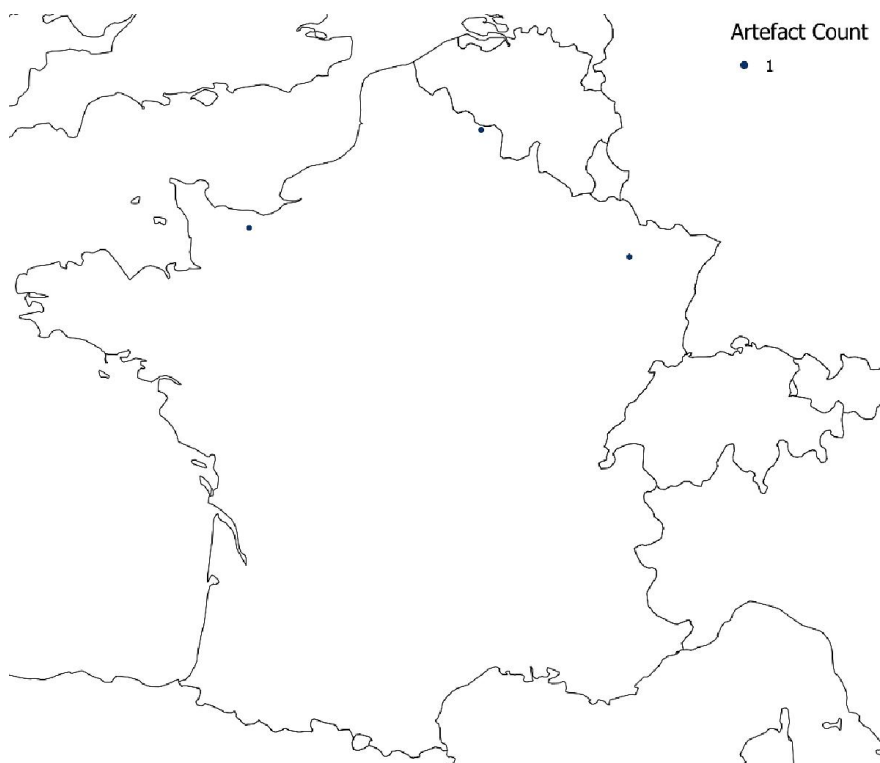
Figure 6.85 - distribution of plaques in France and Belgium. Larger, lighter circles indicate a higher concentration of artefacts.

Three plaques containing images of chickens were recorded, all from the northern part of the region (**Figure 6.85**). These are flat, probably wall-mounted objects; one of silver, one of bronze, and one of clay.
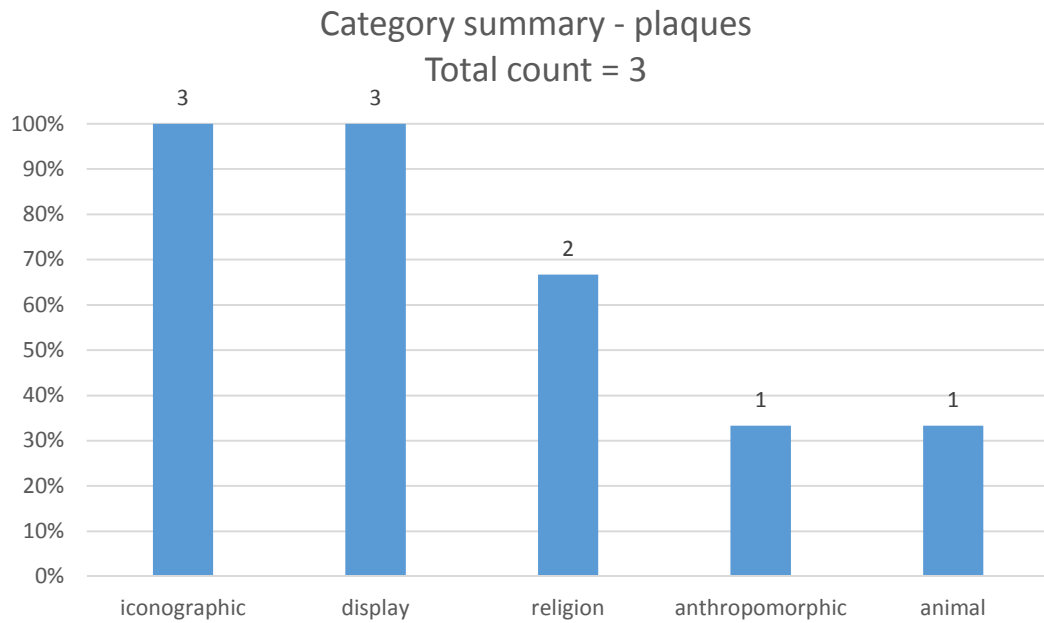
Figure 6.86 - percentage of plaques by category.

All three were recorded because of their *iconography*, and all were objects of *display* (**Figure 6.86**). Two had links to *religion*, and one included *anthropomorphic* and *animal* images.

Figure 6.87 - comparison of strength ratings for plaques.

It was not always clear what species the objects were depicting, and so the *association* scores were quite low (Figure 6.87). Two of the objects had decent *contextual* and *dating* information, which carried over to the *overall* scores.

The first plaque (find 1329) is silver and was found with 2nd century coins in an urban deposit at Vic-sur-Seille (Moselle). It is quite Classical in style and depicts Mercury, Minerva, and Apollo, with birds perched above them, probably representing their attributes of cockerel, owl, and raven.

The second (find 1950) is a ceramic plaque with an image of a bird's foot on it, found at a temple site outside Baron-sur-Odon (Calvados). Naturally, the footprint could belong to any number of species.

The third (find 1977) is a copper plaque found in a deposit of 2nd century material at Bavay. It is unclear, but appears to be an image of Silenus, with two curving objects, possibly cornucopias, projecting outwards. On the end of one of these project a pair of birds' heads, one of which faces the central figure and possibly represents a chicken.

6.12 Miscellaneous
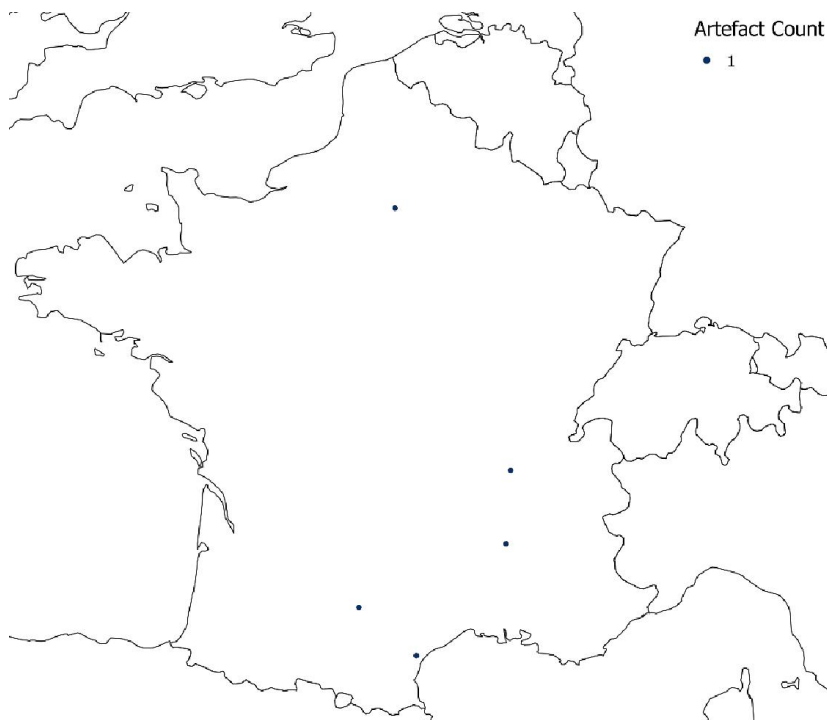
Figure 6.88 - distribution of miscellaneous artefacts in France and Belgium. Larger,

lighter circles indicate a higher concentration of artefacts.

Five objects were related to chickens but did not fit neatly into any of the above categories, with most of them coming from the southern part of the region (**Figure 6.88**). They include a wall painting, graffiti, a box, a punch, and a tile. All came from urban sites.
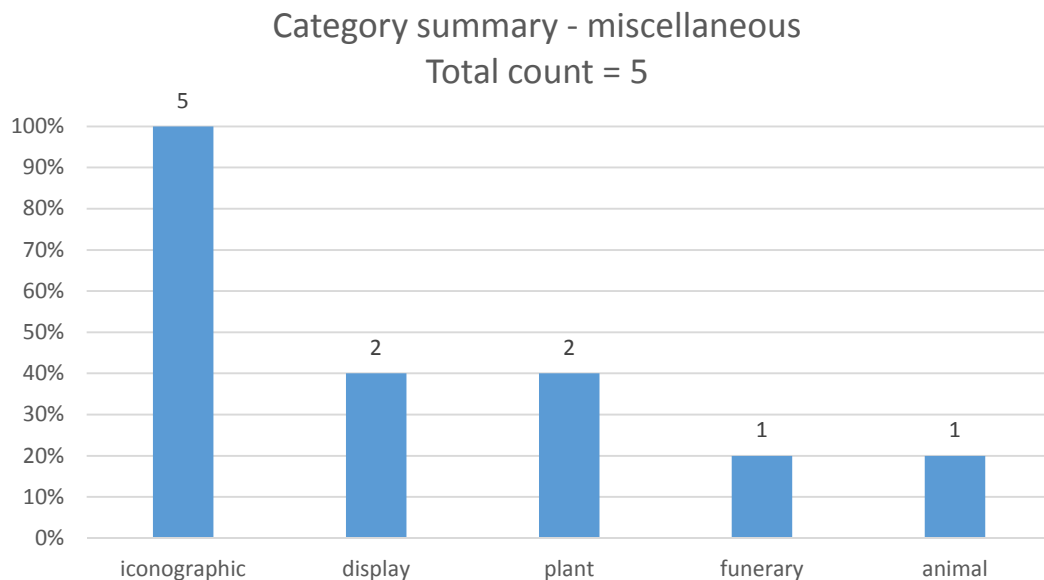
Figure 6.89 - percentage of miscellaneous finds by category.

All of these artefacts included a possible depiction of a chicken (**Figure 6.89**). Two were probably intended for *display*, one was from a *funerary* context, and two included images of *plants* and one other *animals*.

Strength comparison - miscellaneous
Total count = 5
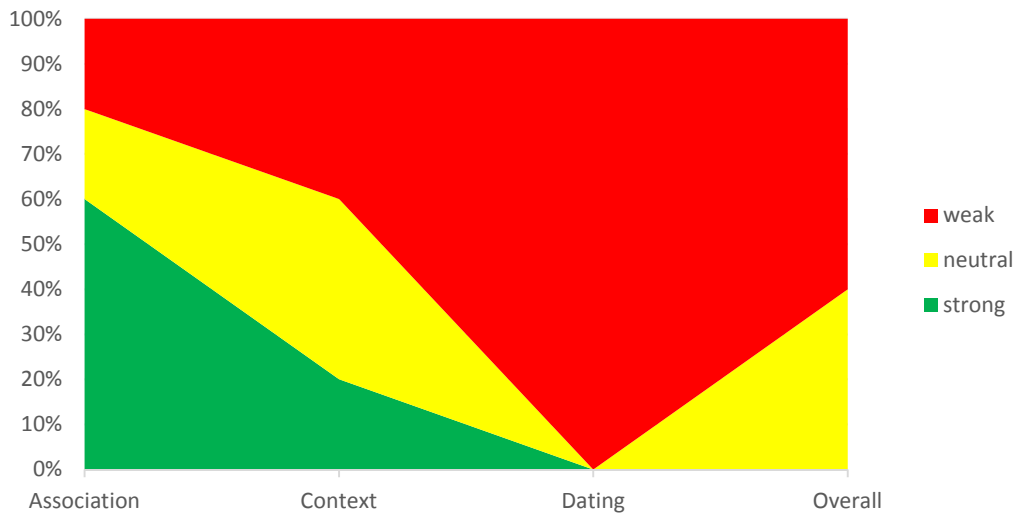
Figure 6.90 - comparison of strength ratings for miscellaneous finds.

Most of these objects had high *association* scores, and there was a mix of good and bad *contexts* (**Figure 6.90**). None were particularly *dateable,* however, which tended to lower the *overall* score.

Figure 6.91 - ivory jewellery box, find 747 (Giroire and Roger 2007, 249).

A small ivory jewellery box (find 747, **Figure 6.91**) in the shape of what may be a seated chicken was found in a grave near Le Pouzin (Ardèche). It was carved out of an elephant tusk and appears to date from the late 1st or early 2nd century. Unfortunately, the head is damaged, which prevents positive identification of the species. If it is a chicken, then it is probably a hen.

Figure 6.92 - wall painting of a chicken in a window, find 2296 (Plassot 1995, 112, fig. 88).

Two pieces of wall decoration included images of chickens. The more formal is the remains of a wall painting from Lyon (find 2296, **Figure 6.92**). The fragments were found on the floor of the Maison Aux Xenia and were carefully reconstructed to show a window looking at a chicken sitting on some sort of surface, with either apples or peaches in front of it. Above the window sits what appears to be a small swan. It may have been painted in the 1st century AD. A less formal bit of decoration is a bit of graffiti from a possible inn at Narbonne (find 1286). This crude drawing appears to be of a bird, possibly holding a palm leaf, but it is not particularly clear.

A punch, an object used to decorate pottery (find 2213), was recorded from Montans (Tarn) as coming from the workshop of Lullus, but it was not clear if it was the original or a recreation. It may have simply been made based on surviving examples of pottery.

Finally, a hexagonal tile from Senlis (Oise) (find 1248) included a crude silhouette of a cockerel, but is almost certainly medieval.

7 Critique of French and Belgian data

This chapter will examine some of the common themes shared amongst the artefacts from France and Belgium. It will discuss some of the issues with this data and how it differs from the British material before exploring how the artefacts themselves were used, where they were found, what they depict, and, finally, the meaning behind their association with chickens.

Although this region contained more chicken-related artefacts than Britain, this number was inflated by large Late Iron Age coin deposits. If those are left out, the numbers are roughly equal between the two regions. However, the French and Belgian material should be viewed as only a sample of material to an even greater extent than the British, largely due to the increased size of the survey area and assorted limitations working with this data.
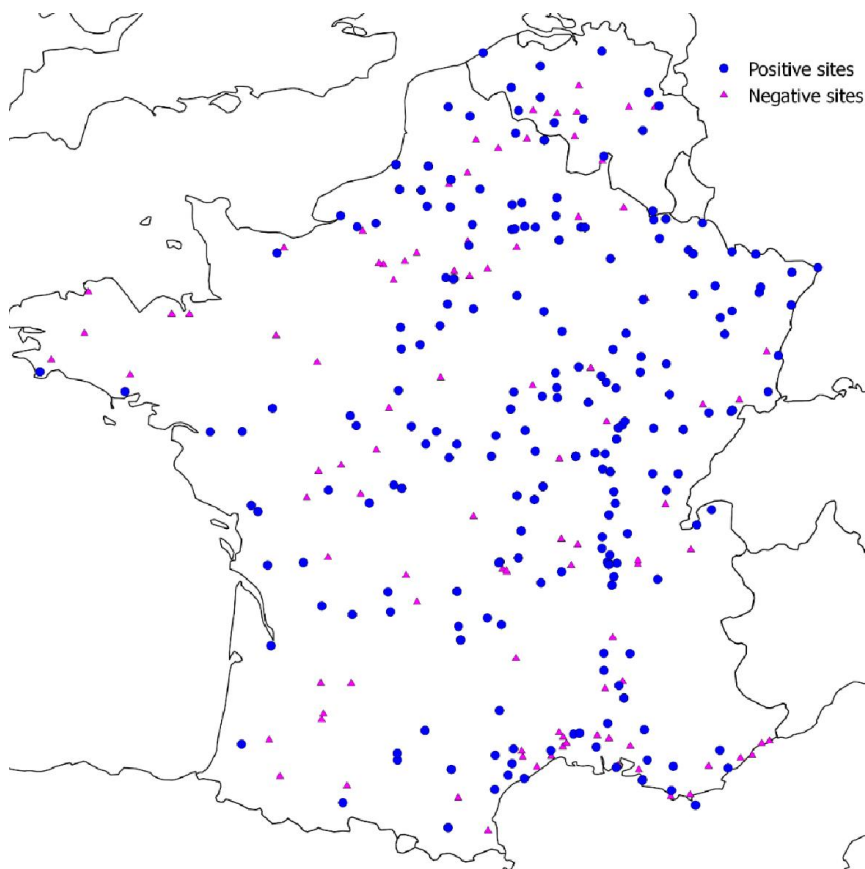
Figure 7.1 - distribution of sites with chicken-related artefacts (positive) vs. those without (negative).

Although finds were recorded from across much of the region (**Figure 7.1**), all of the sources were those easily accessed without the recourse of travelling to various French and Belgian institutions, and the resource pool was necessarily smaller because of this. Negative sites, those without any chicken-related objects reported (see 3.3.1), occurred over much of the same distribution, but also filled in some of the blank spots and demonstrate a more comprehensive coverage than might otherwise appear. While many artefacts from both regions came from catalogues, such as of figurines or rings, in this area these tended to be less all-encompassing than those from Britain, often covering only particular regions or collections. Where individual site reports were available, they often did not separate the various find types into their own chapters as is common in British sources, but discussed them in-line with the archaeological features. While this approach has its merits by more firmly placing the material into its context, it was not always clear if all finds were included or only those deemed of interest by the author. Pottery in particular seemed oddly limited in many reports, making the latter seem more likely in many cases. Additionally, there is no equivalent of the Portable Antiquities Scheme in France and Belgium, which removed a valuable source of material on smaller, rural sites.

A map of Roman archaeological sites reported by the Institut National de Recherches Archéologiques Préventives (Inrap) (**Figure 7.2**), although not presented in a way that is easily comparable with **Figure 7.1**, nevertheless shows a similar distribution to those in this study. This suggests a correlation between the density of Roman sites and chicken objects. The areas less represented in this research are due to a general lack of archaeological data, and not necessarily a diminished interest in chickens.
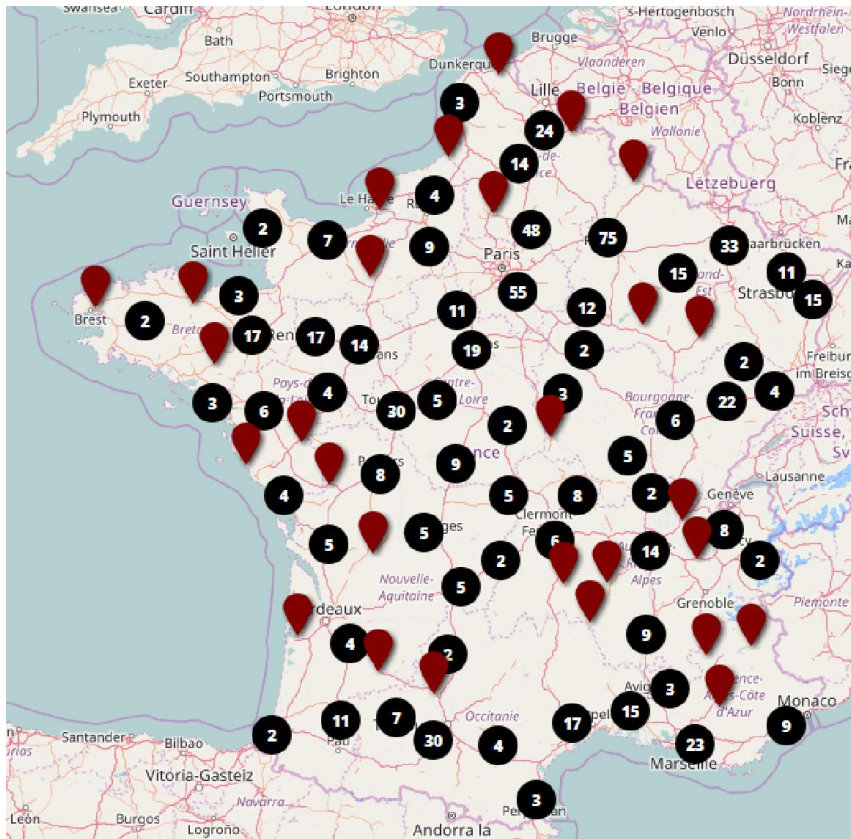
Figure 7.2 - map of Roman archaeological sites in France, as reported by Inrap (Inrap 2016).

With modern scanning tools and translation software, language was less of a hindrance, but without genuine fluency some of the more nuanced descriptions and interpretations may have been lost. Altogether, the size of the region, barriers in accessibility, and variations in publishing technique meant the sample size for France and Belgium was more restricted than for Britain, but enough material was available from a variety of sources to provide a suitable sample size and geographical coverage for meaningful comparison.

7.1 Function

Every object in this collection will have had a function, even if that function was purely decorative. By examining how they were used, it is possible to gain some understanding of how people viewed both the artefact and the chickens associated with it. Broadly, the types of use break down into three main categories: display and decoration, personal adornment, and use in some formalised ceremony. Some objects

do not fit easily into one of the above categories, or may have a less clear link between the object's function and chickens, and these will be discussed last.

7.1.1 Display

Most of the artefacts in this study were either free-standing depictions of chickens or included them as elements of decoration. Whether they were meant purely as decorative objects or fulfilled a deeper purpose was not always clear. Even when appearing on objects with a clear primary use, such as sarcophagi and other funerary markers, pottery, or altars, it is difficult to tell how important the iconography was.

Figurines and sculptures make up the vast majority of artefacts in this category, although that may simply be because the shape of the form often represents a significant part of the total object, rather than a component that may not have survived. An image of a chicken painted on a wall, pot, or altar may have long since faded away, with no sign that it existed remaining on the extant parts of the artefact. Indeed, when looking at sculptures in particular, it was often difficult to identify the figures they contained due to damage over the centuries, and it is likely that chickens are under-represented even in such a well-documented find type.

With these depictions, the bird itself is clearly the object of interest, even if that interest is secondary to other elements of the display, often a deity. The styles and materials varied, but the interest remained, and this variation suggests that the interest covered a range of budgets and artistic styles. Whether this was due to shared religious beliefs or affiliations with certain cultural groups or even simply a shared appreciation for the bird itself is difficult to say from the objects themselves. It becomes necessary to look at where they came from (see 7.2) and what exactly they depict (see 7.3) to delve further into their meaning.

Objects that contain these images as decoration may seem somewhat easier to understand, but, once again, it is not clear how prominent a place this decoration played in that object's role in society. The relative importance of the artefact itself may have influenced this, as well as modern attempts to understand it. The iconography on a samian-ware bowl will almost certainly undergo less scrutiny than that on a tomb, for instance, but that does not necessarily mean that the former had any less meaning.

This type of object could almost be said to be either high-impact, representing a rare, more expensive artefact, like a monument or sarcophagus, or low-impact, which would be something more common and likely encountered on a more regular basis. It is more complex than simply the monumental compared to the individual, as a smaller object owned by a prominent member of society may still have a greater impact than its size suggests. A high-impact object will have a prominence and be singularly influential to many, while a low-impact object will have a commonality and have more impact *en masse*. These objects will have each affected the other, drawing on the same elements of the cultural mindscape, albeit possibly in different ways. The high-impact objects likely reflect society as a whole, driven primarily by those at the top, possibly as a form of imposed identity, while the low-impact objects are a glimpse of what is happening at the level of the typical member of that society. These terms also apply to the archaeologists studying these objects, giving some artefacts a greater prominence that they may not necessarily have had during its use.

In this study, chickens appear in both types of decoration. The high-impact artefacts are mostly carved stone, representing sculptures, altars, and funerary objects. Most are low-impact objects, however, which is not unexpected. These include the figurines mentioned above, but also pottery, lamps, and assorted other objects. Silver plate, including patera handles, could arguably straddle the line between them, as a more exclusive, but still portable, object, possibly tied into more organised religious practices.

The presence of so many images of chickens in a variety of different styles and materials and on both high- and low-impact artefacts suggests they were a prominent animal in the cultures that produced them.

7.1.2 Adornment

Objects intended to be worn as personal adornment were relatively common, mostly represented by signet rings in this region. The other artefacts that fit here are hairpins and brooches.

In an apparently male-dominated society, based on historical records of the time, the rings may have been more likely to be worn by male members of the family, but the hairpins suggest that association with the chicken was something a female could claim

as well. The brooches could have been worn by either gender.

It could be assumed that by wearing an image of a chicken, the wearer in some way takes on aspects of the chicken, although it may not have been a conscious decision. It suggests that these animals had a predominantly positive image, however, in order for it to have been an acceptable accessory.

The rings are perhaps more interesting in that they are a unique expression of a person's identity (Henig 1974, 24). In each case, the wearer chose to tie their personal identity to the images on their seal, whether this was a chicken or an associated figure. This, even more than the above, is a strong indicator that chickens were a desirable symbol.

These artefacts could have been simple fashion items, but they could also have displayed devotion to a certain god, cult, or other social group. Some, like the hybrid figures on some of the rings, may have been protective amulets. The only way to identify this is to look for clues in the images depicted (see 7.3).

7.1.3 Ceremonial

While most artefacts in this study could have had a religious or votive meaning, this section looks at those objects that were almost certainly used as part of a public ceremony. Primarily these are altars, but paterae probably fit in as well.

While some of the other forms of sculpture or artefacts featuring images of deities may have played a ceremonial role, altars are the only ones that did this with any certainty. Ten objects identified as altars were found in this region, and it is possible that some of the other bits of carved stone were originally altars as well.

Mercury appears on seven of these. On three he is accompanied by Rosmerta (finds 2509 and 2323), and on one of these Apollo appears on the face opposite the divine couple (find 2524). Two feature an unidentified male figure holding a hammer or mallet (finds 2500 and 2503). One altar is known only by a single side and displays a cockerel and a boar (find 1226), a pairing that also occurs on one of the Mercury altars (find 2481).

The appearance of a chicken with Mercury is not unexpected, and it is possible that the

other examples represent some unusual local variations of Mercury. However, chickens were a common sacrifice at religious ceremonies (Levitan 1993, 297; Serjeantson 2009, 351), and they might appear on the altars as a representation of a sacrifice, just as sacrificial knives and libation bowls often do (Henig and Webster 2004, 2).

The nine paterae were a form of libation bowl, but it is not clear if they were used as part of official ceremonies, private ones, or even simply as an element of feasting. Regardless, the religious imagery they include suggests at least a mindfulness of the gods when the object was used.

7.1.4 Other

Unsurprisingly, some of the chicken-related objects from France and Belgium had other uses unrelated to that association. The decoration on these objects has already been touched upon, but it should be considered that the decoration may have had some link the object's primary use.

Lamps and pottery are the most "functional" find types in this collection, and both feature chickens as decorative elements. As a light-producing object, lamps may be expected to have some association with cockerels and dawn. However, the relatively limited nature of the iconography on these objects and the fact that the cockerel is not crowing suggests there may be another reason for the inclusion of this image. Much of the decoration on lamps seems to have been purely decorative, without deeper meaning, and this probably applies to these as well (Eckardt 2002, 118). As many appear to be copies of Italian examples (Rivet 2004, 243), they may have been one of many popular imported images duplicated without much consideration.

While pottery was used to prepare and serve food, the iconography on it seldom seems to have any direct relationship to this process. The images on samian ware in particular are quite varied and cover a wide range of topics, and it is difficult to see any direct correlation between the art and the function. Likewise, the pots associated with chicken remains do not appear to otherwise have any particular connection with the birds, and probably represent pottery commonly in use in that region, repurposed for deposition.

Coins are a bit more unusual, being public objects, despite their small size, and

potentially having many levels of functionality from simple exchange to wealth storage to a form of political propaganda. Any images they contain probably reflect some deeper cultural meaning and tie into this functionality in some way, but without fully understanding the role coins played in a culture it is difficult to extract this meaning. The coins included here, coming from a very restricted area and time period, offer a unique opportunity to explore this meaning in a limited context (see 8.2.2).

7.2 Context

The type of site an artefact came from and where on that site it was found can tell something of that object's use, especially when combined into a larger dataset. With so few of these finds having that level of detail, context data is limited in what it can say. Most have at least the place name of where they were found, however, and even this can be of some use. At a more detailed level, it is votive or funerary contexts that are most informative.

7.2.1 Site type

The majority of artefacts from this region were found on religious sites (see **Figure 6.4**), but as these overwhelmingly represent coins from a few locations, this association is less pronounced than it initially appears. Urban sites formed the largest known site type after this, which is unsurprising. Such locations, in additional to their prominence in antiquity, tend to have large modern populations and be the most intensely excavated. As such, even smaller excavations are more likely to make it into larger publications than sites of a similar size on their own. How much of the dominance of urban sites is due to recovery and publication bias?

Regardless, urban sites did contain a large number of artefacts. As centres of trade and manufacturing this is unsurprising, and with a greater number of people living in less space, a higher concentration of objects owned and produced by them would be expected. Smaller towns, rural settlements, and villas were less frequent, but are probably under-represented. Military sites are problematic, and likely overlapped with urban sites to some degree.

The presence of chicken-related artefacts on all of these sites, although it may appear to

say very little, does show that the chicken theme extended into wider aspects of life. It was not restricted to a single sphere or social stratum, as might be suggested if they were overwhelmingly found on more specialised sites. For example, if they were over-represented on villa sites it might suggest an importance to the rural elite. Likewise, a predominantly military presence might imply either a martial or official state status. That they appear on all site types suggests a more widespread meaning, even if that meaning did, for example, carry religious or agricultural undertones.

7.2.2 Votive

As discussed above (section 5.2.2), it is difficult to identify a votive deposit. In this region, they were all simply contexts from religious sites. Most of the objects from these deposits were coins and are discussed below. The remaining objects were figurines.

While objects found in pits and ditches on religious sites may simply be secondary deposits, redeposited there from elsewhere on site (Haselgrove 1999, 115), the possibility that they were deliberately placed there cannot be discounted. Or, they may have been deposited after serving a votive purpose elsewhere for a suitable amount of time. A chicken figurine may have been left by a pilgrim, displayed for a time, and then removed.
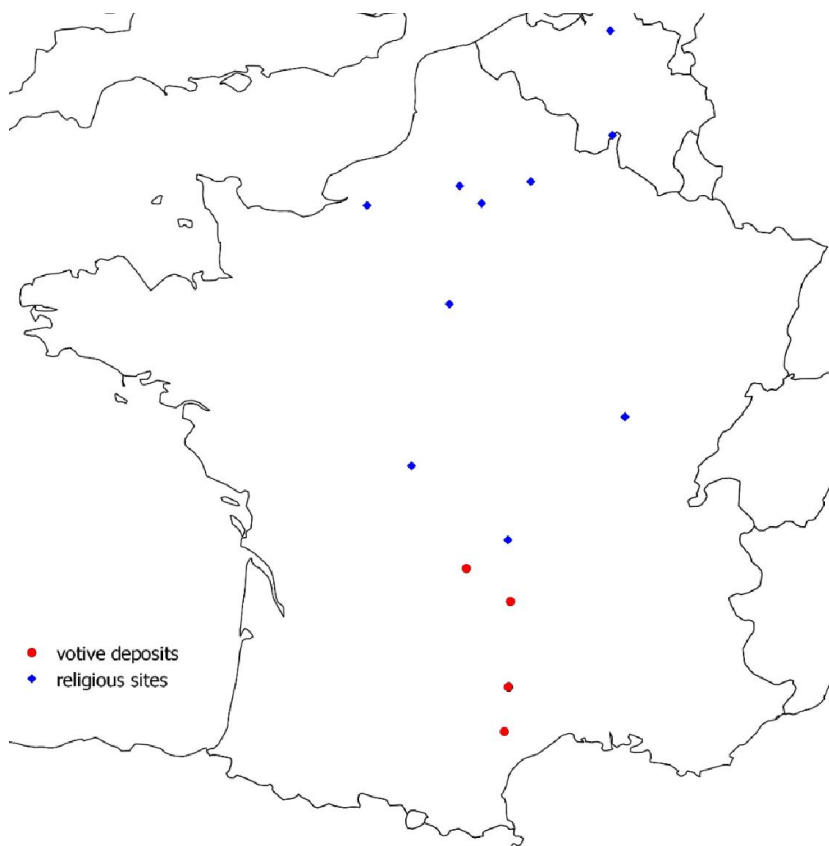
Figure 7.3 - map of figurines from votive contexts compared to those from religious sites.

In this region, the non-coin, identifiably votive objects were figurines found in the south, but many figurines from religious sites in other areas may have been as well. When looked at together, the distribution is much more widespread (**Figure 7.3**), and thus this should not necessarily be seen as a southern phenomenon.

The votive coins all came from the sanctuary at Fesques, with 49 coins coming from various pits and ditches on site, 30 of them from the central pit of one of the temple buildings. These were mostly types DT 511 and DT 512, with a single coin of type DT 509 also being found in the central pit.

At a household level, votive deposits are even more difficult to identify, and in this region this is limited to a single site at Pla de l'Aïgo in Caramany (Pyrénées-Orientales), where four pots were buried beneath the floor of a late 1st/early 2nd century AD native-style building. Each contained the remains of a chicken, and it appears these may have been bled into the pots and not simply buried as carcasses (see 6.5.3).

Votive deposits, where they can be identified, are a link between the meaning contained within an object and religion or folklore. This does not necessarily imply a religious significance of the object itself, but it does suggest an association between the meaning behind the object and some aspect of the deity or *genius loci* it was offered to.

7.2.3 Funerary

In contrast to votive deposits, a funerary deposit is usually easy to identify, although it is not always easy to determine what objects were in that deposit, particularly when they were excavated in antiquity. Some objects from funerary sites may have been part of the grave goods, but without it being stated it was not recorded as such. Even grave markers - large, heavy objects - may have been moved or reused and lost their association with the burial. Therefore, these artefacts are probably underrepresented.

Objects within, marking, or containing the grave will have had some association either with death itself in some manner or to the deceased themselves. A broader connection with death, funerary practices, or the underworld would be expected to be a common and widespread practice. Deposits of foodstuffs, including chickens or eggs on platters or in pottery, fit in well here. While the person in the grave may have preferred certain foods and had these selected for them by grieving relatives, the overall ritual generally remained the same. Of course, the accompanying remains, particularly in the case of the birds as opposed to the eggs, could also be those of a beloved pet or some other animal closely associated with the deceased.

Those things with a more personal connection to the dead would be the more unusual or individual deposits. If only two graves out of fifty contained figurines, for example, that may represent less of a cultural habit of deposition and more a selection of an object somehow intimately connected to the deceased. A grave good may simply be an object that was loved in life (Camuset-le Porzou 1984, 15). With a lack of high concentrations of these deposits and their widespread nature, most of the small finds probably fit into this category rather than representing wider social beliefs about the dead.

More monumental objects, namely gravestones and sarcophagi, likely represent a more personal aspect, as well. The stele of Laetus (find 1963) is particularly interesting example, with what is presumably a representation of the child and two animals that

may have been beloved pets. A cippus with Mercury and Rosmerta beneath the unusual three-headed god (find 2523) is more clearly religious, but may speak more of a personal or familial belief than a wider cultural one.

It is the early Christian art on some of the sarcophagi that begins to show more widespread beliefs, with the depiction of St. Peter and a cockerel. Even then, this may simply represent the deceased's beliefs and membership in the religion rather than an iconographic connection with death and the afterlife.

Unfortunately, few of the objects in this group had much documentation on the individual they were buried with. Often this is because of the age of the discovery and the corresponding lack of detailed contextual information. Those objects that held the remains of chickens or their eggs were probably less important for what they were than what they contained. As these finds in particular are almost certainly greatly underrepresented, any interpretation of them will likely be quite biased. They occurred in both cremation and inhumation burials, and with males, females, and children.

Artefacts that served as grave goods are probably more informative, although only 17 had enough details of the burial to be of real use in this discussion. They were almost evenly split between cremations and inhumations, with nine of the former and eight of the latter. The identification of the sex of an individual is questionable when the exact methods of doing so are not known. One cremation containing a Mercury figurine (find 1952) was described as male. A cremation excavated in antiquity contained an ivory box shaped like a chicken (find 747) was identified as female simply because it was thought to be a jewellery box. A 4th century AD inhumation was also supposed to be female, but it was unclear if this was determined by examination of the physical remains or because it contained jewellery, including a chicken-shaped hairpin (find 1160). The Reinheim brooch (find 1379) was also supposed to have been from a female grave, but there no physical remains survived, so the sex relied purely on grave goods.

Two inhumations were of children. One contained ceramic figurines of a cockerel (find 1361) and a pigeon. The other included a chicken-shaped hairpin (find 2467).

In funerary deposits, neglecting the separation of the individual and society could skew the interpretation. Chicken-related artefacts appear in funerary deposits across the

region in relatively small numbers. This is suggestive of a more individual purpose behind these objects. It could be that the object itself was loved, either a toy or decoration, or that it represents something else, like a link to living chickens. Perhaps the deceased kept chickens or sold eggs, or maybe the figurine represents a favourite living bird. The icon may represent membership in a religious or social group, or be symbolic of a trait they possessed in life.

Funerary objects of this latter sort represent an intimacy between humans and chickens, or at least the idea of chickens.

7.3 Depictions

It seems obvious that how an animal is depicted, and what other creatures or objects appear with it, can tell something of its meaning. In fact, this may be the only information available when an artefact is lacking in contextual and functional information. Although much of this will rely on an unknown cultural context, it should be possible to look for patterns in how these birds were depicted.

Although most of the objects in this study are images of lone chickens, the minority featuring other objects are of more use in this area. These other images are usually humans or deities, other animals, or plants. There are also images that merge one of the above with a chicken into unusual hybrids.

Some larger objects, like mosaics, pottery, or some sculptures, may have multiple scenes, and in those cases normally only those things that shared space with a chicken were considered associated with them.

7.3.1 The chickens

Most of the depictions in this dataset, ignoring the large number of hybrid images on the Belgic coins, were of chickens on their own, with a few rare examples of multiple birds in one composition. These included free-standing figures and two dimensional images on objects like rings and mosaics.

On their own, objects depicting just a chicken can offer only the bird itself for

examination. While the physical details of the chicken (or, more rarely, chickens) could be of use, these same features also occur when they appear in larger compositions. As such, all representations are considered here.

During recording an attempt was made to classify the depictions based on the shape and style of various parts of the body, but it proved difficult to do so in practice. Because of damage to the object, issues with the clarity of illustrations or photographs, stylised or abstract depictions, and simple subjectivity, it was often not possible to be certain what the comb shape was or whether the wattle was missing due to design or accident. Therefore, the focus must remain on individual artefacts and broad trends rather than an objective, detailed summary.

7.3.1.1 Cockerel or hen

Most of the artefacts from this region were referred to in the source material as representing cockerels, not hens. While the majority of artefacts did have features strongly associated with the male of the species, namely the comb, wattles, and pronounced tail feathers, these are not necessarily indicators of sex. Occasionally female birds have some of these features, as well. It could also be that those features signified "chicken", with no intention of depicting either a male or female.

However, there were a few finds with a more definite suggestion of sex that allow some discussion. Two artefacts include chickens with spurs, and while females may occasionally grow them (Verhoef and Rijs 2008, 100), they most likely indicated these birds were male. One (find 1229) is an incredibly detailed bronze statuette found in the River Saône, and the presence of spurs on such a detailed object is not unexpected, but the find itself is not typical of the Roman period (see 6.2.1). The other artefact is an intaglio from near Giroux (find 1207), which shows two birds, both with spurs, facing each other in a combative stance on either side of a mouse or other rodent.

Some artefacts, mostly ceramic figurines, were more identifiably female, generally lacking the wattles and crest and having a more square tail. The identification of these birds as chickens is not always definite, as discussed above (see 6.2.1), which, if nothing else, shows the difficulty in identifying this species without the male traits. Often it is the shape and position of the tail that distinguishes them from pigeons or

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doves (Jeanlin-Rouvier 1972, 82; Talvas 2007, 40). It is interesting that these ceramic figurines are the most female dominated, and it is worth considering how this relates to the high number of female deities, namely Venus and mother goddesses, that also appear in this material.

Apart from these figurines, hens were exceedingly rare. A ceramic lamp from Vaison-la-Romaine (find 2487, **Figure 7.4**) has an image of a hen, assuming chicken as the species, surrounded by chicks on its disc. Somewhat less certain is a mosaic from an unknown location in Bavay (find 2478), which shows a potential hen behind what may be the tail of a cockerel. If this is a female, it shows that they may have been depicted with some of the male features. The tail is notably less grand than that of the mostly missing male, but the wattles and crest remain. Another mosaic from Ainay (find 2479) also includes what may be a hen, but the identification as a chicken is uncertain.

Figure 7.4 - artefacts depicting possible hens. Left, lamp featuring a hen and three chicks (find 2487, Sautel 1926, plate LXXIX); right, mosaic with possible hen and cockerel tail (find 2478, Stern 1957, plate XL).

All of this makes it difficult to discuss the differences between male and female

depictions with any certainty. The fact that it is the male features that most often identify these artefacts as representing chickens means that there may be an inherent bias towards males, but then it is interesting that the most male feature, the spur, is so seldom depicted. If more of the artefacts had colour, more might have been sexed.

As with the British material, the physical features which may have aided investigation of differences in the treatment of breeds were too sparse to be of much use.

7.3.1.2 Colour

Unfortunately, very few of the artefacts included colour depictions. As discussed above (see 6.2.1), some ceramic figurines had traces of paint, but little detail was given for any of them. Two of the three mosaics did not include colour illustrations, so it is difficult to discuss them in any detail. The remaining one, from Biches (find 2480, see **Figure 7.5**), shows a bird with what may be considered typical cockerel colouration on the body, with grey legs and a pale face. This object is the best colour representation from this region. Of course, with mosaics the colours in use may reflect the availability of material for the tesserae more than the living birds from the region.

Figure 7.5 - mosaic from Biches showing cockerel colouration (find 2480, Stern 1975, plate LXXXIV).

The only other well-documented colour representation of a chicken is a wall painting from the Maison Aux Xenia in Lyon (find 2296), which includes a faded depiction of a chicken, probably a cockerel, sitting on what may have been a table. While the colours have faded, they also appear relatively normal for a cockerel, again depicting a pale face.

7.3.1.3 Stance

The stances of the birds are much easier to study, as that requires only the preservation of the body of the bird. The majority of the depictions are of the bird in a neutral standing stance, although some lack the legs and could depict sitting or nesting birds. Where legs are concerned, it appears that the material of the object may have played some role in how they were depicted. For example, ceramic figurines often had short, stumpy legs, making for a more stable base, while metal figurines tended to have longer legs. The ease of manufacture and the stability of the artefact were probably of more importance than lifelike accuracy.

Some 69 artefacts showed birds with a more erect stance, which again may have been for purposes of artistic composition, but could also have represented cockerels in a more vigilant stance, or even specific breeds.

Perhaps of most interest are those birds in a crouched position, as it is this position the males take during combat before leaping. Twenty artefacts included birds in this stance, including eight figurines, a figurine mould, seven pieces of pottery, two sculptures, and two intaglios. Of these, only three have the bird interacting with another animal.

A samian-ware tray from Lezoux (find 1039) shows several pairs of cockerels facing each other around its rim, accompanied by boys or Cupids in combat. A samian bowl from Cutry (find 1951) has facing pairs around its base. The individual birds in these often appear alone, and it is not unexpected for them to occasionally be placed together like this. A more unusual example is a carved transom from Vienne (find 2502) which depicts a small dog and a cockerel fighting over a bunch of grapes.

It seems almost certain that images of chickens in this position were meant to evoke the idea of the cockerel's more confrontational nature.

7.3.1.4 Multiple birds

Only 26 objects included more than one chicken, with 15 of them being coins of type DT 519 or DT 520, which depict two chickens facing each other on the reverse. In two of the remaining items, a samian bowl (find 1326) and an intaglio (find 1218), the animals do not interact or appear to meaningfully share the same space. The rest seem to at the very least share a scene, even if they are not directly interacting.

Chickens facing each other are the most common image, appearing on an intaglio (find 1206), a samian-ware bowl (find 1951) and platter (find 1039), and a brooch (find 2294). On the samian-ware the birds appear to be confronting each other (see above), but on the others the birds may simply be facing each other for a sense of symmetry, as they lack the combative stance. An unprovenanced and sadly unillustrated figurine (find 2462) is supposed to depict "fighting cocks" confronting each other. A slightly more unusual variation of this is an intaglio with two cockerels facing each other with a mouse in between them (find 1207).

More unique images come from a lamp from Vaison-la-Romaine (Vaucluse) (find 2487), which depicts a hen surrounded by chicks, and a stone table from Tarbes (Hautes-Pyrénées) (find 2506) carved with a cockerel and hens.

7.3.2 Hybrids

Depictions merging the features of chickens with those of humans or other animals are technically the most common type in this region, but they were nearly all from a series of 1st century BC coins (see 6.1). Apart from those, this sort of depiction is quite rare, appearing only on three rings and a single cockerel-headed figurine (find 1354).

It is the Belgic coins that offer the most potential, as they appear in large numbers in a restricted space and time. They also appear to be the earliest images of chickens created in northern France, offering a unique opportunity to explore the early symbolism of chickens in a particular culture.

Types DT 509, DT 511, DT 512, DT 514, DT 516, DT 519 all include the hybrid image, and vary from relatively naturalistic with type DT 511 to quite stylised and abstract with

type DT 509. The history and evolution of this image are more fully discussed elsewhere (see 8.2.2).

The three intaglios share a similar image of the Silenus-type, featuring a human head sprouting various parts of animals, including those of a chicken, although the details vary (6.6.3). This image is somewhat similar to those on the Belgic coins, but here the human face is given more prominence.

The cockerel-headed man is unusual, but not unique, bearing some resemblance to some of the British finds, most particularly the Brading villa mosaic or the images of Abraxas on some intaglios. However, as so little is known about this object, it is of limited use in this discussion.

7.3.3 Humans and deities

Chickens appear alongside humans or deities in 86 artefacts. It is not always clear when the being is a god, with those depictions usually relying on additional attributes for identification. Even so, the majority of these objects do appear to have a religious theme, even if the intent was not strictly religious in nature.

Mercury is the most common anthropomorphic figure, appearing with chickens on 60 artefacts, either alone or with other figures. The styles of the depictions vary, with more Classical images appearing on portable objects like silver plate and rings. Larger, more monumental artefacts, like altars or statues, showed more variety in style and composition. Some of these were only identifiable as Mercury due to the presence of his attributes, most notably his caduceus. These variations, most notably the tricephalic examples, suggest the variety of local forms the Roman gods may have taken.

Figurines of Mercury are an interesting mix, often having a more Classical deity accompanied by animal figurines in what may be described as a more provincial style (see 6.2.2). The phallic Mercury from Tongeren, Belgium (find 2476) is perhaps the most unusual of this find type.

Other figures appearing with Mercury include a female deity often assumed to be Rosmerta, although at least one (find 2223) was described as his mother Maia. This

pairing may reflect a pre-Roman coupling, with the male taking on the Mercury label while the female remained in her local guise, which appears to have been quite common in Gaul (Derks 1998, 115). It is not clear how many of the attributes of each god applied to the other, but since the female figure in one stele (find 1348) is holding the chicken, it appears there were some shared elements.

Mercury appears with other Classical gods in smaller numbers on paterae (see 6.7.1) and in sculptures (see 6.3.1). On these it is usually some combination of Mercury, Apollo, and Minerva, and it is likely that each god's attributes, like Mercury's cockerel and Minerva's owl, are associated only with their patron. One of the depictions of Apollo (find 2524) also includes Rosmerta, but as these images are on different sides of an altar, it may be there was no implied connection between the sun god and the divine couple. The possible depiction of Mercury holding Bacchus (find 1433) is another uncertain connection.

A figure possibly representing Hercules appears on two artefacts. On one (find 2522), the figure is on another face of a sculpture featuring Mercury, and may therefore have no direct connection with chickens. The other (find 2516) appears a little soldierly for Hercules, who was only identified as such by the snake he holds, and the object dangling from the other hand may not even be a chicken, so this connection is likewise somewhat dubious.

Other gods appearing with chickens include an unnamed hammer-holding figure, who may represent some local version of Mercury who appears without his traditional attributes or an aspect of Vulcan or another god of the forge. Ceramic figurines of a seated mother goddess are relatively common (Bémont and Jeanlin 1993, 131), but one (find 1437) is unusual in having a chicken at its feet.

Lesser religious figures appear with chickens, as well, including a figurine of a Lar, a type of household spirit (find 2211) and a dadophore, or torch-bearer, in a possibly Mithraic stele from Apt (find 2534). Cupids or erotes may simply be an artistic device rather than religious, occurring in a samian-ware platter (find 1039) and on an intaglio (find 1218). Some Late Roman Christian sarcophagi (6.3.2) depict chickens alongside groups of people, with a special focus on St. Peter.

Non-religious human figures are less common, but still occur with some frequency. In some, such as the shepherd mosaic from Ainay (find 2479) or some of the samian-ware pottery, the chicken is separated from the main scene and may have little or no connection to it. Other objects show a more definite association.

There is little repetition of a theme in these objects as a whole, but some share similarities worthy of attention. Perhaps the strongest of these is the image of a hunchbacked dwarf or "pygmy", which occurs on three artefacts in this study area. One is a lamp, depicting combat between the dwarf and a cockerel (find 2489). Another is an intaglio, found in a grave in Argentomagus, which has an image of a small naked figure carrying a cockerel and a basket between two altars (find 1252).

Figure 7.6 - "pygmy" figurines. Left, find 1228, figurine from Strasbourg (Picard 1958, figure 1); right, figurine from the British Museum, supposedly found in Egypt (object 1922,0712.6, image copyright Trustees of the British Museum).

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The third is a bronze figurine from Strasbourg of a nude dwarf carrying a pottery vessel in one hand and a cockerel in the other (find 1228, **Figure 7.6**). Other examples of this figurine are known from Vienna, Florence, and in the British Museum (Jean-Jacques 1954, 493). The latter was said to be found in Egypt, which has been suggested as the source of this image (Picard 1958, 83). Whether all three of these artefacts reference the same source is unknown (see 8.3.3).

The other images featuring both humans and chickens are more varied. Two intaglios (finds 1197 and 2299) show a seated figure facing a chicken, possibly referencing the story of Lucian's Gallus (Bruneau 1965a, 350). Another has a hunter carrying what appears to be a cockerel (find 1196), and a fourth features an apoxymenos, or bathing athlete, with a chicken beside him (find 1413). Coin type DT 515 has a chicken facing a human head on the edge of the coin. A figurine from Ghent, Belgium (find 2547) is unusual in including a female figure with a chicken, but its authenticity is questionable (see 6.2.2).

Three objects both picture people and appear to reference an individual, all of them carved from stone and possibly funerary markers (6.3.2). The first is a relief of a soldier with a cockerel perched on a standard behind him (find 1434), engraved with the name Lepontius. It is somewhat similar to the Hercules image discussed above (find 2516).

The other two are interesting because they may represent children, although one of them is less clear. A stele found near Entrains-sur-Nohain (Nièvre) in 1895 (find 1421) has a hammer-holding figure that has been described as being a child (Devauges 1988, 99; Bigeard 1996, 158), although it may be a squat, clean-shaven adult. An inscription reads APINOSUS ICLIUS, with a D and an M on either side possibly standing for D(iis) M(anibus), a dedication to the Manes, or spirits of the dead. The other is a stele from Bordeaux (find 1963) and also includes a dedication to the Manes in the inscription to Laetus from his father.

Both of these reliefs include a chicken and what appears to be a dog. Are these representations of pets of the deceased, or symbolic protectors of one who died too young? The diminutive size of the dog seems to make the former more likely.

7.3.4 Other animals

Sixty four artefacts include images of animals other than chickens. Of these, 42 appear with Mercury, either as companion animals or associated with other deities in the same image.

Sheep or goats, or traces of what appears to have been one, appear most often with 35 examples, with all but four accompanying images of Mercury. They stand at the god's side in most examples, but there are a few exceptions. A stele of Mercury has the typical image, with a sheep or goat standing by his feet, but it is unusual in having a tiny figure raising a hand to it (find 2531). In two sculptures, a ram's head and a cockerel appear facing each other beneath the primary image, one of a tricephalic figure assumed to be Mercury based on these animals (find 1352) and one of Mercury and Rosmerta (find 2521). Two altars have images of sheep or goats on a side face. One has the remains of a dedication to Mercury on the face, a sheep on one side face opposite a cockerel and a boar on the other (find 2481). The other is an altar of Mercury and Rosmerta, with a sheep lying on an altar on one side and a cockerel perched on a tortoise on the other (find 2509). It is interesting that in the depictions of Mercury and Rosmerta, the sheep/goat association is kept out of the main composition.

Of the sheep that appear without Mercury, one is on a sculpture of a three-headed figure that may still represent the deity (find 1349), with a ram's head above the triple face. Another is a figurine of a cockerel that was found with a matching sheep, the two fitting together with the cockerel sitting beneath the sheep (find 2447). The third is the shepherd mosaic from Ainay (find 2479). Although as stated above, the chicken in a corner square may not be connected to the image of the shepherd and his charge, it is not impossible that it was a distant reference to Mercury through his companion animals. Finally, ram heads also appear on a patera that features aspects of Mercury, Apollo, and Minerva, but not the gods themselves (find 1251).

The tortoise is Mercury's other companion animal, appearing on 21 artefacts, all of them with Mercury or his attributes. In 14 of these, it is accompanied by a sheep or goat. Normally the tortoise sits by Mercury's feet or stands alone, but in three depictions (finds 2509, 2510, and 2517) the chicken stands on top of the tortoise.

Other animals appear with Mercury, but usually these can be attributed to other deities appearing with him in that depiction. Owls are depicted on six artefacts, nearly always with Minerva. A tablet with Mercury includes what may be an owl, or possibly a harpy (find 2501). Whatever association this might have had is unclear.

Ravens appear on three objects with Mercury, all probably associated with Apollo. The gods do not appear on two paterae (finds 1251 and 1262), but as they contain aspects relating to Mercury, Apollo, and Minerva they are almost certainly associated with those deities. Additionally, a dog appears with Apollo on a relief of Mercury, Apollo, and Minerva (find 2473).

The other animals accompanying depictions of Mercury are less certain, and usually appear without him as well. The exception is what appears to be a scorpion, which appears only on an intaglio, which also includes Mercury's cockerel, goat, and tortoise (find 1214).

A boar is depicted on the side of an altar to Mercury from Vaison-la-Romaine (find 2481), just below a cockerel. It is not clear if this indicates an association with Mercury or something else. An altar with a similar image and an unknown provenance from the same region (find 1226) may actually be the same object, but could suggest a local association with the boar. A figurine of a Lar standing on a plinth also includes a chicken, a crested snake, and a boar (find 2211).

Snakes are an unusual example, associated with Mercury through their appearance on the caduceus, but they are very rarely visible. This raises the question of whether they were an important part of the symbolism, or rather merely ornamentation. On only one artefact did the caduceus appear to be detailed with snake attributes. This altar (find 2504) includes on one face a cockerel and tortoise, with a caduceus seeming to grow out of a vase above them. The curves of the caduceus appear scaled as if representing snakeskin (**Figure 7.7**). A stele of Mercury (find 1193) includes a character interpreted as a snake, but it is not altogether clear.

Figure 7.7 - altar of Mercury depicting a caduceus with snakeskin pattern (find 2504, Espérandieu 1907, 302).

Three other artefacts include snakes, but as they could be represented by quite simple shapes that could be easily obliterated, there may be more that were not identified as such. One was the lare figurine above (find 2211), which included an oddly crested snake. The potential Hercules stele discussed above is another (find 2516), but it appears the snake may be the only reason it was identified as this god, representing the story of him strangling a serpent in his cradle. Finally, a ceramic lamp (find 1006) features a cockerel facing a tree with a snake coiled around it.

Animals appearing with chickens that have no visible connection to Mercury are more rare and usually appear only in small numbers. Dogs are the most numerous of these,

appearing on a total of eight artefacts. One of these is a relief of Apollo and Mercury mentioned above (find 2473), with a dog appearing at Apollo's side. Dogs also appear on altars of an unnamed figure, presumably a deity, holding a hammer. On one (find 2500), the animals appear on opposite sides of the altar, while on the other (find 2503) they stand to either side of him on the main face.

Two other pieces of sculpture include dogs, both of them featuring what appear to be children. The first (find 1421), as discussed above (7.3.3) may not actually represent a child, and the hammer in his hand may suggest a connection to the hammer gods above, but the inscription shows this is a funerary monument. The funerary stele of Laetus (find 1963, **Figure 7.8**) is more clearly a child, but there has been some debate over whether the animal in his or her arms is a small dog or a cat, but the visible genitals favour the former (Johns 2003b, 59). This depiction is somewhat more active than most. The child not only holds the dog, but below the chicken appears to be biting at its tail. The suggestion that these represent pets of the deceased, the latter in particular, is hard to ignore.
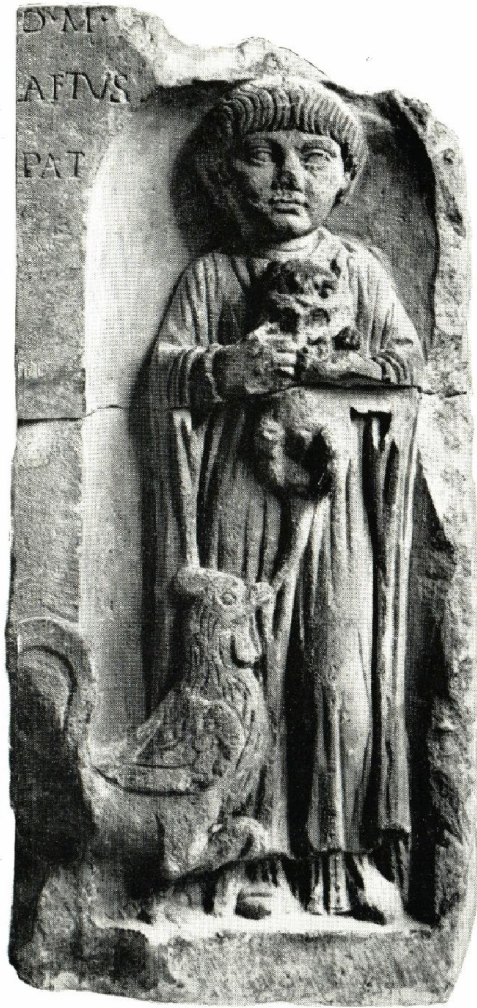
Figure 7.8 - stele of Laetus, featuring either a small dog or a cat (find 1963, Velensi 1964-1965, 24).

More straightforward are the appearance of "working dogs" in two depictions. A dog follows a shepherd in the mosaic from Ainay (find 2479), but, as stated previously, the connection between this scene as the chicken in the corner is uncertain. A hunter carrying a trussed chicken on an intaglio (find 1196) is also followed by his canine companion.

Finally, a more active scene appears on a transom from Vienne (Isère) (find 2502), which shows a small dog and a chicken confronting each other over a bunch of grapes.

Other birds, as a group, appear in 13 depictions. Six are owls and three are ravens appearing with Apollo, both discussed above. Of the remaining four, one is the

shepherd mosaic from Ainay (find 2479), which has small birds of indeterminate species in the main scene, one perched on a tree and the other flying overhead. Another is a wall painting from Lyon (find 2296), with a small "window" opening onto a scene of a chicken sitting on what may have been a table. Seated above this window is a white bird, possibly a swan or a dove.

Two intaglios have images of chickens with other birds. One (find 1198) has a chicken and an eagle facing each other. The other (find 1211) is a more complex image, with a chicken perched on top of a basin facing a cornucopia with what appears to be a parrot sitting on it. These objects are more fully discussed below (7.3.6).

Rodents appear on two objects, both intaglios. The first is the hunter intaglio already mentioned (find 1196), who carries, in addition to the chicken in his hand, a rabbit over his shoulder. The other (find 1207, **Figure 7.9**) shows two cockerels in fighting stance with a mouse or rat between them.

Figure 7.9 - intaglio featuring two cockerels confronting each other over a rodent (find 1207, Guiraud 1988, plate L).

Reptiles are relatively common if the tortoises of Mercury and snakes discussed above are included, but are otherwise only represented by a lizard that appears beside an possible incomplete chicken on a fragment of stone from Vienne (Isère) (find 2499). As

the image is incomplete and the provenance is unknown, any meaning behind this image is unclear.

The remaining artefacts that include other species with chickens were both imported. One of them, a coin of type ABC 2012 from Britain (see 4.1.12) has on its reverse a horse over a chicken's head. The other is a candelabra or incense burner (find 1221), probably from Etruria (see 6.4.2), which has a chicken and some kind of large cat positioned on the sides of the main shaft.

7.3.5 Plants

Plants of some form or another appear on 35 artefacts. Often they lack detail to be certain of species identification, and the interpretations of the source authors are kept here with the understanding that they may not be correct.

Most of these (22 out of 35) appear to be palm leaves, with all but four appearing on a series of lamps (see 6.4.1). In these, a chicken stands in front of a single upright leaf. It has been suggested that this association is representative of victory (Bruneau 1965b, 114; Rivet 2004, 243). Although the species of bird is unclear, what appears to be a palm leaf appears on a piece of graffiti from Narbonne (Aude) (find 1286).

The other palm leaves appear on sculptures, although these are even less clear. One is an altar of Mercury with extensive plant decoration (find 2504), which has on one side face an unusual composition of a pair of theatrical masks with what appear to be pinecones above them, surmounted by what may be palm leaves. On the opposite face is some kind of flowering plant, and the main face features a caduceus that appears to be growing out of a pot.

A stone block from Nîmes (Gard) (find 2505) has a chicken on one face and a round shape bordered by possible palm leaves on the other. Finally, a sarcophagus from the crypts of Saint-Maximin-la-Sainte-Baume (Var) (find 1227) features a scene of St. Peter with a cockerel perched in the leaves of a palm tree.

What appear to be small ears of corn or grain appear on six artefacts, all of them intaglios (see 6.6.1). Usually this image is a simple scene with a lone chicken standing

and the grain in front of it. A more complex image appears on an intaglio from Autun (find 1211), which shows a chicken on top of a basin, facing a cornucopia with a parrot perched on it (see above, 7.3.4). An ear of grain appears to either side of the basin.

Fruits of some form appear in five depictions. One is an intaglio (find 1204) similar to those above, but with a basket in front of the chicken instead of grain. A single fruit appears to have fallen out of the basket. A seated goddess figurine (find 1437) holds a fruit in her left hand while a chicken sits at her feet. The wall painting from Lyon (find 2296) includes two apples or peaches next to the chicken sitting on a table. A patera with attributes of Mercury and Minerva (find 1264) includes round objects which could be fruit or flowers, as well as a bit of acanthus leaf decoration. Grapes carved onto a transom from Vienne (find 2502) are the most recognisable of these fruits.

More general plant material appears in some of the more detailed scenes, for example trees in the shepherd mosaic from Ainay (find 2479), on a sarcophagus with a depiction of St. Peter (find 2225), and in a lamp with a snake coiled around one (find 1006).

7.3.6 Objects

A few other objects appearing in depictions with chickens are worth mentioning. While the more complex depictions may feature many objects, this section focuses on those that appear regularly or otherwise appear to have an unusual significance. Attributes of the gods are most common, and are included above (7.3.3). Of these, those of Mercury are naturally the most abundant, with the caduceus, purse, petasos, and winged sandals appearing both with and without the god himself. Minerva's helmet and Apollo's lyre appear alongside these on some artefacts, but it seems probable these are only connected to the chicken through their association with Mercury. However, a lyre appears on the obverse of one of the Belgic coins, type DT 516 (see 6.1.4), without a clear link to Apollo. It should also be remembered that, in Classical mythology, it was the infant Hermes who created the lyre before giving it to Apollo, and this may harken back to that early story.

Closely tied to some of the plant motifs above are containers meant to hold vegetable foodstuffs. The cornucopia is the most common of these, possibly appearing on eight artefacts. Three of these are intaglios, two of which (finds 1209 and 1210) show a

cockerel standing next to one, with the third featuring a more complex scene with a parrot, another exotic bird, perched on top of the cornucopia (find 1211, see above). A bronze figurine (find 1416) has a chicken perched on top of a cornucopia. They also appear on a relief of Mercury and Maia (find 2223) and an altar of Mercury and Rosmerta (find 2523). A simple triangular shape in front of the chicken on a patera with other symbols of Mercury and Minerva (find 1264) likely represents one as well. Somewhat less clear is a plaque of Silenus (find 1977), which has what may be stylised cornucopias beneath the face of the god.

Baskets are less common, with the one unambiguous example, an intaglio (find 1204), actually holding some kind of fruit. Another intaglio may have a basket being carried by a dwarf or pygmy (find 1252), while traditionally these figures, such as that on a figurine from Strasbourg (find 1228), carry an amphora.

Perhaps most intriguing are the chickens perched atop columns. This image has a long pedigree, as will be discussed later, and it appears in this region on four artefacts. Two are on samian ware, one with the bird on a pillar beside Mercury (find 2297) and the other being simply the chicken on a pillar as a standalone element (find 1947). A carved table (find 2506) includes several images of chickens, one of which sits on a column. On the final example, the St. Peter sarcophagus from Saint-Maximin-la-Sainte-Baume (find 1227), the bird sits atop a palm three rather than the traditional column, but this may simply represent an evolution of the theme. In this scene a second chicken sits on top of a small, locked chest, but the significance of this is unclear.

8 A biography of the chickens of Britain and Gaul

This chapter will attempt to follow the evolution of chickens as they spread across Europe into Gaul and Britain, beginning with an exploration of the historical context of the rest of the ancient world. It will not deal with the spread of the chickens themselves, but rather the expression of the idea of what a chicken is and the artefacts that are the physical manifestation of these concepts. Although the objects that make up this study are often lacking in precise dating, there is enough to suggest broad trends in the expression of chicken symbolism from the Late Iron Age to the end of the Roman period.

8.1 Chickens across the Mediterranean

The chicken-related iconography of Roman Britain and Gaul grew out of a tradition that started in the eastern Mediterranean and first spread across Europe through the expansion of Greek and, later, Roman culture. The species being depicted in the very earliest images are more likely to be jungle fowl rather than the domestic species, but to someone not familiar with either there may not have been any difference, and for the sake of brevity the term "chicken" will refer to both the domestic species and its wild progenitors.

The earliest depictions of chickens in Europe seem to appear on Minoan seal stones found on Crete. Neither example could be located, and only the original illustrations and descriptions were available. One was a clay sealing found at Katos Zakro, site of a Minoan palace and occupied in the first half of the second millennium BC. It appears to show two chickens facing each other across an altar (Hogarth 1902, 88). The other is a three-faced seal stone from an unknown site in central Crete. One of the faces was interpreted as a chicken standing next to an unknown, spikey, L-shaped object (Evans 1895, 73). Unfortunately, neither image is clear enough to be certain of species, and the lack of chicken bones on these sites means any identification must be cautious.

Other very early depictions are known from Egypt, where small numbers of these birds could have come as gifts or tribute. The annals of Thutmosis III (1501-1447BC) mention, as tribute from Babylonia, a bird that lays eggs daily (Carter 1923, 1; Wood-

Gush 1959, 323), which would suggest that some improved breed of jungle fowl was around at that time. The walls of the tomb of Rekhmara, an official who served this pharaoh, show a chicken's head in a scene with other articles of tribute (Carter 1923, 4).

Figure 8.1 - ostracon from the Valley of the Kings with a drawing of a chicken or red jungle fowl (Carter 1923, plate XX).

An ostracon (small fragment of limestone, British Museum number EA68539) was found in the Valley of the Kings and described by Howard Carter as "not only the earliest drawing of the domestic cock, but absolute authentic evidence of the domestic fowl in the form of the Red Jungle-fowl being known to the ancient Thebans between the twelfth and fifteenth centuries before our era" (Carter 1923, 1). The drawing, although simple and made up of only a few lines (**Figure 8.1**), is naturalistic enough that it is safe to assume that whoever drew it had seen one, either directly or through another detailed depiction. While this is undoubtedly early, a bird-shaped bone amulet, possibly representing a jungle fowl, in the British Museum (number EA57774) may be even older, dating back to the Intermediate Period (2181-2055BC). Also in the British Museum (number EA65609), a mirror from the New Kingdom (1550-1077BC) has a

handle in the form of a trussed chicken, suggesting that, if it is indeed a chicken and not some other species of fowl, the culinary use of the bird was not limited to merely their eggs.

It is in Greece from about the 8th century BC that chickens become a more common iconographic element. During this period, there was an artistic renaissance and an increase in the building of temples and sanctuaries (Coldstream 1977, 317; Boardman 1991a, 9-10). It was a time of social change, with new influences from the Near East and Egypt spreading across the region (Coldstream 1977, 313; Boardman 1991a, 18; Shanks 1999, 1). New techniques in pottery painting in particular led to the creation of a wealth of chicken imagery.

Called "the Persian bird" by Aristophanes (*Birds*, line 485), it may be unsurprising that these depictions came during the orientalising period. Early Corinthian pottery included chickens, probably cockerels judging by their features and spurs, in animal friezes (Shanks 1999, 2). They appear to take the context of domestic rather than wild animals (Shanks 1999, 135).

Chicken images became more common on Attic black-figure ware from about 700BC (Boardman 1974, 9). These depictions vary, but can be quite naturalistic and usually show the crest, wattles, and tail feathers quite clearly. The spurs are commonly depicted, as well, and the presence of female birds in some scenes further suggests the typical image is of a cockerel. From around 530BC red-figure ware became more popular, and while animals tended not to be the focal point, chickens and hybrids still made an appearance (Boardman 1975, 214-215).

Some depictions have the appearance of a cockfight, with the cockerel in a crouched position it takes during combat. The level of interaction between the birds varies, with some examples seemingly engaging with each other and others having them balanced apparently for a sense of artistic symmetry, with no clear indication that they share the same space. Many of these scenes appear on cups, and it has been suggested they appealed to young men who took part in the sport of cockfighting (Boardman 1974, 204).

This theme linking young males and cockerels becomes even stronger, and perhaps

influences the previous assumption, with the development of the "love gift", in which an older man presents a younger one with a cockerel, often with erotic themes (Boardman 1974, 211). Shapiro (1981) has examined this in great detail, finding that these images were at their peak from the mid-6th through to the early 5th century BC, coming into prominence during the reign of the tyrant Peisistratos and his heirs, and portraying a socially acceptable sexual relationship between equals at a time when such relationships with women of the upper classes were forbidden. During the 5th century these scenes became less common and evolved into similar scenes depicting Zeus pursuing Ganymede. In some of these the supreme god tempts his cupbearer with a gift like the older depictions, but often Ganymede is merely holding the bird as well as a hoop (Boardman 1975, 224). This image remained in use into the Classical Period (Boardman 1991b, 52)

Possibly more notable, and appearing about the same time, are the Panathenaic amphorae, which were prizes given to the winners of the Panathenaic games and filled with olive oil from the goddess Athena's sacred groves (Boardman 1974, 169). These vases display two scenes: one related to the event that was won, and the other the goddess Athena flanked by two columns with an "unexpected" chicken perched on top, possibly representative of the spirit of competition or victory (Boardman 1974, 167). This image of the "cock on the column" would become a theme repeated until the present day, and the evolution was examined by Callisen (1939) nearly 80 years ago, tracing it from these early Greek images through Mercury into early Christian art, and finally suggesting that it persists today in the form of weathervanes.

These particular black-figure vases continued into the red-figure era (Boardman 1975, 7), suggesting a conservativism or sense of tradition acting to preserve them. Eventually the chickens began to get replaced with other objects, and the Panathenaic decoration appeared on other types of objects, possibly souvenirs of the games, before fading away over the 3rd and 2nd centuries BC (Boardman 1974, 168-169).

Chickens appear on other artefacts from this period, but these tend to be less common than the pottery. Although no actual examples were found, some pottery, such as late 6th century BC cup in the Louvre (Boardman 1975, plate 91), show shields with the silhouette of a chicken on it. A shield band from about 530BC shows Achilles about to

kill Troilos at an altar on which a chicken stands (Carpenter 1991, 20). The appearance on such martial objects suggests an association with the cockerel's natural combativeness, but it is not impossible that it reflects some other attribute associated with an individual or group. Perhaps the "chicken warrior" on Attic pottery is a known character whose context is now lost. Pausanias mentions a statue of the Trojan War figure Idomeneus at a temple in Olympia which has a chicken on its shield (*Description of Greece* 5.25.9), and, although he wrote many centuries later, it is possible that these shield-bearers all represent this character.

Figurines appear to have been somewhat more common. With the development of new temples and the accompanying potential changes in religious practices during this period, there could have been an increased demand for votive offerings (Boardman 1991a, 9-10). Small representations of animals could have served as substitutes for the real thing (Coldstream 1977, 332), and chicken figurines dating to this period have been found across Greece (Coldstream 1977, 175). This practice spread with Greek influence, and chicken figurines have been found at the temple of Demeter and Persephone in Cyrene (White 1975, 40-41). Although it is not known if any figurines were found, this association between Persephone and chickens appears again at a sanctuary in Locri, Italy, where a clay relief was found. It depicts the goddess seated next to her husband Hades, who holds flowers, and she holds grain and a chicken, with a cockerel, judging by its spurs, standing beneath her chair (Gardner 1896, 78).

The spread of religious associations can also be seen in the iconography of coins from this period. The British Museum holds dozens of coins from around the Mediterranean dating to the second half of the first millennium BC that have chicken imagery. These coins remained prominent enough symbols that the 16th century naturalist Ulisse Aldovandi was able to use them to research his own history of chickens (Lind 1963, 345-348).
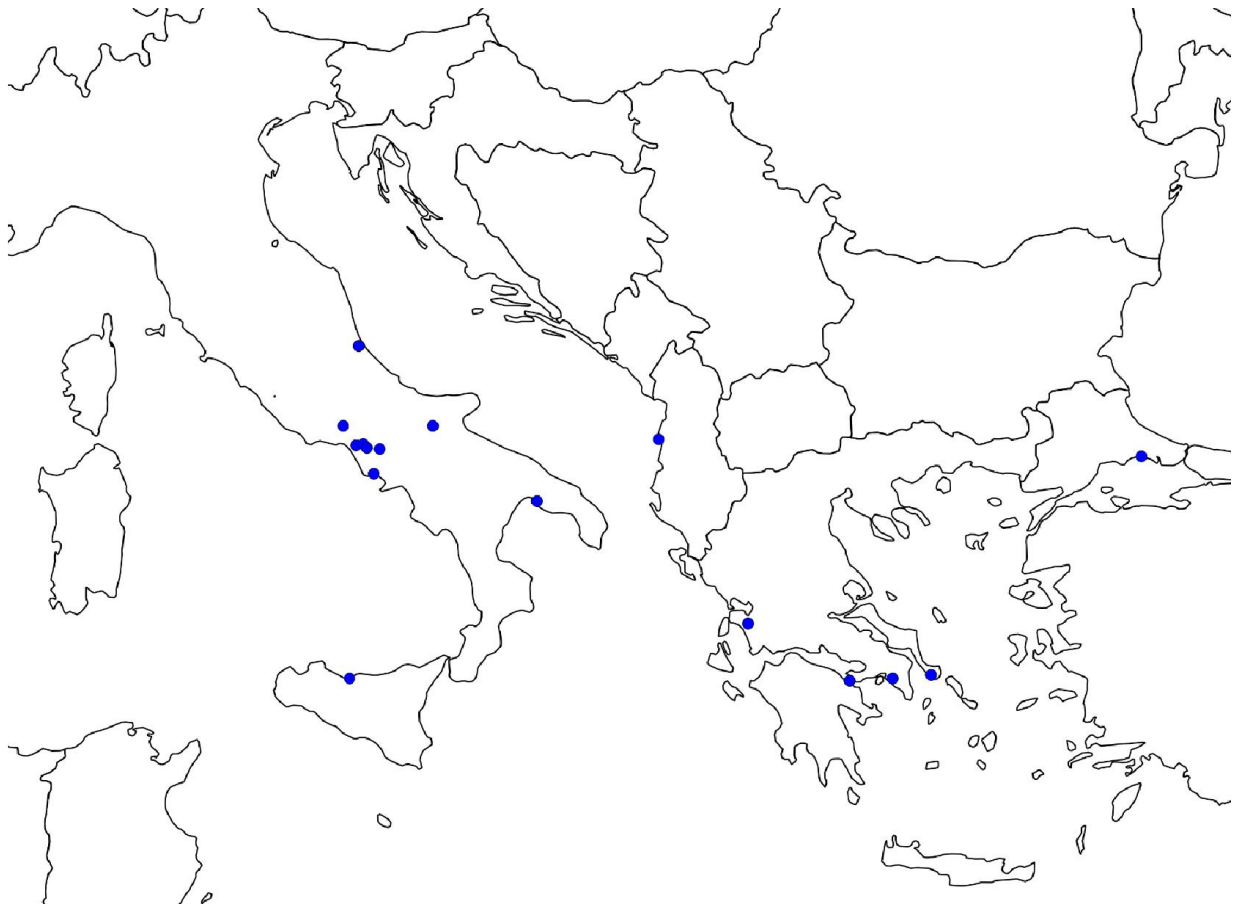
Figure 8.2 - distribution of Iron Age coins with chicken imagery in the British Museum.

Among the earliest of these are coins from Dicaea in Thrace, dating to the 5th century BC. They have a chicken on the reverse, but the obverse face varies, with marine life in the form of shells (British Museum number 1986,0424.12) and cuttlefish (numbers 1892,0611.23 and 1883,0402.5, see **Figure 8.3**) on some, and a lionskin-clad man, possibly representing Heracles, on others (numbers 1859,1013.8, 1876,0803.3, 1855,1211.4, and 1922,1020.3, see **Figure 8.3**). Other coins from this century include examples from Turkey, where chickens appear with, and in one case, their heads hybridised onto, triskeles (numbers 1922,0425.59 and 1961,0301.3). Another Turkish coin has a geometric pattern on the obverse (number 1995,0605.37), which is remarkably similar to a Sicilian coin minted around the same time (number 1972,0713.1).

Figure 8.3 - pre-Roman coins with images of chickens. Top, 5th century BC Macedonian coin (British Museum number 1892,0611.23, image copyright Trustees of the British Museum); bottom, 5th century BC Thracian coin (British Museum number 1859,1013.8, image copyright Trustees of the British Museum).

During the 4th century BC chicken-depicting coins seem to become more commonplace. Athens minted coins with chicken heads opposite an ivy leaf (number 1922,0317.151), images of Pegasus with chickens on the reverse (number 1949,0411.504), and a human-headed bull opposite a chicken (number 1920,0805.421). Pegasus appears again, this time ridden by Bellerophon, on coins from Acarnania, with a chicken standing beneath a chimera on the reverse (numbers 1852,0701.42 and 1920,0805.183). Corinthian coins also feature Pegasus, with the head of Athena facing a chicken on the reverse (for example, numbers 1841,B.1638, 1890,0804.4, RPK,p5B.27.Cor, and 1840,1226.253). Several coins from Carystus have a cow suckling a calf on the obverse and a chicken on

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the reverse (numbers TC,p149.1.Car, 1871,0705.10, 1988,0320.1, and 1875,0701.23), although these may date into the 3rd and even early 2nd centuries BC.

Probably influenced by these earlier Greek coins, a large number of chicken-themed coins were minted in Italy during the 3rd century BC. Most of these were from the central region of Campania, but there were examples from Atri, Luceria, and Tarentum. The image of Athena's helmeted head opposite a standing chicken was the most common of these (for example, numbers RPK,p309B.4.Tia, TC,p28.2.Sue, RPK,p308B.5.Sue, RPK,p308B.3.Sue, and 1902,0703.6), and there were several, mostly from Luceria, that depicted Apollo instead (numbers 1867,0101.505, G.2573, G.2572, G.2574, 1949,0411.10, and 1949,0411.11). Some of the more unusual images include a man riding a dolphin with a chicken in the background, with the obverse image of a horseman, on coins from Tarentum (numbers RPK,p292M.37.Tar, 1949,0411.43, and RPK,p291M.27.Tar). A simpler but perhaps odder image appears on coins from Atri, which have a typical chicken on one face and a shoe on the other (numbers 1851,0503.405, 1868,0316.39, G.2433, 1867,0101.519, 1867,0101.520, and TC,p17.2.Had). Also during this century, the Roman Republic created bronze currency bars with an image of two chickens facing each other (numbers R.10677 and 1867,0212.4), either pecking at something on the ground or crouched in preparation for combat. What appear to be starbursts appear above and below the heads of the chickens.

There appears to be a significant drop in the number of coins with chicken imagery from the 2nd century BC onwards. A coin from Epirus in Greece, dating from the late 3rd or early 2nd century BC, has an image of either Artemis or Demeter facing a chicken (number 1866,1201.3191). Another from Durres, Albania features the suckling cow of earlier times, but now the chicken stands above it and a cornucopia floats to one side (number 1906,0306.6). An Athenian coin minted by magistrate Chari-Hera in 146BC has a head of Athena on the obverse and an owl and a chicken on the reverse (number 1908,1201.4 and 1853,0225.7). Most interesting about this composition is the palm leaf that accompanies the chicken, as this theme continues into Roman times. Italy is oddly lacking in chicken coins after the glut of the previous century.

While these coins only represent one collection, that of the British Museum, they do

show that chicken imagery on coins was easily mobile, even more so than pottery, and apparently widespread. It is worth nothing that in addition to the religious and mythological associations described above, many of these coins, including the early Thracian and most of the Italian examples, include a sun or starburst with the chicken. It is not clear if this indicated a solar connection or was some other symbol copied onto new types, but, as will be seen, it continued on the earliest native chicken images in northwest Europe.

In Italy, the Etruscan civilization appears to have had an affinity for chicken-related objects, doubtless influenced by the predominantly Greek art described above, but possibly reflecting pre-existing native ideas. The earliest example appears to be a small 7th century BC vase, possibly an inkwell, in the shape of a stylised chicken, with the Etruscan alphabet inscribed around its body (Metropolitan Museum of Art, accession number 24.97.21a, b). One of the most famous may be the frescoes of the Tomb of the Triclinium from the Necropolis of Monterozzi in Tarquinia. One of the scenes depicted is a banquet, which features a chicken standing beneath the couch of one of the diners (Haynes 2005, 235).

More relevant to this study are a series of candelabras or incense burners of Etruscan origin, dating to about the 4th and 3rd centuries BC (Oggiano-Bitar 1984, 62). Although the details vary considerably, they include a chicken perched sideways on the main shaft, often pursued by a large cat of some sort. The British Museum holds four in its collection (numbers 1873,0820.214, 1772,0302.42, 1873,0820.211, 1847,1101.24), all antiquarian finds said to come from Italy. What makes this type of object noteworthy is that two may have been recovered from the project area. One (find 1187) is in the Pitt Rivers Museum and is listed as being found in London, but this may be where it was obtained rather than excavated. The other (find 1221) is in the Musée Borély in Marseille, but lacks any details of how it entered the collection. Given that these appear to have been antiquarian finds, it seems likely the British and French examples were also found in Italy and removed to where they later entered into the documentation.

The chickens on these early depictions generally appear quite naturalistic, but there are some unusual hybrids. For example, the Timiades Painter created "cockerel monsters" (Boardman 1974, 37). These may have been the hippalectryon, a horse-chicken hybrid

which was the most common mixed chicken beast on black- and red-figure ware (Boardman 1974, 204; 1975, 215). There is carved example from the Acropolis, as well (Dickens 1912, 131). One of the early coins from Turkey described above has a triskele with a chicken head on the end of each of the "legs" of the device, but this appears to be a unique example.

Figure 8.4 - krater with chicken-headed men (image copyright The J. Paul Getty Museum)

Another possible unique hybrid appears on a red-figure krater in the J. Paul Getty Museum, examined in more detail by Green (1985). This pot has an image of two chicken-headed men with erect phalli, which Green concluded were probably depictions of characters from *Birds*, written by Aristophanes around 414BC. While this particular image does not appear to have been repeated in later depictions, it does illustrate the influence that literature and other forms of popular culture, which may not have survived, can have on art.

Many of the objects discussed above have some religious connotation, even if it was

intended as primarily artistic. During the Hellenstic Period, starting in the late 4th century BC, the Greek world went through a series of social changes and started adopting more standardised depictions of the gods (Carpenter 1991, 8; Smith 1991, 64). This almost certainly helped spread the idea of a god's attributes, as well.

As seen in the coins in particular, the association between Athena and chickens seems to the strongest and most widespread. This may have been aided by the movement of Panathenaic amphorae and knowledge of the games behind them. The other mythological associations are less clear, but as Pegasus is often linked with Athena when he appears, it seems the Pegasus-chicken link comes from her, and the hippalectryon may be an evolution of this. Pausanias, when discussing statues of Athena carved by the artist Pheidias (*Description of Greece*, 6.26.3), mentions one from near Olympia that depicted a chicken on her helmet. If the starburst on the coins does indicate an association with light, the less common association with Apollo could be easily explained in the same way. Certainly the earliest known written reference to a chicken is its crowing at dawn (Theognis, lines 861-864). Although not appearing in any of the art described here, chickens are also associated with the healing god Asclepius (Lentacker *et al.* 2004, 91), although the nature of this relationship is unclear. This is more fully discussed in section 8.4 below.

Notably lacking in any of these depictions is Hermes, who eventually became linked with Mercury, the deity most strongly associated with chickens in Roman times. While other gods of this period often appear without their companion animal, like Zeus and his eagle and Athena and her owl (Boardman 1974, 216, 218), the lack of any sort of chicken connection for Hermes in either art or literature is a strong indicator that it was a Roman, or at least a Roman-era, invention.

The objects briefly described here show that chicken imagery was widespread in the Classical world by the time of the Roman invasion of Gaul, although some of the associations appear to change. Regardless, it is these depictions that influenced what was to come in future centuries in Roman Gaul and Britain.

8.2 Late Iron Age Gaul and Britain

The earliest chicken-related material culture in the project area comes, unsurprisingly

given its closer proximity to the Greek world, from southern France. With the Greek colonies such as Massilia in this region, the presence of Attic pottery is to be expected, but only two examples featuring chickens were found during this survey (see 6.5.2), both from a shipwreck near the island of Porquerolles dating to about 475BC.

8.2.1 An exotic brooch

A more native representation is the Reinheim brooch (find 1379, see 6.9), a bronze and coral brooch in the shape of a chicken found in the rich burial of a 4th century BC "princess", who appears to have been sexed solely by the presence of jewellery, on the French and German border near Bliesbruck (Moselle). Although the choice of a chicken is unique, the brooch appears to be the most western example of a form originally based on a Central Italian Villanovan style, which crossed the Alps to influence late Hallstatt and La Tène jewellery, giving it an ultimately Greek or Etruscan origin (Echt 1999, 70-71).

The presence of such a unique depiction in the grave of what must have been a person of some importance, and the subsequent lack of chicken imagery for the next few centuries, does beg the question of what status the bird had at that period. It must have had some importance, but was it because of what the object was, an exotic, high status, and possibly imported luxury item, or what it depicted? This seems to be a high-impact sort of artefact, but one that failed to inspire any others, at least in terms of chicken imagery. Perhaps in this region chickens, or possibly the symbolism attached to them, had yet to make any particularly widespread impact, remaining an animal restricted to a few people or, alternately, only known as exotic imports.

8.2.2 The cock bronzes of Belgica and Britain

After this, it took some three centuries before more native-produced chicken images appear in the archaeological record, and these are, if anything, even more unusual. The images are those on a very geographically and temporally restricted set of coins from Belgic Gaul and southeast England, and they represent the earliest native chicken imagery in that part of the world.

Other coins from the period include images of animals such as horses and boars (de

Jersey 2006, 119); strong, powerful creatures whose inclusion is fairly understandable. The use of a chicken is less explicable, but the issue is even more complicated by the human face on the stomach of the bird. Why is the image that appears on some of the earliest base metal coins in this part of the world not just a chicken, but a chicken with a human face?

DT 509   DT 510   DT 511

DT 512   DT 513   DT 514

DT 515   DT 516   DT 517

DT 518   DT 519   DT 520

DT 521

Figure 8.5 - Belgic coins (after Delestrée and Tache 2002, pl. XXII).

The earliest coins of this type appear in Belgic Gaul in Haselgrove's Western zone, which includes the territories of the Ambiani, Atrebates, Bellovaci, and Veliocasses (Haselgrove 1999, 119). Using the typologies of Delestrée and Tache (2002), these

coins are types DT 509 through DT 521 (**Figure 8.5**).

Delestrée described these chicken-themed coins and their possible evolution over thirty years ago (Delestrée 1980), and has further clarified the typologies since (Delestrée and Tache 2002). For this investigation a detailed discussion of how they interrelate is not important, and a short summary of the earliest one and its variations will suffice (see 4.1.2 and 6.1 for details on the individual coin types).

Type 511, sometimes called the Bracquemont type, appears to be the earliest of this series. It is less stylised than the others, featuring a fairly Classical human head on the obverse, possibly representing Roma or Minerva. The reverse image is of a cockerel, clearly recognisable by its wattles, comb, and tail feathers. Its wings are spread, which is unusual for depictions of chickens, but most bizarre is the human face placed on its belly.

It is thought that this coin was inspired by the Central Italian coins described above, which date back to the late 3rd century BC (Delestrée 1980, 55). At least two coins of this type have been found by metal detectorists in Britain (finds 159 and 161, see 5.1.1), and while it is impossible to be sure they were deposited in antiquity, it does suggest that Mediterranean coins occasionally made their way to the far northern edges of the world. Such copying is not an unusual concept, with the earliest gold coins from this part of Gaul thought to have ultimately taken their imagery from far-flung Macedonia and the coins of Philip II (Creighton 2000, 26).

A comparison of the Gaulish coin to a type of Campanian coin found in Hampshire (find 161) does show some similarities (**Figure 8.6**). Both have a possibly female, helmeted head on the obverse, a chicken on the reverse, and the Gaulish coin has round shapes in the same place where the Italian one has a starburst and a crescent shape. However, the chicken on the Campanian coin is more erect in the manner of modern breeds of gamecock like the Shamo and its wings are folded. The Gaulish coin's chicken, apart from the addition of a human face, has spread its wings and holds its head back. While the later coin may have been influenced by the earlier one, it was not a slavish copy.

Figure 8.6 - comparison of coin minted in Campania, above (Wildwinds.com, auction CNG 61, Lot 7) and type DT 511, below (Delestrée and Tache 2002, pl. XXII).

Delestrée suggested that the plump crop on some of the Campanian coins inspired the Belgic coin makers to fill in the space with a human face (Delestrée 1980, 56), but it is unlikely that such an unusual image would be created on a whim. It must have been born out of some aspect of Belgic culture, creating a local style out of an imported image.

Accepting type DT 511 as the first of the Belgic cockerel coins, it is easy to see the other types as either derivatives or otherwise inspired by the same sources. While the DT 511 is relatively naturalistic, some of the others become quite stylised and abstract, with DT 509 being perhaps the most extreme example.

The hybrid image is by no means universal, with types DT 510, DT 517, DT 518, and DT 521 having the bird without the face. Type DT 515 is unusual in having the human face at the edge of the coin, facing the non-hybridised chicken. Types DT 519 and DT

520 have two hybrid birds facing each other. Type DT 521 is the most deviant of the cockerel coins, not only having a significantly different form of chicken on the reverse, but also featuring a boar instead of a human face on the obverse.

Nearly all of the coins in Gaul were recovered from Late Iron Age religious sites in Picardy and Normandy. The most significant were Digeon, Fesques, Bois-l'Abbé, Camp Rouge, and Vendeuil-Caply, all of which had later Gallo-Roman religious activity.

Table 8.1 - Iron Age religious sites and the coin types found there.

Coin type	Digeon	Fesques	Bois-l'Abbé	Camp Rouge	Vendeuil-Caply
DT 509	14	1			6
DT 510	1				
DT 511	443	169	49	12	
DT 512	2	57	3		
DT 514				2	
DT 515				1	
DT 516	19	1		12	
DT 517		1	34		
DT 519	13	1		3	
DT 521	1				

Known in the 19th century as the "terre d'argent", or land of money/silver (Delplace *et al.* 1986, 83), the temple site at Digeon (Somme) has the highest concentration of coins in Belgic Gaul (Delestrée and Delplace 1986, 19). Nearly 1,200 identifiable coins from this site, largely from museum collections and metal detectorists, were examined in one

study (Delestrée and Delplace 1986). Coins with chickens on them were the most abundant type of bronze coin recorded there, especially the Bracquemont type, DT 511 (**Table 8.1**). Smaller numbers of other chicken coins were present, all of them minted locally, and all of them seeming to be of a similar date, making for a remarkably homogeneous assemblage (Delestrée and Delplace 1986, 18-19).

From Digeon, it is thought that chicken imagery spread to the other religious sites (Delestrée 1994, 27). One of these sites was Fesques, a large temple complex in use from the 3rd century BC to the 2nd century AD (Mantel 1997, 7). Many of the coins from this site were, fortunately, recovered during controlled excavations and therefore come from known contexts, most of which were within the main three structures on site (Delestrée 1997, 283). Most of these were pits and ditches, which makes it possible that these are merely secondary deposits, moved there during later renovations to the site (Haselgrove 1999, 115), but they may also have been votive offerings. As with Digeon, the coins are mostly local and form a homogeneous group (Delestrée 1997, 285). Type DT 511 is likewise the most common type, followed by DT 512, which is a smaller variation of the Bracquemont type (**Table 8.1**).

The site of Bois l'Abbé, near Eu (Seine-Maritime), is another large sanctuary with a high concentration of chicken coins (Delestrée 2008). The numbers are smaller than the previous two sites, but DT 511 still dominates (**Table 8.1**). Here, however, type DT 517, which otherwise was only seen as a single example at Fesques, is the second most common. This coin lacks the human face on the chicken, and appears less stylised than most of the others. Whether this indicates this type is earlier or merely a different artistic tradition is unknown.

Le Camp Rouge near the town of Fontaine-sur-Somme (Somme) had a smaller, but more diverse, collection of coins (Delestrée 1987). Type DT 511 was still the most common type, but it tied with type DT 516. This type was found in small numbers at Digeon and Fesques, but the relative proportions suggest a local prominence at this site. The coin bears similarities to both types DT 511 and DT 517, and is unusual in that a small lyre appears in front of the face on the obverse side. Although they appear in smaller numbers, this site also possessed the only examples of types DT 514 and DT 515 (**Table 8.1**).

The temple complex at Vendeuil-Caply is quite different from the others, having only six chicken coins in its assemblage and lacking type DT 511 entirely (Delestrée 1985). Here only type DT 509 was found, which only appears in small numbers at Digeon and Fesques. This type is perhaps the most stylised and abstract of the coins discussed here, with the shapes being made up of simple lines and dots. This site is the most peripheral of the group, and so may be on the edge of the "chicken zone", with different influences at play.

It has been suggested that during the Late Iron Age, religious sites such as these were where coins were minted (Delestrée and Delplace 1986, 19; Haselgrove 2007, 501). For "tribal states" defining themselves around a group rather than a geographic point, such as a city, such sites would be ideal for this sort of centralised activity, and would have served as a geographic anchor for such a group (Collis 2007, 524-525).

This would explain the high volume of coins and some of the variation between the sites. A site might be expected to have a large proportion of the coins minted there, plus those of any of the more important sites with which it was associated. The huge number of coins from Digeon may reflect a recovery bias rather than the status of the site, but it does appear to be a site of great importance for the chicken coins. The dominance of the possibly prototypical version of these coins, type DT 511, suggests that it may have been where they were minted, and possibly the original local source of this image.

A look at the list of types in **Table 8.1** suggests possible local issues at the other sites, and highlights the importance of type DT 511, even if it was not the first. Fesques lacks any strong contender, with the possible exception of type DT 512, a smaller variation of the type. That both are often listed generically as "Bracquemont type" makes it difficult to explore this particular deviation further.

Bois l'Abbé would appear to be the home of type DT 517, with only the Bracquemont types making an appearance alongside it. Le Camp Rouge is likely where type DT 516 was minted, and possibly types DT 514 and DT 515, although they may represent other religious sites not included here. The coin catalogues of Vendeuil-Caply contained only type DT 509, so of these sites it is the only likely mint. It appears that there may be a difference based on the river valleys, with Digeon, Fesques, and Bois l'Abbe all being along the Bresle River, and le Camp Rouge and Vendeuil-Caply being along the

Somme's tributaries.

This explains where the coins were found and their potential minting sites, but the question of when they were minted remains. Unfortunately, the Western zone coinage is difficult to date (Haselgrove 1999, 160). They appear to fall into Haselgrove's Stage 3 (125-60 BC) or 4 (60-20 BC), with Stage 4 being the most likely. Delestrée has dated them to after the Gallic War (Delestrée 1980, 47), with the provenanced coins from Fesques coming from buildings dating to the second half of the 1st century BC (Delestée 1997, 285), but he has at least once suggested they may have been in circulation before the Roman conflict was resolved (Delestrée and Delplace 1986, 19). Haselgrove has noted that it is particularly difficult to determine which changes in this region were due to the social changes during the war versus those that came after (Haselgrove 1999, 149). A mid to late 1st century BC date for these coins appears to be as close as it is possible to estimate for now.

The situation in Britain is quite different, with only a single chicken-human hybrid coin type, type ABC 737, the Chichester 'cock bronze' (see 4.1.2). It has been examined in most detail by Cottam (1999), who determined that minor variations suggested at least three minting events potentially resulting in the creation of hundreds of thousands of coins. They are thought to have been copied from the Gaulish coins, possibly more than once, with early examples being influenced by types DT 511 and DT 509 (Cottam 1999, 10) and some later ones seemingly copying elements of types DT 517 and DT 518 (Cottam 1999, 12).

Figure 8.7 - British cock bronze (find 45, image copyright Oxford University & The Portable Antiquities Scheme).

The images on the coin are more stylised and abstract than many of the Gaulish examples (**Figure 8.7**), with a human head wearing some kind of helmet or headdress on the obverse and a chicken with a human face on its stomach on the reverse. Here the face appears to be bearded, with the line of feathers merging into a beard towards the front of the bird.

The exact ancestry of the British coin is difficult to determine, but it is clearly related to the Gaulish examples and can be ultimately traced back to the theoretical prototype DT 511. Without the intervention of the British Channel, it would most likely have been classified as another, more stylised Bracquemont derivative.

The distribution pattern of the Chichester "cock bronze" coins is very different from the Gaulish coins, however, made up of 65 individual coins found across southeast Britain, albeit with a heavier concentration around Chichester, rather than a few sites with large deposits. None of the known examples came from a secure context, and so it is difficult to discuss them as anything but points on a map.

Despite the presence of a number of religious sites near Chichester, including Hayling Island (Briggs *et al.* 1993) and Westhamptnett (Fitzpatrick 1997), both in the area of highest concentration of these finds, none of the coins have been unambiguously recovered from within their confines, and certainly not in high numbers. While the primary structures on these sites tend to be poor in finds, they have produced some

artefacts in the surrounding features (Hamilton 2007, 94). While the images on the coins are similar, it appears that they were not used in the same way as they were in Belgic Gaul.

As with the Gaulish coins, it is difficult to determine an exact date for the British examples. If they are derived from Gaulish coins, as seems likely, then they will naturally post-date them, but this is of little help due to the limited chronology available. A date of the late 1st century BC seems most likely, but Haselgrove (1999, 165) has noted that with the early use of struck bronze in that part of Gaul, it may be necessary to consider an earlier date for these coins as well.

The lack of coins at Hayling Island could help in this respect. The coin evidence from the temple suggests it was initially in use around 30-25BC, followed by a gap until the appearance of coins from just before the Claudian invasion (Creighton 2000, 195). It seems reasonable to suggest that the Chichester coins went out of use either before the temple was established or that they were minted and circulated between these periods of use.

Having summarised what these coins are and where they were found, it is time to discuss the iconography of the hybrid chicken and what it means. While there may be more to be learned from a purely numismatic perspective, it is beyond the scope of this study to delve any deeper into that arena. The question being asked here is, why a chicken, and why add a human face to it? Iron Age faunal assemblages from this region usually have, at best, only a small percentage of chicken bones (Hambleton 2008, 27), and so can offer little in the way of answers.

It is important to note that these coins represent the earliest depictions of chickens created in both of these regions. While some of the objects discussed above may have been known to the people in the areas where these coins were minted, they were all products of another culture. If they influenced the art of native craftspeople, it would have built upon pre-existing notions of what a chicken was.

It is first necessary to discuss issues of dating and what is going on in this part of world during this period. It is a time of great change, with a new and relatively sudden pressure from a powerful, expanding empire leading to war and eventual conquest, but

there is also an introduction of new goods and ideas, which, it must be said, may not all have been viewed as "Roman", but merely exotic (Haselgrove 2007, 512). Without accurate dating, it is difficult to determine exactly where these coins fit into this picture. If they were minted prior to Caesar's victory over the Belgic tribes, their meaning may be quite different than if this happened afterwards, or even during the later uprisings. And what of the British examples, which pre-date the coming of Roman bureaucracy? What effect did this difference in Roman relations have on how these images were viewed?

As Gaul appears to be the birthplace of this image, any investigation should begin there. This region does not appear to have any unusual relationship with chickens. The known animal bone assemblages are unremarkable, containing neither high numbers nor unusual specimens (Méniel 1986; 1997; 2008). They appear on no other iconography from this period, and the representation of chicken-related artefacts in this particular area during the Roman period is unremarkable. Whatever the source of the hybrid chicken, it does not appear to have left any sign of great affinity in the faunal record.

If these coins were being minted at religious sites, as discussed above, then an additional question is whether these objects took on a religious significance. As a geographic focus, a sanctuary may have played many roles, minting among them, which may not have been seen as religious in nature. The large deposits of coins on these sites are certainly suggestive of the objects' nature as a votive offering, but to what extent were they seen as religious themselves? It is also possible that these were undistributed coins, deposited either as waste, possibly as secondary deposits, but given such large numbers across a site this seems unlikely. The lack of this type of deposit on British temple sites suggests that either coins were not minted there or that was a difference in their use as votive objects at the time they were made.

The nature of the coins as an offering could have more than one explanation, as well. While they may have been of a propitiatory nature, sacrificing an object with a value attached to it in return for some blessing, even this could have variations. Pilgrims to one of these sites may have obtained a coin to use as an offering for a safe journey, or the coins may have served as a sort of token in lieu of another, more traditional offering. On a less individual scale, if the coins were collected from this site for use or

redistribution elsewhere, perhaps one or two were left behind from each batch as a form of offering or to create a symbolic link back to an important site.

Whatever the reasons why coins were deposited on these sites, the presence of many different types of coins suggests that the images they contained were of less importance than the objects as a whole. If so, they were not deposited because they were chickens, but because they were coins, and the search for meaning will have to move elsewhere.

The coin assemblages from these sites and across the region suggest a relatively insular community, with few of these types travelling very far and few coins from other groups making their way in (Delestrée 1997, 285; Haselgrove 1999, 160-161). Whether this was because these people turned inwards during or after the events relating to the coming of Julius Caesar or because they had an underdeveloped trading network making little use of coins between territories is uncertain. It does bring to mind Caesar's statement that some groups in this region refused to trade (*Seven Commentaries on the Gallic War* 2.15), but those groups, namely the Nervii, were found further north than this region.

With the coins as a whole having a strong local focus, it must be asked whether their iconography shares a similar introspection, with images selected because of some strong local cultural connection. It is time to take a closer look at the images themselves and see if they can reveal their meaning.

The use of the chicken, regardless of its hybridisation, is immediately striking, as it is not an animal commonly depicted on coins. While the inspiration may have come from Mediterranean coins as discussed above, there must have been some attribute associated with the bird to make it worth selecting. The chicken, which is most commonly assumed to be a male because of its features, is reared back with its wings spread. Although often unclear, on some examples it appears that its beak could be open, although the wattles and lower beak can be hard to differentiate (for example, see types DT 516 and DT 517 in **Figure 8.5**). Could it be an image of a cockerel stretching its wings and crowing? The cock's crow would certainly have been a strong mental association amongst people familiar with the bird. The depiction of wings on a chicken is unusual, so is their presence important, with the wings spread to ensure their visibility?

If the bird is crowing, it could indicate an association with dawn, the sun, or light in general. As some of the earliest literary records of chickens relate to crowing (Arnott 2007, 10) and solar imagery is fairly common on coins from this period (Creighton 2000, 42), an early depiction doing the same would not be unexpected. Suns or starburst symbols are quite common on coins of this era, and the addition of another solar symbol might not be implausible.

A closer look at some of the coin types adds further weight to the idea of sound being an important component of this image. Some of the coins have unusual curvilinear shapes in front of the chicken. This shape appears on type DT 511, but is often at or just off the edge of the coin. It is more pronounced on types DT 510, DT 516, and DT 517 (**Figure 8.5**).

On the obverse side of these coins, the human head also has an unusual set of curves in front of it, appearing to emerge from the person's mouth. On type DT 516 this shape is less abstract and takes the form of a lyre. Could the shape be a depiction of speech or song? If so, are the lines on the other coin types a more abstract representation, perhaps the breath that carries the sound or the sound itself? Similar symbols in front of a cockerel are suggestive of a shared importance of sound. Of course, these birds do not only crow at first light, and the sound may not suggest the arrival of dawn, but another event that makes them vocal; being victorious.

Images of cockerels are often associated with combativeness and victory, particularly in older works (for example, Bruneau 1965a). The stance of the figure in these images is not particularly evocative of a bird in combat, however, although type DT 510, where the chicken appears to be leaping with its feet extended in front of it, is an exception. Even if the image is not one of combat, it may still be meant to invoke images of it. Although organised cockfighting is almost impossible to detect archaeologically, people would still have been aware of the cockerel's natural behaviour and could have incorporated that into their cultural chicken associations. It could be the cockerel is not crowing for the dawn, but for combat.

Against the background of the Gallic War, this association becomes quite interesting, but its exact interpretation could vary depending on when exactly these coins were in use. The use of the cockerel as a martial symbol during a conflict needs little

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explanation, but how could it still be used in defeat?

Up to this point, the use of tribal names has been largely avoided because of the issues surrounding their use (Haselgrove 1999, 119; Isayev 2010, 224). However, it could now be informative to bring in one particular group to explore this association further. This region includes the land of the Bellovaci tribe, who fought against Caesar and later rebelled against Roman rule. They are often associated with these coins and probably produced the original, type DT 511.

The lack of precise dating or a deep understanding of the history of this region on such a small timescale limits interpretation, but enough of a general history is known to examine one possibility. The insular nature of the assemblages containing these coins could indicate a society under pressure from external forces. During the initial war with Caesar or during an anti-Roman uprising this makes sense, and the selection of an animal associated with combat is also appropriate. If the coins were minted after the Gallic War, as seems likely, then the image offers an intriguing new meaning.

In some modern cockfighting cultures, such as that of the Canary Islands, the way a bird loses is as important as if it wins (personal communication, Professor G. Marvin). A cockerel that loses well is more deserving of respect than one that "turns chicken". If the Bellovaci, or whatever group was responsible for minting these coins, shared that belief, then the image may be a proud symbol of a noble defeat. They may have been conquered by the Romans, but they went down fighting and could still raise their heads high. Such a sentiment could have formed a central conceit of this group's post-conquest identity and helped fuel later revolts. Of course, it is impossible to know for sure if this is what happened, but it is an intriguing possibility.

While this may explain why a chicken was used, it does not address why the human face appears on so many of these coins. While the image may not necessarily be a true hybrid creature, perhaps representing a person wearing a headdress of some sort, the result is still that of a human and chicken being linked together on a symbolic level.

Creighton (2000, 42-47) has suggested that some of the more abstract and unusual images and shapes on Iron Age coins were meant to capture the visual aspects of a trance state. While he only mentioned these coins in passing, he did discuss coins from

the same region that feature a human-headed horse as possibly trying to capture the same imagery (**Figure 8.8**). This raises the possibility that the chicken-man may be linked to some form of shamanistic practices, perhaps reinforcing a cultural connection to some aspect of the bird. Some people have reported synaesthesia, or seeing sounds, while under the effect of psychotropic drugs, which adds to the idea of sounds being depicted (Abel 1985, 111).

Figure 8.8 - type DT 318, a human-headed horse (Delestrée and Tache 2002, plate 15).

Even if it did have psychotropic influences, the image could also have had a more mundane source. Perhaps it represents an individual with some intimate connection with chickens. Maybe it references a similarity of name, or even a nickname. If so, then the meaning is lost to time. It may also represent a previously aniconic deity, taking on a more visible form in this new medium, who might later evolve into a local version of a god like Mercury. Whatever the case, too much of the cosmological context of the image is lost to be sure. If the curvilinear lines are meant to evoke sounds, then perhaps it is a reference to a famous oration or song. One can imagine a leader during this period speaking of a new dawn for his or her people.

In Britain, the image on the coin is too similar to have developed independently. This region is known to have had close contacts with the Belgic people, with even earlier gold coins making their way back and forth between them (Haselgrove 1999, 119; de Jersey 2006, 126-127). The image was adopted by people living in and around

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Chichester and the coins spread across much of southeast England. This wider distribution and lack of highly concentrated deposits at religious sites suggests a difference in culture, and possibly in meaning.

Without the pressure of the Romans, perhaps the British tribes were less insular, with base metal coinage taking a greater role in long distance trade. If coins were being minted at other, non-religious sites then they may have been less convenient to use as votive offerings. It is intriguing that none of these coins have yet been found at the Hayling Island temple, which is otherwise quite similar to the Belgic examples (Briggs et al. 1993, 41).

The image on the Chichester coin is more simplified than many of the Gaulish types, but is still recognizably the same image. This could indicate a shared deity, mythical figure, or culture hero; perhaps even a ruler associated with the chicken. However, if it was tied into a post-Caesar identity, then surely some of that would be lost amongst people who had had only minimal contact with these southern people.

While any number of Belgic elites may have crossed to Britain during this period, bringing their iconography with them, one figure in particular presents an intriguing possibility. Commius is famously linked with both of these regions on the assumption that the "Commios" appearing in inscriptions on British coins is either the same person or a relative. His personal history fits the ideas behind the source of the image quite well. He was familiar with the Roman world and later allied with the Bellovaci to fight against the Romans. Then, possibly to put a still useful but dangerous figure out of the way, he may have been set up as a client-king in the region of southern Britain where these coins were made (Creighton 2000, 60-64). If the Hayling Island temple does in fact represent a Commian dynastic cult, built either late in or soon after his reign (Creighton 2000, 192), then could the Chichester coins be an issue from earlier in his career, perhaps soon after his arrival from Gaul?

Regardless of how it arrived, it is not clear how much of the meaning behind the Gaulish image carried over. This region of England appears to have casually adopted objects and traditions from across northern Gaul (Hamilton 2007, 98). While the meaning may have remained intact, it could also have been adopted as a sign of kinship with the groups that invested more of their own culture into it. Whatever the case, it

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would surely have carried a positive association in order for it to be adopted.

With the arrival of Julius Caesar and the first steps in becoming a part of an increasingly multicultural Roman world, this was a time of great social and political change, with war, defeat, revolt, and eventual acceptance. Without being able to pinpoint exactly when in this process the coins were created, it is difficult to extract the history of the iconography. However, although they may have been influenced by coins from the far-flung south, these images were forged out of a sense of local identity, possibly after the initial defeat of these groups by Caesar's legions.

It is the connection between these people and the chicken, which otherwise appears to have held little importance in their society, that is behind this image, but without further evidence it is difficult to say what meaning the hybrid chicken had. It could have been an image of nobility in defeat, a representation of a god from a dreamstate, a reference to a local hero, or intended to recall a speech or song.

The relationship between the coins of Belgic Gaul and Britain is also obscured, but they share an obvious ancestry. Lacking the pressures of northern Gaul, the image may have taken on another meaning in Britain, and there are certainly differences in where they have been recovered. How much these distributions reflect underlying cultural variation or merely differences in metal detecting legality and reporting and excavation is unclear, but the lack of large temple deposits in Britain seems to be genuine.

8.2.3 The Cotswold cockerel coins

Although the coins described above are the most high profile, there is another series of coins from Britain that feature a chicken, albeit as a more minor element of decoration. These silver coins have a much tighter distribution around the Cotswolds, and are mainly represented by coin type ABC 2012 (see 4.1.3). The obverse of the coin features a human head with oddly stylised crescents representing either hair or helmet, and the reverse shows a triple-tailed horse, which is a common image on coins from across northwest Europe in the 2nd and 1st centuries BC, possibly following an artistic tradition stretching back to Phillip II of Macedonia (Creighton 2000, 26). Where this type differs is in the small icon appearing beneath the horse, which is quite often a wheel, either representing a chariot (Cottam *et al.* 2010, 48) or acting as a solar symbol (Webster

1986, 129; Kiernan 2007, 169). The Cotswold coins, however, have the head of a chicken in place of this, although it is not always easy to identify it as such. In fact, in later issues the symbol undergoes a bizarre transformation into a flower and then a cross (**Figure 8.9**, Cottam *et al.* 2010, 19).

Figure 8.9 - the evolution of the chicken head on the Cotswold coins from chicken to flower to cross (Cottam et al. *2010, figure 139).*

The horse is a powerful, regal animal, and could have been symbolic of a link between the ruler and the land over which they reigned (Creighton 2000, 22-24). For a chicken to appear alongside it suggests that a similar, if perhaps less pronounced, symbolism may have been responsible, possibly even influenced by the Chichester cock bronzes or indicating an alliance or other relationship between the two groups. The rapid evolution into other forms shows that this could have been a temporary thing, reflecting a change in the relationship with the more southern group or even simply moving on to other symbols when the cock bronzes went out of use.

While most of these coins did not travel far beyond their core area, a few outliers show interesting connections with other areas creating chicken coins. Two were found at Hayling Island (finds 270 and 271), suggesting that they may have post-dated the height of the Chichester cock bronze, although coins of precious metal may have simply had a greater longevity. More interesting is a coin found at the Bois l'Abbé temple in Eu (find 2209), but as that temple remained in use after the chicken coins were minted it could have been deposited some time later. The people of the Cotswolds, the Dobunni tribe, appear to have been "the middlemen of the Late Iron Age" (Trow 2002, 106), controlling access to many resources, and these outliers may reflect that.

This shows that there was some movement between these groups, it does not necessarily mean that the chicken head on the Cotswold coins was directly influenced by the cock

bronzes. It could have been an independent development drawing on the same or similar cultural beliefs towards the chicken. That it took the place of a solar symbol is suggestive, and it is possible that some of the choices in the colour of coins during this period were based on solar and lunar association (Creighton 2000, 37, 41-42). If the chicken was selected due to a link with the sun through its morning crowing, it seems odd that it would appear on silver coin, which evokes a lunar connection.

8.3 The early Roman chicken explosion

It is in the early Roman period that objects of chicken-related material culture first appear in large numbers in both Britain and Gaul, and that seems to happen from quite an early date. While this may indicate an adoption of a Roman affinity for chickens, it could also have built upon a less evident set of native beliefs. It is true that this new culture is more archaeologically visible than what came before (Haselgrove 2002, 54), and that may obscure continuity more than highlight it.

With Roman influence came a dramatic rise in the number of chicken bones found on site (Grant 2004, 377; Maltby 2017, 201-202). Even prior to official Roman rule, this trend was seen on sites with higher amounts of luxury goods (Grant 2004, 372). Regardless of any pre-existing idea of what a chicken was, this increased presence, both as food and as a living creature, will certainly have had an effect on their place in the mental landscape of the emerging Gallo-Roman and Romano-British cultures, which would in turn have been expressed through their material culture. These new animals, objects, and ideas would not necessarily have been viewed as "Roman", but could have rather been a slow cascade that spread between groups through routine trade and social engagement, coincident with inclusion in a wider network of trade and cultural exchange. The increasingly cosmopolitan world of Roman Britain also added a level of complexity, with the possibility that an artefact may not have been made by a Briton for a Roman, but by a Gaul for a North African (Johns 2003a, 21).

The adoption and incorporation of the chicken would have varied in different regions and with different groups within and between those regions. Some groups may have initially resisted and shunned change (Trow 2002, 104), but there is little sign of it in this data, with chicken-related objects being fairly ubiquitous across both Britain and

Gaul. The lack of precise chronology for this period could hide a change that took place over several generations, but it appears to have happened quite soon after the start of Roman rule.

The southernmost region of Gaul would have been quite familiar with the Roman world, and vice versa, by the time it became part of what would become the Empire, with a long history of Greek and Roman contact (Rivet 1988, 15-17). The rest of Gaul would have had less direct Roman influence until more recently, but it was already socially complex and may have been compatible with the Roman way of life (Drinkwater 1983, 10-11).   This was enhanced by the policies of Augustus (27BC – AD14), which encouraged the young elite to embrace more Roman ideas and tied these regions, the north in particular, closer to the rest of the Roman world (Drinkwater 1983, 18-22; Woolf 1998, 33). The large military presence during these early decades, there to protect Rome's new territory from both Germans and the newly "Roman" Gauls, would also have had a significant impact (Woolf 1998, 32). Regardless, regional differences between the north and south remained, showing that Roman Gaul was not a wholly uniform province, but instead evolved from a variety of pre-Roman cultures (Woolf 1998, 19).

Gaul was also influenced by a more direct controlling interest by the Imperial family during these early decades of Roman rule (Drinkwater 1983, 95), and it has even been suggested that the early success of the samian ware industry was due to their ownership of the workshops (Fulford 2013, 12). The patron-client relationships that emerged in this environment would have been familiar to the Gauls (Derks 1998, 36). This attention would almost certainly have caused those in favour, or seeking to be in favour, to be more active in embracing and adapting aspects of this new culture (Woolf 1998, 33, 40). Those lower on the social ladder may have emulated them, whether by choice or subconscious acculturation, or been similarly influenced by the heavy presence of the military, which included some members of their own or neighbouring societies, during the first century or so after the conquest (Drinkwater 1983, 123). Creolization studies show that this spread of ideas would not have been a one-way process of uncritical acceptance of Roman culture, but a slow merging of ideas into something new and unique (Webster 2001).

While this was happening in Gaul, many of these new ideas and the emerging Gallo-Roman culture would have bled across the Channel into Britain. Roman influence, whether direct or indirect, was understandably a very recent thing in what was at the time the very edge of the known world (Creighton 2000, 127; King 2002, 236). The regions with more of a Roman, or, in their eyes, possibly Gallic, influence show evidence of increased wine consumption and a more "Roman" diet, which included chickens (Haselgrove 2002, 53). The level of influence varied, with the southeast, where the cock bronzes displayed a connection with Belgic Gaul, having a very Gallic diet, while East Anglia appears more insular (Trow 2002, 104-107). The Roman military would have had a strong influence in those areas where it was present, as well.

8.3.1 The artefacts

Regardless of the differences within and between Britain and Gaul, both experienced the same sudden, in archaeological terms, increase in chicken-related material culture. The limited Iron Age evidence does suggest chickens had a cultural meaning of some sort, but this came late enough that some "Roman" influence is quite possible. It is not clear how much of this meaning came from the earlier Iron Age, nor how much of the new Gallo-Roman and Romano-British beliefs built upon that of the Late Iron Age. The increased movement, whether military, bureaucratic, or economic, of the Roman period will have blurred this development at the local level, but that chickens had a widespread and early importance is quite evident.

The generally poor dating of this collection makes it somewhat difficult to trace this evolution, but enough exists to examine the broad trends of the earlier Roman period. The mention of chickens and eggs in Vindolanda tablets dating to around AD100 (see 4.1.9) show their importance as food even at the Empire's far northern border because of military demands, although these reports seem to limit their consumption to the more important members of the local military. One (find 639) even mentions the development of a piece of tableware, namely the eggcup, which is linked to the species. The eggs of other species may be eaten in the same way, but only chickens would provide them regularly.

It is the non-dietary material culture that offers the most evidence of what meaning

chickens had, however. Most of these were included in this study because they depicted chickens in some way or another. All of the major find types that do so, with the exception of coins, which peaked earlier in a far more regional manner, appear during this period. Were they simply a copied element of someone else's culture, devoid of any deeper meaning whatsoever? Were the chickens merely decorative, included as an interesting new, or at least newly abundant, species? Were they symbolic, either of some higher concept or affiliation?

The style of art used in these depictions, discussed in very simple terms here, can be of some help in exploring these questions. The coins discussed above show native adaptation of a foreign design, and that continues into the Roman period, but these "native-Roman" styles occur alongside a more Classical, traditionally Roman style. The continuing use of these "provincial" styles is not simply from a lack of technical ability, but a deliberate choice by the artists and the audience they catered to (Johns 2003a, 12).

In Iron Age art, zoomorphic shapes tend to be quite rare, and suggest an influence from more "Roman" sources (Hattatt 1982, 160). Both the Reinheim brooch and Iron Age coins discussed above appear to have some Classical ancestry, and animal forms are quite common in Roman art, so at the very least, the Roman period saw an increased appreciation or demand for such depictions, or possibly the weakening or ultimate destruction of a taboo against them. The art of the Roman period is varied, with some artefact types being more uniform than others (Crummy and Eckardt 2003, 44). For example, the artwork appearing on samian ware pottery and on rings is quite Roman (Henig 1998, 64), while ceramic figurines from Gallic workshops show a mixture of native and Roman influences, suggesting artists were free to express their own cultural identity in this changing world (Camuset-le-Porzou 1984, 16). Carved stone and metallic figurines from both provinces show a wide variability in styles. Mosaics, while almost always drawing on Greek and Roman sources where anthropomorphic figures appear (Smith 1977, 154), show a similar variety in how these images are interpreted onto the media. Whatever the source of chicken imagery, it appears to have been something that was not exclusive to a particular style and was easily adapted into others.

It is also worth considering the effect on spreading the message behind the chicken each

of these artefacts had. As discussed in earlier chapters, these could be summarised as high- or low-impact. A high impact object is more unique, owned by an important person, or monumental; something that will, either by its own merit or that of its associations, have an individually strong influence on those who encounter it. A low-impact object is more common, possibly mass-produced, and more likely to be encountered on a regular basis; something that has smaller individual influence, but could, by abundance or collective association with a certain group, have a much larger impact on society. The impact may be limited, such as the ring-impressed seal of a government official, which might only be seen by a small section of society, but at some degree the notion of what the chicken means will spread beyond to the wider culture.

It is not only the treatment of objects by people in the past that affects their impact, as historically archaeologists have had a tendency to focus on the bigger, richer, more elite-affiliated artefacts. These objects often possess a greater visibility due to the circumstances of their recovery or their material, size, or construction, which often appeal to the general public. It has also been suggested that researchers feel they have more in common with the higher class members of past societies than the common folk, and can more easily empathise with them (Hingley 2005, 92). Thus, it is necessary to always consider that an object may not have had the importance modern interpretations have given it.

Of course, it is not always possible to identify what kind of real impact an object would have, particularly when it is devoid of context, as are many in this study. The Reinheim brooch, a unique object decorated with an unusual material (coral) and interred in a wealthy burial, seems to be a high-impact artefact, but apparently had little effect on local material culture, either because it was too special for casual replication or because of limited exposure to the population. Likewise, a particular type of figurine, such as the large enamelled ones, may seem unremarkable now and fit into the low-impact category, but if they were all gifts given to favoured members of a particular cult, they may have been more individually important than they appear. The Panathenaic amphorae described above are a more easily identifiable example of this kind of artefact.

Closely linked to this is whether an object is primarily public or private, which is, again,

often difficult to determine without proper contextual information. A carved piece of stone is probably quite public, but what about a figurine? As part of a household shrine, it would probably be more private, but what if it was a decorative item on open display in one of the more public parts of a house? What of a mosaic in a dining room? It is only accessible to those welcomed into the home, but it is more visible to those outside the household than something kept in the more purely private areas. With most of these objects, it is not possible to identify how publicly exposed it was.

The interplay of high- or low-impact and public or private could have a great effect on how much a depiction of a chicken helped spread the idea of the chicken. Public objects would naturally be quite good at doing this, but private objects show something else entirely. A high-impact but very private artefact, like an expensive statue or figurine in a private shrine, could have done little to spread an idea, but would instead show the impact of the idea being spread by other means. Low-impact private objects would be even more suggestive of an idea that has already been widely adopted. An example might be figurines in household shrines or displayed in kitchens or other private areas of the home. Unfortunately, this level of detail is lacking from most of this dataset, but the small size of most of them suggests personal ownership and a more private trend.

8.3.2 Evolution of style and form

Regardless of the mechanism, chicken imagery did spread across Britain and Gaul quite early in the Roman period. One of the earliest and most time sensitive types of object bearing the image of a chicken to appear were lamps (see 4.8 and 6.4). Lamps were common and mass-produced in Italy and North Africa (Potter 1987, 163-164; Raven 1983, 96) and were fairly common in southern Gaul, where local versions were being made, probably copied from Italian examples (Martin 1974, 135; Rivet 2004, 233). Two pottery workshops that also produced lamps and dating to the 1st century AD have been identified at Fos-sur-Mer (Bouches-du-Rhône) (Rivet 2004) and Montans (Tarn) (Martin 1974, 135). Lamps become less common to the north, with only three ceramic examples depicting chickens found in Britain. Despite an early spike in lamp use, perhaps being seen as a very Roman item, their numbers appear to go into decline after the 1st century AD, possibly due to a lack of necessity, problems with obtaining oil, or a

change in the objects' popularity (Eckardt 2002, 58-60).

The fact that these lamps, or least some of them, and their decoration were copied, apparently in large numbers, raises the question of whether the inclusion of chicken imagery on them had any meaning. Lamp imagery was homogeneous across the Empire (Eckardt 2002, 132), and the most common image seen in this collection, that of a chicken with what appears to be a palm leaf behind it, was a popular one (Rivet 2004, 243), with a contemporary example in the British Museum's collection coming from as far away as Egypt (British Museum number 1925,1120.54). Palm leaves and chickens were depicted earlier on silver coins from Athens (British Museum 1908,1201.4) minted in about 146BC, suggesting that this association may have a great antiquity, but whether whatever meaning this carried was copied along with the image is not clear. The fact that the palm leaf motif seems to fade away after this suggests not, but this may have something to do with a lack of familiarity with the plant.

In a society with limited artificial light, oil lamps would have been quite a significant development, and it would seem feasible that they would assume a symbolic importance (Eckardt 2002, 16, 27). The images they carried, however, do not appear to have played a significant role in this (Eckardt 2002, 132). The differences between the north and south may be explained by variations in how light was used, but where chicken imagery is concerned, it may have more to do with timing. The chicken images of the south, which appear to have been popular on lamps in the 1st century AD, may have simply been out of fashion by the time lamps were in use in the rest of Gaul and Britain.

Samian ware pottery, a Gallic evolution of the Arretine pottery from Tuscany (Webster 1996, 1), was another very early type of native-produced object to include depictions of chickens. Like the lamps, samian ware was based on an Italian version, with imagery influenced by metal bowls of Greek design (Hingley 2005, 100), again raising the issue of whether it was a meaning-infused symbol or just simple decoration. The relatively restricted range of art hints that the artists may have been working from a pattern book (Webster and Webster 2013, 348). However, the resulting images and motifs, created by local craftsmen based on external influences, could be evidence of a new Gallo-Roman identity (Hingley 2005, 101). It has even been suggested that some of the earliest examples helped influence the designs of some of the latest coins of the Iron Age

(Hingley 2005, 111).

Although the number of these pots from France and Belgium (see 6.5) was smaller than from Britain (see 4.4), as discussed above, this is almost certainly due to differences in publication methodology rather than a genuine lack of pottery. However, there may have been different distribution methods in different regions, and it has been suggested that the industry was under state control in more northern areas (Fulford 2013, 12-16). To produce fineware pottery of this type requires a particular type of clay, and production sites relocated to new sources over time to follow the market, which appears to have been Britain and other provinces in the west, largely favouring military regions until it went out of use in about the 3rd century AD (Johns 1977, 10; Drinkwater 1983, 187-188).
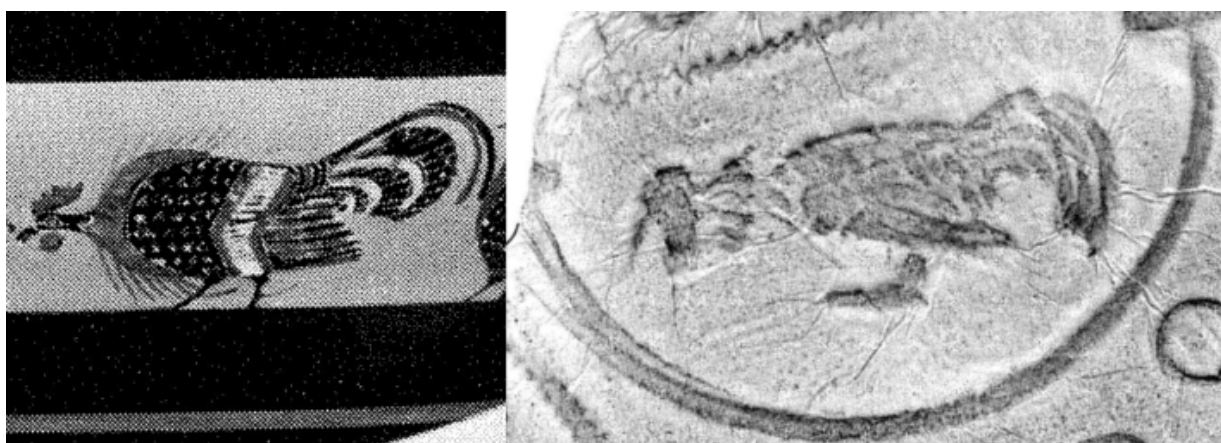
Figure 8.10 - comparison of crouched chicken on Attic pottery, left (Boardman 1974, plate 109) and samian ware pottery, right (find 481, Mills 2011, figure 8).

The chicken images appearing on samian ware vary in composition, but tend to be fairly limited in form and do not interact with the other figures on the pot. They are relatively detailed, however, often formed of several components, which define the shape of the bird quite well. It is not uncommon for the bird to be depicted in an aggressive, crouched stance, which was also fairly common on older Attic pottery (**Figure 8.10**). While this could be a copied bit of decoration, the level of detail, highlighting the feathers rather than simply offering a silhouette as with some other animals, does suggest a certain care in creating the stamp, and any culture that keeps chickens would be familiar with the cockerel's aggressive behaviour. It is worth noting that, despite this

stance appearing quite often, very few of these depictions show chickens facing each other in what might be interpreted as a cockfight.

Figurines, the most ubiquitous find type in this collection (see 4.2 and 6.2), make an appearance at the advent of the Roman period and appear to last until the end, but the lack of good dating makes them less useful for establishing a timeline than their abundance might suggest. The ceramic figurines are more informative than the metal ones in this regard, being dated to the first two centuries AD by their presence at some of the workshops that created them (Beck 1993). They were made from the same clay as pottery, and the workshops are located in the same region of Central Gaul (see 6.2.1, Higgens 1976, 105). Because of this, the relatively small number of ceramic figurines in Britain were probably imported, but at least one was found in circumstances suggesting it was manufactured on site in the late 2nd or early 3rd century AD (find 1190, see 4.2.1).

The ceramic figurines, manufactured of both red and white clay, are noteworthy in one other respect. Alone among all the find types, they often depict females of the species, although there is some difficulty in positively identifying these birds as chickens (see 7.3.1.1). Depictions of female deities in clay are also quite common (Bémont and Jeanlin 1993, 131), especially in comparison to metal figurines. It appears that this particular medium is more commonly affiliated with female depictions in general, and it is a strong suggestion that the male and female of the species had some degree of separation when it came to meaning that does not come across in the rest of the assemblage.

The metal figurines, usually made of bronze, are far more variable than the probably mass-produced ceramic ones. Of the objects presented so far, they are the first to show a strong sense of individuality and both native and "Roman" expression. They display a remarkable range in style and sophistication, indicating there was a lack of artistic restriction and a broad appeal for these objects. Some were crude and cheap, while others were quite naturalistic and probably significantly more expensive. Truly these were chickens meant for everyone.

Figure 8.11 - comparison of the more stylised (left, find 1181, Pearce 2015, figure 8) and the more naturalistic "Roman" styles (right, find 2448, Monnier 1990, 25).

One of the most notable examples of the native figurines is the type found recently in a child's grave in Cirencester. This object is not unique (see 4.2.1 and 6.2.1), but the known examples are similar enough to have come from the same workshop. Despite being more stylised and simplistic than the more "Roman" figurines (**Figure 8.11**), they are quite large at about 125mm in height and formed of multiple components. Details were then picked out in enamel, an art form Britain was known for, possibly as a replacement for coral (Butcher 1976, 43; Johns 2003a, 18-19; Künzl 2012, 10). These were objects of quite complex construction and would have been a significant investment. Quite clearly, the craftsmanship of these artefacts was not reliant on a Roman style to be effective. Outside of Britain, the known examples come from sites with a high military presence, where they may have travelled with military or administrative personnel, possibly as souvenirs from postings such as Hadrian's Wall (Künzl 2012, 18).

As with the previous find types, figurines of chickens have a long pedigree, appearing on earlier Greek and Egyptian sites, with some examples possibly being imported (Camuset-le Porzou 1984, 15). In Roman times, metal figurines became more common than the previously more popular ceramic variety, but this could be linked to the availability of an appropriate clay source, which may be the case in Britain, or simply due to bronze being cheaper and more accessible than previously (Higgens 1976, 105). Naturally, even less expensive versions could have been made of perishable materials, like wood.

The purpose of these figurines, which were clearly widespread across both Britain and Gaul and on all site types, is sadly more difficult to divine, as most are lacking in contextual detail. They could have been votive objects offered in lieu of live animals (Webster 1986, 126), part of a *lararium* or household shrine (MacGregor 1978, 38), protective objects in life or death (Talvas 2007, 328), toys (Camuset-le Porzou 1984, 15), or even simply decorative objects. They may have served all of these purposes.

So far all of the objects discussed have been standalone artefacts, but people were also adopting chickens as an element of their personal adornment, usually in the form of jewellery. This very personal type of object often display a blending of native and Roman cultures (Johns 2003a, 19). In Britain, brooches were the most common piece of jewellery to depict chickens (see 4.3), which is remarkably different from Gaul, where they were more of a rarity (see 6.9). This is the most visible difference between the two regions, and largely hinges on the distribution of a single type of brooch.

While flat brooches in the shape of chickens are scattered throughout both Britain and Gaul, it is the sitting chicken brooch (see 4.3.1) that is distinctive. This stylised, enamelled, three-dimensional plate brooch is remarkably similar to the enamelled figurines described above, and some relationship between them seems likely, even if that is just a shared artistic tradition.

These enamelled brooches seem to come into use during the 2nd century AD, after a few generations of influence from the wider world of the Roman era. Subsequently, there seems to be a general decline in the use of brooches in Britain (Hattatt 1982, 35; Mackreth 2011, 236). The sitting chicken brooches are uniquely British, but are found across the entire region, even beyond the frontier into Scotland. How an object can be

so common and yet not pass beyond the British shores to other parts of the Empire during such a cosmopolitan period is an intriguing question. It suggests a very strong local connection to, if not Britain, then to something entirely contained within Britain. The use of enamel, a material particularly used in Britain and the northern parts of Gaul, and the similarity of the uniquely British enamelled dragonesque brooches (Hattatt 1982, 158; Künzl 2012, 11), strengthens this connection. The implications of this and whether they had any religious connotations are more fully discussed below.

Rings or their intaglios were the other piece of jewellery that commonly depicted chickens, but they were more uniformly present across Britain and Gaul than the brooches (see 4.5 and 6.6). These signet rings were in use throughout this early period, becoming less common in the 3rd century AD (Henig 1974a, 29). Although Britain has more recorded examples, it has been noted that the British material tends to be better recorded than the European, largely because they are less common and receive more attention (Henig 1974a, 55).

What makes rings particularly useful is their individuality. Their primary purpose was to create a seal and serve as a marker of identity, which meant that they were individually unique and closely tied to personal identity (Henig 1974a, 24-27). At the most basic level, to claim an association with chickens at such an intimate level shows they had a positive image, but many of these images contain other figures or objects and offer a wealth of other symbolic associations to explore.

As with the figurines, rings were created in a variety of materials catering to different classes and budgets. In general, those made of more expensive materials tended to be found on sites with a closer relationship with the Roman administration, like York or Colchester, while more inexpensive materials are common on more "native" sites like Silchester (Henig 1974a, 61-62). As mentioned previously, the artistic style on these artefacts is traditionally Roman, so it seems that in this instance the style, if not the meaning, flowed down from a few high-impact rings belonging to the new elite to the general population of those important enough to require such a device.

Hairpins were the final common piece of personal adornment to feature depictions of chickens, although the species is not always confidently identified (see 4.7 and 5.8). The dating of these objects is problematic, which, combined with their relatively small

numbers, makes them less useful than the previous find types. They appear to have been more popular in the later Roman period, but some, such as a stylised bronze pin from York (find 441) have been found in 1st or 2nd century AD contexts (Cool *et al.* 1995, 1543). However, as hairpins were used in the styling of women's hair (see Stephens 2008 for details of how they were used and examples), they show that chicken imagery was appropriate for females.

So far the artefacts discussed have been small and portable, and could conceivably have travelled quite far from their point of origin, as seems to be the case with samian ware and ceramic figurines found in Britain. Sculptures and mosaics, the remaining major contributors of chicken imagery, are stationary by nature, although some have since been moved from their initial point of construction. These large, expensive objects would have had high-impact, but were not necessarily very visible, especially in the case of mosaics.

Public sculpture could have been instrumental in spreading the theme of chickens in art, but the dateable examples tend to be from the 2nd and 3rd centuries AD, and the depictions were probably more a reflection of existing trends rather than setting new ones. Carved stone was rare in these regions during the Iron Age, and earlier versions may have followed a native trend of wooden sculpture (McGowen 2010, 1). These objects, although produced by a few individuals or cults, were consumed by being viewed, worshipped at, or having offerings left at by larger groups who may not have owned chicken-themed objects themselves.

There were more examples of sculpture from France and Belgium (see 6.3) than Britain (see 4.6), which may be expected due to the larger area, but there also appears to be more variety in the Gallic material, which could reflect a different attitude towards the medium or better availability. As these depictions are overwhelmingly religious in nature, they will be discussed with other aspects of religion below. It is also worth noting that many of the sculptures are concentrated in areas with a high military presence, such as eastern Gaul and a particularly noticeable line along Hadrian's Wall in Britain.

Carrera marble was imported for some sculptures, such as the chicken found at Bradwell villa (find 300), even into the 4th century AD (Henig 1993b, 98), but many

appear to be carved from local stone. The styles vary significantly, with some, like the fragmented statue of Mercury from Uley, Gloucestershire (find 307), called a masterpiece of Romano-British sculpture by Henig (1993b, 89), having clear Classical roots. Others, like a relief of Mercury from York (find 465) or some of the depictions of Mercury and goddesses (for example, finds 93 and 1348), are in more of a native style, being somewhat less detailed and having unusual proportions.

Mosaics depicting chickens were rare in both regions (see 4.10 and 6.10). Three of the British examples are so similar that they may have all been made by the same workshop in the Cotswolds, and only three are known from all of France, so it was not a common theme for this particular medium. The remaining British example, the mosaic from the Brading villa on the Isle of Wight, is more unusual, and will be discussed further below.

Since both Britain and Gaul have such an abundance of chicken-related objects, it seems unusual for them to be lacking from this particular type of art. A catalogue of North African mosaics (Dunbabin 1978) contained nine examples that included images of chickens, showing they were present in other regions, even if not in overwhelming numbers. The reason for this could be a matter of source material, with many scenes in mosaics coming from Classical mythology (Smith 1977, 154), in which chickens play little part. The animals that appear on the edges of mosaics or in isolated squares also appear to be wild rather than domestic, which may be another factor.

Other types of artefacts related to chickens were found in smaller numbers, but for the most part they add little to this timeline, and will only be discussed as necessary. One final particular find type is worth a mention, however. These are the seal box lids found in Britain (see 4.11), the exact function of which is unknown. They may have held important documents and have been used as a sign of literacy in the regions where they are found. Derks and Roymans (2002) have examined them in some detail in the region of the Batavi tribe, a group situated on the border of Belgic Gaul and Germania, specifically exploring the idea of different aspects of Roman culture may be adopted while others were not. In the case of the Batavi, literacy was important for communication with distant relatives, while agricultural aspects were not.

However, the only seal boxes with images of chickens were the British ones, which were too distant to be considered as part of the same tribal traditions. The association of

the chicken with literacy does harken back to the Etruscan inkwell mentioned above, and brings to mind the role of Mercury as the inventor of writing (Maier 1996, 132). If there was a link between chickens and literacy, transferred through their association with Mercury, more images of this type would be expected, however, and in this case the chicken was probably merely decorative.

Roman coins offer only a limited contribution to this group. As discussed previously (see 4.1.4), coins are seldom described in detail in archaeological reports, and there could be significantly more examples than those recorded here, but chickens appear to be poorly represented in Roman coin imagery. The two types catalogued in *Roman Imperial Coinage* include Mercury, and will be discussed with him below.

A few coins in other parts of the Roman world included chickens, but only in minor ways. Some coins of Juno Sospita, minted by the monnier L. Pappius in 79BC (British Museum number 2002,0102.3576), used chickens as control marks. A few 3rd century coins from the Eastern provinces included chickens in larger scenes. The earliest is a coin of Elagabalus minted in Tomis in Romania (British Museum number 1868,0405.9) and is the most classical, with a depiction of Mercury with a chicken at his feet. The other images are more complex. A bronze coin of Phillip I and Phillip II, minted in Damascus, Syria in AD244-249 (British Museum numbers G.4147 and 1908,0110.2388) has what appears to be chickens emerging from cages held aloft by female figures standing above a shrine of Tyche. Phillip I's precursor, Gordion III (AD238-244) appears on a coin from Trabzon, Turkey (British Museum number 1872,0709.129), which features on the reverse a mounted figure in front of a column, upon which perches a chicken beneath a star.

What particularly sets coins apart, however, is that the people using coins had no choice in the decoration. The images were selected at a much higher level of society, often far removed from where they were consumed. A particular coin was used because it was the appropriate coin, regardless of the images it contained. They represent more of an official version of a culture rather than the individuals who interact with it.

What stands out about this collection is that they are predominantly small, personal objects. Most of the larger depictions are religious sculptures and will be seen to represent cults of individual gods. The other large depictions, the mosaics, are still

relatively private objects. Even more notable is the lack of chickens on coins in this period, particularly after their popularity in the pre-Roman Mediterranean. This shows that whatever meaning chickens had, it was not associated with the state, but rather a something expressed on a more personal level.

8.3.3 An exploration of meaning

The preceding section shows how chicken imagery spread across the emerging cultures of Roman Britain and Gaul, but it is not enough to merely catalogue these artefacts. It is the meaning behind them and what it reveals about these cultures that is significant. The sheer number of chicken-related objects in this collection shows that they were important, but why? Of course they were a source of food, but so were other species that appear with less frequency, and horses, an animal even more commonly depicted, which, although still consumed, were primarily used for non-dietary purposes. There must have been more to it than a simple celebration of one's dinner. To determine what that was will require a closer look at the themes explored in Chapters 5 and 7 and an examination of how they interact.

It has been mentioned that most of these artefacts were easily portable and could have travelled a significant distance before deposition. Finds being brought in from elsewhere may not reflect native ideas, although local artists and craftspeople may imitate the styles and themes they introduce, as discussed with the Iron Age coins above. Different find types and their decoration have different levels of inherent meaning that may or may not have travelled with them. Samian ware pottery and lamps, for example, appear to have had decoration that was largely devoid of deep symbolism, at least as far as the use of the object was concerned. The appearance of chickens on such objects shows a cultural affinity for the animal, but the decoration probably had less to do with the decision to obtain it than it would for other find types. A figurine, in comparison, was doubtless selected by its owner specifically for what it depicted, possibly reflecting a more practical purpose for its use. For example, it may have served as an offering or signified a personal preference related to an individual's religious beliefs, profession, or ascetics.

Most of the artefacts in this study incorporated images of single chickens, with nothing

sharing the scene with them (see 5.3.1 and 7.3.1). For these items, it leaves only the bird itself and the type of object, and how it was used and viewed, as clues to their meaning. For the most part, the chickens appear to be male, which follows the artistic pattern from ancient Greece (Arnott 2007, 10), although with most images lacking the spur that more clearly indicates a male, it could simply be that male characteristics were more expressive of chickenness and therefore depicted regardless of sex. As discussed in previous chapters, these are also the characteristics that make it easier to identify the bird as a chicken in the first place, giving a modern bias on top of whatever there was when the images were created. The presence of a few more obviously female chickens, as in the ceramic figurines discussed above, shows at least some degree of separation when it came to depicting them, however. The question remains as to whether the majority of chickens being depicted were cockerels or if "cockerel" was simply the default image of a chicken. Unfortunately, there is simply not enough information to answer this question, although the general lack of spurs is intriguing, and suggests that the other cockerel traits were seen as generically "chicken".

The other physical details, such as the shape, colour, and the chicken's deportment, which could offer some information on the appearance of the living birds, are also disappointingly lacking. Of these characteristics, only the stance of the chicken is very revealing (see 5.3.1.3 and 7.3.1.3), with images of birds in a crouched, combative position apparently seeking to capture the cockerel's aggressive nature.

Many of the themes expressed through associated imagery introduced during this period relate to Roman and Greek religion and mythology, but some are more abstract.

The chicken perched on a column, seen on the Attic Panathenaic amphorae centuries before, is one such theme. Although less common, and completely lacking in the British data, this theme continued beyond the Roman period, when it is sustained in Christian art, such as the sarcophagus of the holy innocents in Saint-Maximin-la-Sainte-Baume (Var) (find 1227). The other French examples (see 7.3.6) are carved onto a stone table of unknown provenance (find 2506) and on samian ware (finds 1947 and 2297). The meaning remains a mystery, but these could merely be copying an established Classical trend without further embellishment.

Figure 8.12 - samian ware figure of a chicken on a column (Oswald 1936, plate XLVII).

Although not seen on any recorded examples, Oswald's catalogue of samian ware figures (1936, number 980) has a more unusual variation of this image (**Figure 8.12**). Here two figures, one of which has been cut off, stand on either side of a column with a ring on top of it, on which perches a chicken. Floating to one side is what appears to be a crown or wreath, which, if intended to be laurels, would neatly link back to the competitive aspect of the original Greek image.

Palm leaves, seen primarily on lamps but occasionally with other floral decoration on sculptures and once on a piece of graffiti (see 5.3.5 and 7.3.5), are another imported theme which could have a related meaning. They appear without chickens in Roman scenes of the arena as a reward for the victor (Bruneau 1965a, 112), and, when combined with the natural combativeness of the cockerel, it seems a natural symbol of victory (Bruneau 1965a, 114; Rivet 2003, 19; 2004, 243). Cumont (1966, 398) mentions a table with an image of Cupids offering a palm leaf and crown to the victor of a cockfight, but sadly provided no further details. A palm leaf and a chicken appear, along with an owl perched on an amphora, on the reverse of one of the mid-2nd century BC Athenian coins mentioned above, but Callisen suggested a much earlier origin on Minoan Crete, with chickens perched atop palm trees that later evolved into the columns discussed above (Callisen 1939, 166-169). This is especially interesting when considering the replacement of the column with a palm tree on the sarcophagus at Saint-

Maximin-la-Sainte-Baume. It is possible that the palm tree inherited its symbolism from the column imagery, which shares an award connotation, in a strangely circular evolution.

Whatever their meaning, the column and palm associations remained minor ones in Britain and Gaul, and, as they mainly appeared on objects that were copied from foreign examples, may not have ever had the same meaning as in other parts of the Empire. The palm leaf, very likely unknown to most of the inhabitants of this region, may have been too alien to fit into their symbolic lexicon.

Other themes were more successfully adopted, although potentially only by privileged or high status members of society. Rings and intaglios are probably the best find type for exploring these, as they are unique and have a wide variety of imagery, but they also represent the more well-to-do people with closer connections to the Roman administrative system, and do not necessarily reflect society as a whole. However, as many of these are made of cheaper materials, such as glass paste and base metals, they may represent a middle-class bridge between a more internationally networked elite and those whose sphere of experience was predominantly local. Some of these themes carried over to other find types, but none had the sheer variety of the rings.

One of the most common recurring themes is the association of chickens with ears of corn (see 5.3.5 and 7.3.5). While this could simply be a depiction of chickens feeding, it seems likely that any object appearing in these scenes, which all appear on rings, will have carried a symbolic importance, even if it was a subconscious one. It is easy to see these bits of grain as representative of agricultural abundance and, as wealth in a pre-industrial society is more directly linked to agriculture, financial fecundity. It may go a step further, showing such an abundance of grain that it could be used to raise luxury livestock, such as chickens. Many rings found in hoards have images relating to prosperity in some way (Henig 1974a, 68), including the paired rings of a trussed chicken and crossed ears of corn (find 287) found in the Backworth hoard.

When combined with other objects appearing with chickens, this theme of abundance becomes even more apparent. Perhaps the most obvious one is the cornucopia, which appears on at least ten artefacts (see 5.3.6 and 7.3.6) and has long been associated with abundance, prosperity, and good fortune (Webster 1986, 58; Williams 2007, 154).

Buckets and baskets, sometimes holding fruit, are similar objects; less overtly symbolic, but still associated with some goddesses in the region (see below).

The various fruits that appear (see 5.3.5 and 7.3.5), usually unidentifiable to species, probably had the same symbolism as the grain. Of these, grapes are perhaps most worth of attention, partly because they are most recognizable, but mostly because of their association with wine and feasting. They also appear in some of the few action scenes in the assemblage. An intaglio from Leicester (find 423) shows a Cupid holding a bunch of grapes in one hand while fleeing from a chicken. A stone transom from Vienne (Isère) (find 2502) has on one face a chicken and a small dog fighting over a bunch of grapes. These scenes are unusual in having the chicken interacting with another figure. The presence of grapes may merely be a coincidence, but given the effects of wine and the natural combativeness of the cockerel, the scenes may be evocative of foolish or argumentative drunkenness.

Another association with wine and feasting appears in the image of the "pygmy" figures from Gaul (see 7.3.3). While only one of these, the bronze figurine from Strasbourg (Bas-Rhin) (find 1228), has the figure carrying an amphora, they may all refer to the same thing. The source of the image appears to be Egyptian and was popular in Gaul during the 2nd century AD (Faudeut 1978, 33). It may refer to the Greek tales of battles between cranes and pygmies, with a chicken taking the place of crane for unknown reasons (Picard 1958, 84), but the laygnos, a type of ceramic drinking vessel, being carried suggests the figure may be on his to a celebration of Bacchus, where bringing your own laygnos was the norm (Picard 1958, 87-88). The role of the chicken is unclear. If the man is on his way to a feast, it may simply be food, or it may share a reference with the chicken-teasing Cupid above; both diminutive, possibly comic figures interacting with a chicken.

The animals most commonly appearing with chickens, namely sheep/goats and tortoises, share a religious association, but others could also fit more directly into the theme of plenty (see 5.3.4 and 7.3.4). These are the rodents or rodent-like creatures which appear on some of the intaglio images. It is not clear if the rodents are mice, rats, rabbits, or hares, but the rabbit and hare had fertility associations (Toynbee 1973, 200-203) that would complement other symbols of abundance. Mice would naturally be

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found on farms and around grain stores, and an agricultural association seems plausible. The intaglio from Corbridge, Northumberland (find 430) that includes ears of corn, fruit, and a basket is the most obvious example of these together, but it is interesting that the rodent, presumably a mouse because of its size, is sitting on a stick held in the chicken's beak. Another intaglio from Giroux (Indre) (find 1207) has a mouse or rat, judging by its long tail, caught between two aggressive chickens. These two images may show the chicken as a vigilant defender of the prosperity of the farm.

An intaglio from Autun (Saône-et-Loire) (find 1211), has a parrot perched on top of a cornucopia, which stands on a basin, which is flanked by two ears of corn. A chicken stands on the basin facing the parrot. Surrounded by other symbols of prosperity, the parrot possibly enhances them as a sign of the exotic.

Parrots also feature in another type of depiction shared with chickens. One of the rodent-like images not discussed above is of a mouse or rabbit driving a chariot pulled by a chicken (find 429). This particular theme appears across the Empire with various birds pulling the chariot (Toynbee 1973, 281-282; Dunbabin 1978, 91-94; **Figure 8.13**). While there does seem to be some association with the four seasons (Toynbee 1973, 282), they appear to be mostly whimsical images of the circus (Toybnee 1973, 280; Dunbabin 1978, 106). With other species of bird also acting in these scenes, the likelihood of chickens being selected for a competitive symbolism seems unlikely, but cannot be excluded.
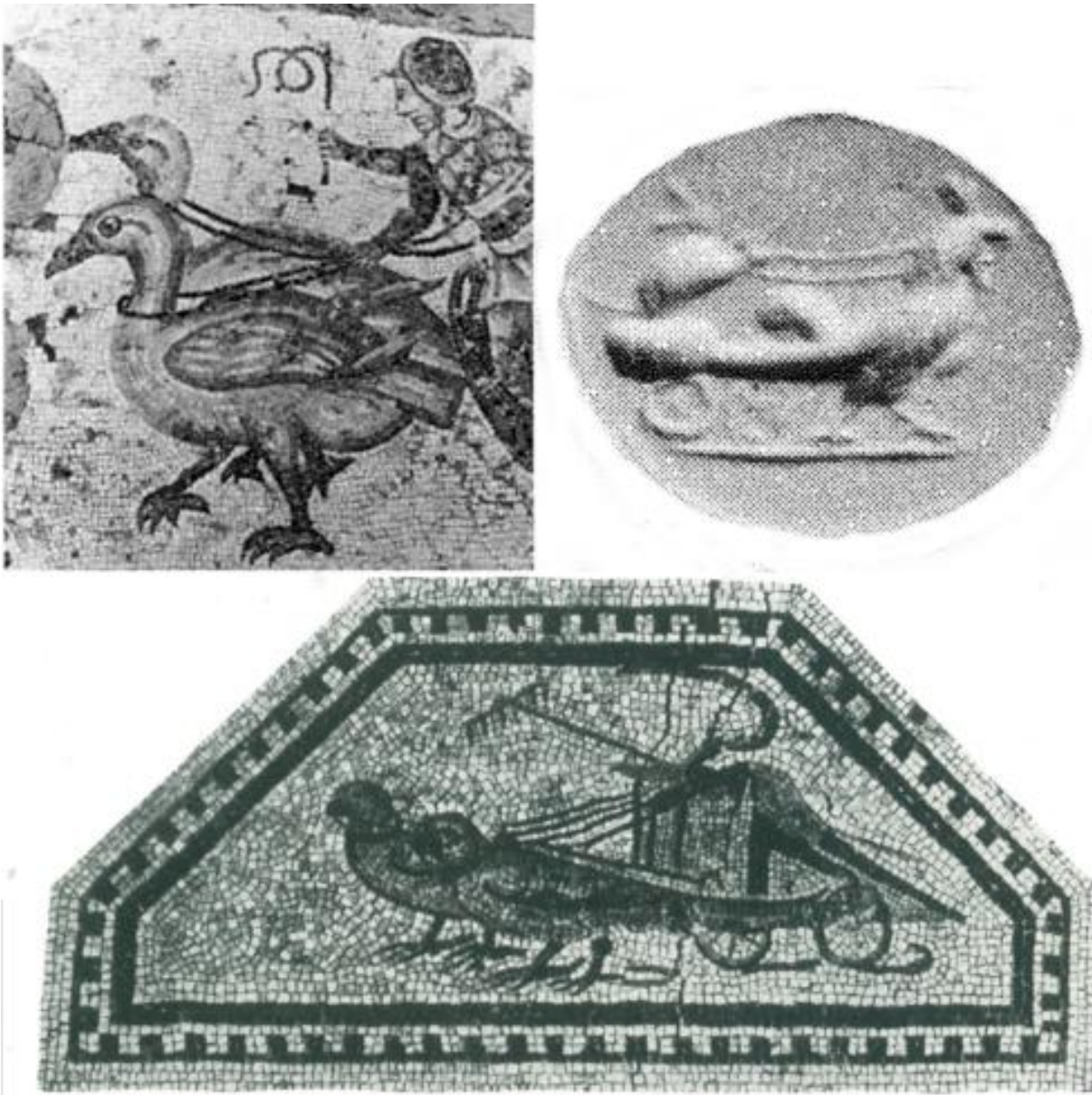
Figure 8.13 - Depictions of bird-drawn chariots. Top left, bird circus mosaic from the Maison de la Course aux Chars, Carthage (Dunbabin 1978, plate 79); top right, find 429, intaglio from Aldborough, Yorkshire (Henig 1974b, plate XII); bottom, mosaic from Cologne, Germany (Toynbee 1973, plate 135).

Some artefacts display a more straightforward association to fertility, with the phallic objects (see 5.3.2 and 7.3.3) being the most obvious. This association between the male reproductive organ and cockerels has a long pedigree and has been discussed more fully by Baird (1981), and the chicken's strong association with eggs, another fertility symbol may have enhanced this symbolism (Mackreth 2011, 241), but it does not appear to be

very common in this part of the Empire. The virility of the cockerel is also expressed in images of one bird treading another as part of the sexual act, as seen in a lamp from Ephesus, Turkey (British Museum number 1867,1122.221) and on a 5th to 4th century BC Greek intaglio (Johns 1982, 113), but this scene is also lacking in this collection.

8.3.4 Summary of the early Roman chicken

The picture that emerges for this early period is one of a personal relationship with the concept of a chicken. The iconography is not passed down from above through monumental architecture or coins, but appears across the spectrum of Romano-British and Gallo-Roman society. The artefacts that depict chickens are small, easily transported objects. Some, like the images on pottery and lamps, probably held little meaning and were simply decorative, but the widespread figurines, many of which were definitely made in these regions, show the birds themselves held some importance. The fact that, in addition to chicken imagery being widespread, so many of the objects were meant to be worn shows that they had a positive image.

The theme of prosperity and abundance seen quite clearly on the ring images probably accounts for much of this. A person may not necessarily have consciously thought about a chicken being kept in the home to attract wealth – it may have simply been the accepted practice – but it would explain their common presence on so many different types of site and in so many different media.

Of course, there may be associations now long lost that explain some of the themes in this assemblage. Croxford has pointed out the problems of identifying humour in ancient artefacts, even using the example of the chicken-headed figure on the Brading villa mosaic (Croxford 2008, 156-157). This mosaic has received extensive attention, with most theories considering the image to be religious in some way (see below), but why could it not simply be a humorous image?

It has often been noted that chicken was a Roman pun for Gaul (Pobé 1961, 71; Toynbee 1973, 134; Beaune 1986, 74). While this may go some distance towards explaining the popularity of chickens there, they appear to have been as popular in Britain. It could be some other name or title that is being embraced, possibly a tribal or family name, or some other social group. It may be that Gauls happily adopted the

chicken and took it with them, with many British examples coming from Gallic families that settled there.

Not all of the examples may be serious representations of an ideal. Some associations may be ironic, contrasting two different ideas in a way that may be lost without the appropriate context. As discussed above, could a chicken fighting over a bunch of grapes with a diminutive dog be a belligerent drunk, taking the concept of a noble combatant and pitting him against a ridiculous foe? Or could the chicken be a heedlessly aggressive figure, eager to face any foe, by default, with other combative images, such as the crouched chickens that appear on samian ware, playing on that image? Such themes are probably not recoverable without an external hint.

Two intaglios from Gaul that feature a seated human figure facing a chicken (see 7.3.3) could have such a contextual explanation. Bruneau (1965b) discussed them in detail, suggesting that that type of find is a good way of investigating relationships with literature and concluding that that particular image may be an illustration of Lucian's *Gallus*, in which a man spends an evening conversing with a serial-reincarnating figure currently living as a chicken.

Depictions like these can also provide information about more practical things about how humans related to chickens. Specifically, the images of trussed birds match descriptions of how they were processed, with the wing tips and heads removed prior to being cooked (Cool 2006, 99).

Many of these objects do not just relate to chickens, however. Most that include other figures or animals are religious in nature, which adds another layer of complexity to their meaning.

8.4 *Mercury and the sacred chicken*

"This genus of birds should glory in the fact that is has been considered sacred to so many gods." – Ulisse Aldrovandi (Lind 1963, 198)

It cannot be denied that, in Roman Britain and Gaul, chickens had a religious connotation. It was nothing new, with depictions of chickens appearing alongside

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deities for centuries before the Romans incorporated Gaul and Britain into their growing Empire. This can be seen on the coins and Attic pottery that spread across the Mediterranean, with their associations with Athena, and the chicken imagery at the temples of Persephone in Locri and Cyrene. Even the surprisingly early sealing from Zakros (see above) appears to show two birds, probably jungle fowl at such an early date, standing on either side of an altar.

It is not unusual for birds to be associated with gods. "Their otherness and association with divinity makes of birds a sign of the beyond" (Shanks 1999, 95). Jupiter had his eagle, Minerva had her owl, Apollo had his ravens, and Mercury had his cockerel. Chickens were a striking animal, recently introduced, and the males in particular display an excess of personality. Their fecundity, crowing, colourful plumage, aggressive behaviour, and motherly nature must have made them an attractive new element to fit into the cosmology of the Greek world. Some of these elements were passed on to the Romans, but, strangely, the strongest religious association of the Roman era does not appear to be one of them.

Religious aspects of life tend to be left out of discussions of material culture (King 2002, 220), with religion often seen as completely separate from the more practical political and social systems (Derks 1998, 73). A person in 2nd century Britain or Gaul may not have seen a chicken painted on a wall, or even a hen scratching at the dirt outside their home, and thought of it as sacred creature if it was outside of a religious context. However, it would be foolish to think that iconographic representations were devoid of religious symbolism. It may be subtle, and perhaps only discretely influenced by religious associations, but something of that divinity will have percolated into the everyday aspects of the icon's existence. At some level, this 2nd century chicken-viewer would be aware that the painting or creature they were looking at was involved with certain deities or regularly sacrificed at the temple down the road.

Very little is really known about the indigenous religions of Britain and Gaul (Derks 1998, 73-75). The gods of the Iron Age may have been aniconic, being primal forces rather than anthropomorphic characters, but even this is uncertain, with some figures in La Tène artwork possibly representing the divine (King 2002, 222, 229). Many of the gods, not to mention their temples, took on increasingly Classical forms from the 1st

century BC (King 2002, 234), but some, like the horse goddess Epona and the Matres, a group of mother goddesses, appear to retain a more native form (Drinkwater 1983, 206-207). As part of this evolution, there would have been a new round of mythmaking to explain the relationships between the emerging Roman-influenced culture, the old and new gods, and the ancestors (Derks 1998, 242). Animals, particularly those that already had a place in the native cosmology, as the coins of Belgica and southeast Britain suggest for chickens, would have needed a new interpretation, as well.

Rome, concerned more with keeping the peace in its new territory, was quite happy to leave this process alone (Derks 1998, 34). The resulting religions would certainly be different than their Iron Age ancestors, and may have been "culturally Roman while remaining Celtic in tradition" (Haeussler and King 2007, 10), but it was probably more of a spectrum, with different groups, regions, and periods varying in the degree of Romanisation they expressed.

With chickens becoming a more common element of the faunal assemblage during this period of rapid religious evolution, it is difficult to separate changing perceptions based on this new relative abundance and their religious associations. One reason for this is their association with one of the most popular and widely worshiped gods in Roman Gaul and Britain, Mercury.

8.4.1 The origin of Mercury's chicken

Caesar claimed Mercury was the most popular god in Gaul (Caesar, 6.17), and the large number of depictions and inscriptions to him attest to this (Ferguson 1970, 213; Henig 1984, 57). He appears to have been just as common in Britain, where he frequently appears on figurines (Durham 2012, 3.15), rings (Henig 1974a, 91-92), and sculptures (for example, Espérandieu 1910, 189-199; Phillips 1977, 8-9, 68-69; Henig 1993a, 6-7, 22-27). In this collection, Mercury is the figure who appears most frequently with chickens, sharing a place in 85 depictions (see 5.3.3 and 7.3.3). There is a clear, strong association between the god and this bird, but the exact reason for this is less clear.

Mercury was probably an early Italian god who was merged with Hermes as Greek culture spread, with a temple dedicated to him on the Aventine in Rome in the early 5th century BC (Warrior 2002, 188). Hermes is a god of great antiquity and was a popular

figure on Attic pottery (Carpenter 1991, 45), but there is a distinct lack of association between this god and chickens in both the surviving tales and artwork. Wherever Mercury's chicken companion came from, it was not inherited from his Greek ancestor. As already mentioned, other gods had companion birds as well, but they have an antiquity that this one lacks. The origin of Mercury's chicken is perhaps the biggest mystery of this study.

The solution lies in a closer examination of Mercury, his cult, and the themes and deities associated with him. It is quite common among the artefacts in this study, and for Roman depictions of chickens in general, for the mere presence of a chicken to imply an association with Mercury. This is not necessarily the case, and any individual depiction of a chicken could carry any of the meanings discussed above without evoking Mercury. The chicken and Mercury must be examined separately, and then evaluated to see where their attributes overlap.

This is complicated somewhat by Mercury's many roles. Taking the mantle from Hermes, he is most well-known as the messenger god, as indicated by his caduceus or herald's staff, but he was also the protector of trade and commerce, manifested in the purse he carries, travellers, jointly represented by his caduceus and winged shoes, and, oddly given his connection with merchants, thieves (Ferguson 1970, 70-71; Derks 1998, 115; Warrior 2002, 188). Perhaps this last trait is based on the mischievous trickster antics of his youth, when he stole Apollo's cattle, an event which also established him as a master of trade when he offered his tortoise-shell lyre as compensation (Gantz 1993, 106). The creation of the lyre is also the likely source of Hermes the patron of craftsmen and invention (Gantz 1993, 109), and the cattle are probably related to his ancient role as protector of livestock. Oddly, although cattle feature in the story, he became guardian of sheep (Gantz 1993, 109), and they remained his most constant companion throughout his worship.

One of the ways the association between chickens and Mercury has been explained is in his role as herald, with cockerels acting as "herald of the dawn" by crowing (Green 1977, 302; Leary and Butler 2012, 13). Zoroastrian literature from the 8th century BC and earlier refers to chickens in this way (Wood-Gush 1959, 323). Pausanias, reflecting in the 2nd century AD on a statue from Olympia of Idomeneus, descendent of the Sun

and holding a shield with an image of a chicken on it (Pausanias, 5.25.9), states something similar by writing that the cockerel proclaimed the rising of the sun. However, forging an association to Mercury based on this phrase feels quite weak. The activity of crowing at the first light of the sun could make the cockerel an appropriate companion for a solar deity like Apollo or Mithras, and the starbursts that appear with earlier depictions of chickens and the coins of Apollo suggest this connection may have existed, but this explanation assumes the people of Britain and Gaul would apply the same title of herald to cockerels and attach them to Mercury instead. While this is not impossible, especially if a local version of Mercury had a more solar aspect, the chicken does not appear to have a very strong association with the light or the sun in these regions. Chicken imagery on lamps and candlesticks exists, but is relatively sparse (see 4.8 and 6.4), and very few images show chickens in the act of crowing. Chickens cannot be linked to Mercury as heralds of the sun when they do not have any strong solar associations, and this is not reflected in the material culture unless the chicken was so strongly established as a symbol of the sun that it needed no further visual referencing. Even then, to attach them to a messenger god because they announce the dawn rather than a solar deity seems rather laboured.

The other most common explanation of Mercury's chicken companion is through his role as a psychopomp, guiding the souls of the deceased into the underworld (for example, Faider-Feytmans 1979, 68; Keppie and Arnold 1984, 6; Crummy 2007, 225). Hermes first appeared leading souls into the afterlife in the Odyssey, but does not appear in this role again until around the late 6th and 5th centuries BC (Gantz 1993, 109). In some depictions he weighs their souls (Carpenter 1991, 45), but his role as guide is more familiar, both in art and myth. In this he may be acting as messenger, taking messages and people to their destination, as when he and Athena guided Heracles into the Underworld to get Cerberus, rather than a true psychopomp (Gantz 1993, 109). Hermes does appear on clay vases that acted as grave markers (Boardman 1991, 185), suggesting that whatever his original role, he did have some funerary associations.

How much of this chthonic aspect crossed over to the Roman Mercury? He does not appear to have had it originally, adopting it only when Livius translated the *Odyssey* in the 3rd century BC (Feeney 2007, 230). Mercury is commonly said to have this connection to the afterlife (Henig 1974a, 92; 1984, 200; Cool 2006, 101), but it is hard

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to determine how strongly identified he was with it in reality. Ovid's *Fasti*, published in AD8, makes only a minor reference to it, when Jupiter asked Mercury to lead the nymph Lara to the Underworld, which led to a dalliance resulting in the birth of the Lares, Rome's minor guardian spirits (Book 2, February 21). As with Hermes, here he acts more as an escort than a guide for the dead. Only three objects in this study had both funerary aspects and an association with Mercury (finds 1952, 2476, and 2523). Those other objects in this study with funerary associations are discussed below, but it is unlikely they were selected because of Mercury's seemingly weak connection with the afterlife.

The most promising explanation for Mercury's chicken companion lies in his role as protector of commerce and prosperity. As his name shares a root with *mercator*, the Latin word for merchant (Crummy 2006, 57) and he usually, especially in more Classical depictions, holds a purse in one hand, this was probably among Mercury's most prominent roles. When combined with Mercury's ancient association with livestock (Gantz 1993, 106), his role expands to encompass agricultural wealth as well. While this aspect alone could be used to argue for Mercury's chicken connection, when examined as part of this wider role it becomes even more persuasive.

Abundance and prosperity are a common theme in this collection, based primarily around other aspects of agricultural wealth like grain and the cornucopia, and appear mostly on rings (see above). Rings, serving as personal seals on contracts and official papers, are related to commerce, and the frequency of depictions of Mercury on them seems significant (Henig 1974a, 27). Only seven rings in this study include both Mercury and a chicken (see 4.5.2 and 6.6.2), but the exclusion of his animal companions may have something to do with the relative sizes involved. Two rings from Gaul (finds 1212 and 1213) got around the size issue by leaving Mercury out of the depiction and showed his attributes of winged feet and hat along with a chicken, interestingly leaving out his caduceus and purse. While other images of prosperity were lacking from these depictions, they may have been redundant with both Mercury and his chicken adequately filling this role.

Given this shared association with wealth and plenty, the lack of chicken imagery on the coins of Imperial Rome is surprising, especially in light of how common it was in

earlier centuries (see above), and maybe this has something to do with their relationship to Mercury. He does not appear to be as common on Roman coins as some other gods. By Imperial Rome, the deities appearing on coins were selected because of their relationship to the emperor (Williams 2007, 155), and the only chickens appearing in Imperial Roman coinage are the result of a particular event during the reign of Marcus Aurelius. In AD173 the Roman army defeated its barbarian adversaries because of a sudden rainfall brought about by the divine intervention of Mercury, and a series of coins featuring Mercury apparently referencing this were minted (Mattingly and Sydenham 1930, 205-206). Two of these include chickens, one at Mercury's side (type RIC 1071) and the other with his other companions and attributes on the tympanum of a temple behind an image of the god (type RIC 1074). While there may be other reasons for this lack of chicken coins (see below), one must wonder if they were excluded specifically because of their association with wealth, as if there was a taboo on establishing too close a connection between money and a god and animal responsible for them.

Perhaps unsurprisingly for such a symbolically promiscuous deity, Mercury has other minor roles that could also link into his association with chickens. The extent to which he represented these in Roman Britain and Gaul is uncertain, and regional variations in the god could have included different aspects, meaning some of these may not have been universal.

One of the most straightforward associations is the ancient role of Hermes as having control over birds of omen (Gantz 1993, 106). As chickens were used in divination (Varro *de re Rustica*, Cicero *de Divinatione*), a symbolic link between the two is not too far-fetched, but Mercury does not appear to have a particularly strong fortune-telling role in Roman religion, making this a somewhat weak source of relationship.

Mercury had a related role as master of knowledge and invention (Fasti Book V, May 9; Santrot 1996, 278). While this made him naturally appealing for craftsmen, it could have made him an attractive deity for scholars as well. Mercury was known as a persuasive god (Crummy 2006, 57), with Ovid's *Fasti* (Book V, May 15) saying he teaches others to be eloquent and Lucian's *Gallus* (2) claiming he is the most loquacious and argumentative of the gods. Education, with a particular emphasis on oration,

appears to have been important to the Gauls, with the school at Autun becoming a leading centre of learning in the western Empire (Drinkwater 1983, 22; Rivet 1988, 86; Woolf 1998, 73).

If speech and debate were thought of so highly, it may explain why Mercury was so popular a god across Gaul. Local gods with a predilection for eloquence may have been seemed an appropriate match for Caesar and other Romans. Of interest to this study is the association with sound. The matching of a loquacious god and a loquacious animal seems too apt to be mere coincidence. Furthermore, Ovid's tale of Mercury and Lara, the nymph whose tongue got her into trouble and was punished with silence, takes on a new twist when viewed with Mercury in this role. Was assigning a talkative god to escort her more important than where he was taking her, further weakening the Underworld connection?

The crowing of the cockerel and its link to speech has already been seen in the Late Iron Age coins of the far north (see 8.2.2). Another of Mercury's roles ties into one of the other possible sources of the images on those coins. Hermes was associated with dreams far back into antiquity, with his original wand used to bring sleep (Gantz 1993, 106). Mercury's link with dreams does not appear to have been as strong, but he does appear to share some traits with shamanistic practices, namely flying, travelling, and the ability to move between worlds (Creighton 2000, 51). If the strange images on the Iron Age coins are the result of psychoactive substances or taken from a dreamtime related to similar beliefs, the Mercury of Gaul and Britain could be based on a figure from the same tradition. Whether and how the chicken fit into this is impossible to say at this point, with the enigmatic cock bronzes of Belgic Gaul and Britain serving as the only link between them.

In the social context, there is clearly a deep compatibility between Mercury and the chicken. So far the focus has been on the deity himself, but it is only through the actions of his worshippers that this material culture exists. To truly understand what Mercury represented, it is necessary to also seek an understanding of those who revered him.

Since few temples include enough information to determine which gods were worshipped there, this is a more difficult prospect than it appears. A variety of

Mercury-related artefacts hint at a temple to him in Colchester (Crummy 2006), which tied with London as the most represented site in Britain at nine artefacts. Although so far lacking in temple architecture, Great Walsingham, Norfolk, has also been suggested as being sacred to Mercury for the same reason (Smith 1999, 47). A more definite site is the temple at Uley, Gloucestershire, which held several stone depictions of Mercury, including altars (Henig 1993b). Unusually, this site, despite its clear affiliation to Mercury and large collection of chicken remains (Levitan 1993, 300), is generally quite poor in depictions of chickens, with only a single figurine (find 310) representing mobile material culture.

In Gaul, Derks (1998) has catalogued and analysed the depictions and inscriptions from the northwestern part of the province in a detailed study of the religious demography in this region. The results relating to Mercury are quite interesting, showing a widespread distribution with no major clusters, seemingly simple temples, and dedications from individuals rather than organisations, all hinting at a series of private local cults instead of a major, well unified organisation (Derks 1998, 99). As the defender of trade, Mercury's cult appears to have attracted traders, who probably helped spread the early Gallo-Roman concept of Mercury, and those in search of wealth (Derks 1998, 116). The height of Mercury's Gallic cult seems to have been in the economic "golden age" of the 2nd and early 3rd centuries, appealing to craftsmen and traders in the towns but also appearing on farms as a bringer of agricultural prosperity (Derks 1998, 243).

Members of this cult, or rather the various regional versions of it, may have carried something to identify themselves as such. Rings with depictions of Mercury would have been the most obvious sign of their owners' personal religious affiliations (Henig 2004, 227), but other pieces of jewellery could have done the same. Chicken-shaped hairpins have been suggested as an indication of Mercury worship (MacGregor 1985, 118), but it is the brooches that have received the most attention. Crummy has suggested that the British chicken brooches were a sign of cult membership, as well as similar brooches in the shape of shoes, purses, and flies, with the latter possibly being a simple play on Mercury's flight (Crummy 2007). The connection to shoes, which have an obvious association with travel, another of Mercury's roles, appears again in the sandal sole from London (find 1185) and in the two intaglios from Gaul that depict a chicken with Mercury's feet and hat (finds 1212 and 1213). Intriguingly, shoe-shaped

pendants from the Late Iron Age were found in large numbers on both sides of the Alps, even coming from the same site as the early chicken-brooch from Reinheim (Echt 1999, 96). The widespread nature of the enamelled British brooches does suggest they were carried by travellers, but their appearance only in Britain suggests they did not travel beyond the shores.

Worshippers of Mercury could also have kept something in their home to indicate their faithfulness, but small depictions of Mercury and his chicken were relatively rare, and almost completely lacking in the cheaper material of clay. The metal figurines, as described elsewhere (see 4.2.2 and 6.2.2), tend to be Classical in their depictions, but often have bases and companion animals that appear to have been added at some later date. This could mean that some of these depictions of Mercury were created before he was associated with the chicken, but if that was the case, then why was his other, far more ancient companion sheep/goat added at the same time? A British survey of metal figurines found 103 of Mercury, the most commonly depicted god (Durham 2012, 3.15), with only two of these (finds 119 and 595) including chickens, so it could be that, for whatever reason, the association was not necessary or appropriate. It could be that the elements of the figurine were separated, but the sheer number of them found singly suggests this was not that common.

Not every temple or regional cult would necessarily have worshipped the same Mercury in the same way, adapting slightly different depictions or practices to match whatever local forms a proto-Mercury might have taken. In Gaul there appears to be a bit more variety in how Mercury was depicted (see 7.3.3), suggesting that there were either more unique local versions than in Britain or that the pre-Roman British versions were less strictly defined iconographically. Although not always definitely Mercury, the presence of his attributes is quite suggestive in most cases.

These variations of Mercury complicate his associations, with local or regional Mercuries possibly having only a few primary traits in common and adopting new ones lacking elsewhere. Mercury could be related to the Gaulish Teutates (Echt 2000, 267) or Lugos (Webster 1986, 33), but these associations are not always very clear (for example, see Maier 1996 for a discussion of Mercury-Lugos). A three-headed god, possibly representing one of the above, is a possible representation of Mercury (Ross

1967, 74; see 6.3.1), although only really identified as such by his female companion and the appearance of a chicken and/or sheep/goat.

In Britain, some of the variation can be seen at Uley, which otherwise features rather conventional depictions of the god (Henig 1993b, 89). The names on the inscriptions are native, suggesting the site was used primarily by a British population (Cool 2006, 210). Some of the artefacts found on the site, such as miniature weapons, suggest this version of Mercury had a warrior or hunter aspect as well, which may explain some of the inscriptions to Mars and Silvanus found there (Henig 1984, 149).

While chickens and Mercury are clearly linked, it is unlikely that the two were synonymous, but rather shared a symbolic link that bound them together. With Mercury's many roles, which may have varied considerably across these two large regions, it could be based on a single association or a mixture of several. The latter is probably true to some degree, but it appears that the shared prosperity and abundance connotations are the strongest and, most likely, commonly held between the god and his companion. This particular connection becomes even stronger when Mercury's companion deities are taken into account.

The picture that emerges is of a cult built around an individual affinity for Mercury, a variable figure probably derived from a series of pre-Roman mythological figures or deities. He was not incorporated into the official Roman administration (Henig 2004, 225-226), and as the coin evidence suggests, he was not strongly associated with the Imperial family, despite Augustus and Caligula claiming some affinity to the god (Ferguson 1970, 92). Mercury appears to have been a god of the people rather than a state-sponsored divinity. This meshes well with the chicken-related artefacts, which, as seen, are predominantly low-impact, widespread, and personal.

8.4.2 Gods associated with Mercury

The Mercury of Britain and Gaul was often accompanied by other deities, which varied depending on the type of artefact (see 5.3.3 and 7.3.3). The smaller, portable artefacts are all pateras and include other Classical depictions of conventional mythological figures, especially Apollo and Minerva, which is otherwise a rather uncommon grouping (Tassinari 1970, 162). The larger objects are sculptures and tend to be more

native in style and in who they depict. It is these that are more useful in exploring how Mercury fits into the cosmology of Britain and Gaul.

The most common figure to appear with Mercury is a female deity usually identified as Rosmerta, although a relief from Lyon (find 2223) was referred to as his mother Maia, but with no explanation of why. This goddess appears with Mercury across Gaul and Germania Superior, apparently a native divine couple whose male half became associated with Mercury while the female half retained her own identity (Derks 1998, 115). This is not unusual, with male gods taking on a more Roman identity, sometimes taking on a double name reflecting the original deity, while the females remained native in name and depiction in the early years of Roman rule (Derks 1998, 93). Over time, some of these female goddesses adopted forms like Fortuna or Diana (Webster 1986, 59; Derks 1998, 119).

Figure 8.14 - reliefs of Mercury and Rosmerta. Left, find 2521 (Espérandieu 1913, 24); centre, find 2524 (Espérandieu 1913, 414); right, find 1348 (Pichon 2002, figure 226).

The male half is this pair is not always clearly identifiable as Mercury, seldom having his full complement of attributes, suggesting that this is less the Roman Mercury and more his Gallic form. Rosmerta stands or sits beside him in a rather static scene (**Figure 8.14**). In a depiction from a tomb in La Malmaison (Aisne) (find 2523), the pair sits beneath a tricephalic head, suggesting some link to whichever figure that represented.

This female figure often appears with purses and cornucopias and therefore shares Mercury's association with wealth to at least some degree (Webster 1986, 59). She has another attribute that is more uniquely hers in this relationship. This is a bucket, basin, or a cylindrical object reminiscent of a butter churn (see find 2524, **Figure 8.14**), all objects easily interpretable as agricultural in nature. This tub or basin may be a precursor to the magic cauldrons of more recent Celtic myth (Webster 1986, 61).

The best British example is from Gloucester (find 521), where she may be related to the goddess Cuda of the Cotswolds (Yeates 2007, 61; Cottam *et al.* 2010, 19). A relief from nearby Aldsworth, Gloucestershire (find 93) includes another female figure standing beside Mercury, but there she is more reminiscent of Minerva, holding a spear with a shield by her feet. While this may be a version of the Roman goddess, it could also represent a more militant side of the local goddess represented on the Gloucester relief. While the proximity of these images to the temple of Mercury at Uley is intriguing, it is their presence in the territory of the Late Iron Age Cotswold cockerel coins (see above) this is most interesting. Perhaps this region's version of Mercury's consort, Rosmerta or otherwise, has her own connection with chickens stretching back into pre-Roman times. Although this is simply one region, away from Rosmerta's apparent origin, it does raise the possibility that Mercury's chicken may not have originally been associated with him, but was rather borrowed from one or more of his native consorts, who perhaps shared a relationship with the chicken like that seen in earlier times with Persephone and Athena.

Mercury has a more minor association with Bacchus, the god of wine (**Figure 8.15**). One of the objects depicting them together is a patera handle (find 918), which also includes depictions of Juno and some water deities. The association between the deities there is less clear, but a statue from Oberdorf-Spachbach (Bas-Rhin) (find 1433) of Mercury, a chicken by his side, holding an infant is a more direct association between the two figures. The Greek Hermes was associated with the birth of Dionysus as far back as the 6th century BC (Carpenter 1991, 45), and this myth may have crossed over to the Gallo-Roman Mercury, although the identity of the infant in this sculpture is by no means definite. There are some Gallic images of Mercury offering Bacchus a purse (Derks 1998, 116), suggesting some local connection between the two deities did exist.

Figure 8.15 - images of Mercury with Bacchus. Left, find 918, patera handle from the Capheaton Treasure (image copyright Trustees of the British Museum British Museum); right, find 1433, stele of Mercury holding the infant Bacchus (Hatt et al. 1973, 144).

However, when considered with the scenes of chickens with grapes or wine discussed above, the association between Bacchus himself and chickens becomes a bit stronger. Whether this association was through Mercury or more directly is less certain, as there are so few images of Bacchus and chickens. It is not impossible that some versions of Mercury incorporated aspects of Bacchus to varying degrees, identifying with his association with wine or feasting. The pygmy depictions would also fit into this relationship, given their possible association with Bacchus (see above). While a meaning relating to drunkenness, as discussed above with grape images, may be behind this, it seems more likely that the theme of prosperity, namely having enough wealth to engage in feasting and merrymaking, is responsible.

A figure related to Bacchus was the satyr Silenus, who appears in a variety of hybrid forms on intaglios (see 5.3.2 and 7.3.2), with a bearded face acting as the body of a creature with various animal limbs attached, often including the head, tail, or legs of a

chicken. Such odd creatures could have served an apopotraic purpose, protecting the wearer from evil magic (Henig 1974a, 129), but it is difficult to determine what meaning lay behind each component of the strange beast. It has been suggested that the chicken represented fertility and, possibly, the sun (Baird 1981, 90), but it could have symbolised any of the traits or related figures described here, or even been part of a pun or joke whose meaning is now lost. Whether this type of image is genuinely related to Bacchus, with his own tenuous relationship to Mercury, or draws on other inspiration is likewise uncertain.

8.4.3 Chickens in other religions

While there is a clear, strong link between chickens and Mercury, the vast number of chickens that appear without an obvious association with Mercury shows that this was not an exclusive relationship. Mercury's cockerel companion may have been as promiscuous mythologically as it is in reality. Rosmerta and Bacchus, to a lesser degree, show that even deities linked to Mercury may have their own relationships with the chicken.

A deity commonly associated with chickens is the physician god Asclepius (Lentacker *et al.* 2004, 91), although no known depictions of him with a chicken were found in this study. Other depictions from this area are all Classical in appearance, and he does not appear to have taken on any native associations, making him a very Roman god (Sikora 1983, 175-176). His association with chickens dates back to the early days of his cult in late 5th century Greece, and appears to be based on the last words of Socrates, asking for a cockerel to be offered to the god (Boardman 1989, 225; Lloyd-Morgan 2000, 367). It is not clear whether this refers to a special affinity between chickens and Asclepius or simply reflects a common sacrifice. In any case, in Britain and Gaul there is no apparent association between them.

More evidence exists for a link between chickens and a group of goddesses seemingly related to fertility and abundance. Their identities vary and are not always easy to determine, but some relationship to Rosmerta seems quite likely. Those female deities appearing with Mercury are easy to identify as Rosmerta, but alone her identity is less clear, and such lone goddesses could either be her or some regional variety embodying

some or all of her characteristics. In general, female deities across the Roman world tended to retain their native names and forms, while the males merged with Roman gods (Drinkwater 1983, 206-207; Woolf 1998, 223; Ando 2008, 50).

Although not appearing in Gaul or Britain, Persephone is an early form of this relationship, and may in fact be the source of the chicken theme. As seen above, chickens were linked with her in Northern Africa and southern Italy. While on the surface this may suggest an association with the afterlife, a closer look shows that it is Persephone's link to the fertile earth that was of greater importance. In Cyrene, chicken figurines were found at a temple to Persephone and her mother, Demeter, an earth goddess, and the plaque from the sanctuary at Locri shows her seated next to her husband, Pluto, but holding cereals. She was linked with agricultural wealth as far back as 5th century BC Greece, when she appeared in scenes of her abduction by Hades holding a cornucopia (Gantz 1993, 67). Porphyry, writing in the 3rd century AD, says chickens are sacred to Ceres, the Roman version of Demeter (*On Abstinence from Animal Food*, Book 4, 16), suggesting that the association carried on with the mother goddess.

The cornucopia, as already seen, remained a common symbol of abundance, and appeared with many of these goddesses of plenty, including the Hellenistic Tyche and her later Roman version Fortuna (Smith 1991, 77), Rosmerta (Deyts 1992, 119), and various mother goddess figures (Vezeaux de Lavergne 1999, 95). The cornucopia, the purse, and the caduceus were all symbols of abundance and good fortune (Webster 1986, 58; Williams 2007, 114), as were the buckets, basins, or tubs often appearing with goddesses in this region (Webster 1986, 60-61; Yeates 2007, 65). Sometimes these symbols appear together, without anthropomorphic figures, such as a lamp from Colchester featuring a caduceus between two cornucopias (Eckardt 2002, 373).

Most of these goddesses associated with chickens were paired with Mercury as described above, but four appeared without him. Mother goddesses were commonly depicted seated, often holding fruit, baskets, or cornucopias (Vezeaux de Lavergne 1999, 95), and three of these objects follow this theme. One was a ceramic figurine from Saint-Eloy-les-Tuileries (Corrèze) (find 1437), with a female figure on a chair with a chicken at her feet. A similar figure (find 544), but carved out of limestone, was

recovered from a well in Lower Slaughter, Gloucestershire, along with three altars and four other statues, but its gender is less certain. Described as male because of the lack of pronounced breasts, it is quite worn and this could conceivably be due to damage. The third depiction is more unusual in featuring two goddesses. Found at Corbridge, Northumberland, this relief (find 461), shows Fortuna, holding a cornucopia and a rudder, next to a seated goddess holding a torch with a chicken at her side. She was interpreted as Ceres because of the torch, but with a statement that Ceres was not associated with a chicken (Phillips 1977, 2-3). As seen above, her Greek counterpart, Demeter, shared an affinity for chickens with her daughter Persephone, and this could be reflected here, and this may in fact represent a version of that mother-daughter pair, but symbolically similar native goddesses cannot be ruled out.

The final artefact did not include a depiction of the goddesses, but rather was part of a hoard dedicated to them. A ring with an image of a trussed chicken (find 287) was part of the mid-2nd century Backworth Hoard found near the eastern end of Hadrian's Wall, as was as a similar ring with an image of crossed ears of corn. A silver skillet or patera handle was inscribed with a dedication to the Matres, a group, often a trio, of mother goddesses popular in militarised regions of Gaul (Webster 1986, 63), which may explain their presence near Hadrian's Wall. Intriguingly, the hoard also contained a ring with an image of a figure holding an inverted torch (Henig 1974a, 63-67). The trussed bird, which admittedly may not be a chicken, has a more clear link to the animal as food than is normally seen, and could be symbolic of a luxury menu item, but the accompanying grain-imaged ring suggests the theme of agricultural abundance remains strong.

Although often tied to Mercury when taking the form of Rosmerta, among these female deities the theme of plenty and earthiness is overwhelming, and the appearance of the chicken with them strengthens the place of the bird within that theme. Over time, some of these goddesses appear to take on more Classical forms, becoming variations of Fortuna or Diana (Derks 1998, 119), but some at least seem to retain an association with Mercury, as demonstrated on a mid-3rd century coin featuring Felicitas, a personification of productivity and good fortune, holding both a cornucopia and a caduceus (Doyen 2007, 475).

Although the archaeological record provides only a glimpse into how these goddesses

interacted with chickens outside of Mercury's influence, it hints that there may be a deeper connection obscured by the more prominent male half of the divine duo, especially when combined with the chicken's earlier connection to earthy goddesses in the form of Persephone and her mother.

Although poorly represented, the Lares may also have some association with chickens. As already discussed, these minor spirits were the offspring of Mercury and the nymph Lara, and could therefore be another Mercury association. Only a single figurine, with a Lare standing on a base with a chicken, a bearded snake, and a pig (find 2211) represents this possible relationship, but away from Rome the Lares may not have been recognisable as such, but remained minor local spirits, either formless or represented by other objects or animals. In this way, lone depictions of chickens could have taken on a more religious importance themselves.

8.4.4 Chickens as religious objects

As creatures associated with the gods and possessing a rich symbolism in their own right, it would be only natural for chickens to have a spiritual or supernatural role even when appearing alone. In this form, they could represent minor spirits similar to the Roman Lares or act as emissaries of one or more deities, but in most cases there is simply not enough of an artefact biography to know. This section will focus on artefacts that have a religious or ceremonial purpose but lack an obvious connection to any particular god. While this could be expressed in any of the personal connections to chickens seen in rings and other jewellery, or the use of figurines in household shrines, there are effectively only two situations where this individual importance is likely to be identified, and that is as votive objects (see 5.2.2 and 7.2.2) and funerary offerings (see 5.2.3 and 7.2.3).

Votive deposits, as previously stated, are quite difficult to identify without something that clearly identifies them as such, which is why so few of the artefacts in this collection were considered votive. These objects would have been given as an offering to something, whether a deity, ancestor spirit, or *genius loci*, but that does not necessarily mean that they would have had a direct association other than as an offering. A figurine of a chicken does not show the god in question is linked with chickens, but

rather that a figurine of a chicken is an appropriate offering. It is rather telling that the temple of Mercury at Uley, which has large amounts of remains of those animals sacred to him, namely chickens and sheep, is, apart from statuary and altars associated with the temple structure, only represented by a single chicken figurine. While this may be explained by a local belief that the god was too important for a substitute offering instead of the real animal, it shows that there is not necessarily a direct correlation between a deity and the offerings to them.

Some find types are more likely to be votive offerings than others, with personal objects being the most common after coins, creating an even closer connection between devotee and deity (Webster 1986, 131-132; Crummy 2006, 56). Brooches are of this type, and while a frequent find at temple sites (Hattatt 1982, 158), they do not appear at all of them (Simpson and Blance 1998, 277). Hairpins are another such object, and a chicken-shaped one found at the temple of Nodens at Lydney Park, Gloucestershire (find 677) was interpreted as votive, as over 320 in total were found there (Wheeler and Wheeler 1932, 41). The rings in the Backworth Hoard (see above) were part of a larger votive deposit, and the only other ring that appeared to be votive was an amethyst intaglio featuring Mercury and a chicken (find 380) found buried beneath the entranceway of the palace at Fishbourne (see 5.2.2). However common they are, the lack of clusters of said objects in this study shows that, while the general type of object might be more likely to be votive, the depiction of a chicken on it had little specifically votive importance.

Figurines are another common votive object, and in Gaul there are some identifiably votive deposits (see 6.2.1 and 7.2.2). An object in the shape of an animal could have served as a substitute offering for that animal (Webster 1986, 184), but the costs involved complicate this. While a mass-produced ceramic figurine may have been relatively inexpensive (Fauduet 1993, 109), many of the metal figurines are quite well-made and would certainly have cost more than a live chicken, so this could not have simply been a matter of saving expense. A figurine, as a more permanent object, could have been a higher tier of offering, or intended for a period of display as a visible sign of devotion. They may have been an offering *in absentia*, perhaps given by someone unable to undertake their own pilgrimage to another who left it on their behalf, or they could be objects already owned by the supplicant, perhaps coming from a household shrine, giving them an even deeper personal connection to the offering. In any case,

apart from a few sites in Gaul, there are no heavy concentrations of chicken figurines on religious sites, suggesting that they were not a common offering, unless, of course, they were more frequently made of perishable materials or offered in a way that left no trace, such as the burning of wooden or wax objects.

The final category of potentially votive objects in this collection were those that contained chicken bones or eggshell. Only five objects could be identified in this way; a cup containing the head and neck vertebrae of a chicken found beneath the altar at the temple of Mithras at Carrawburgh by Hadrian's Wall (find 645), and the four pots found beneath the floor of a house in Caramany (Pyrénées-Orientales) (see 6.5.3). Like the British example, the heads and necks of the birds were inside the pot, but careful excavation revealed the bodies of the birds were outside, suggesting they were bled out into the pot (Fabre *et al.* 1999, 288). In these cases, the vessels were probably a convenient container for the true offering and not purely votive themselves.

Funerary deposits are, unsurprisingly, much easier to identify and are therefore much more common. Chickens are sometimes said to have an association with the underworld and rebirth (Keppie and Arnold 1984, 6; Leary and Butler 2012, 13), something that may have crossed over from their association with Mercury, although Mercury's psychopomp role, as already discussed, was not as strong an association as is commonly assumed. Chickens themselves are a common find in and around graves, either as burial offerings or part of a funerary feast, which appears to support the idea of the chicken as a chthonic creature, but, if an animal offering was required, a chicken would have been a more bearable expense than a whole pig or sheep, and this may simply be a reflection of economics. In this study, many of the artefacts with a funerary connection were pots that contained these offerings or meals (see 5.2.3 and 7.2.3). As with the votive pots above, it was the animal remains that were important, and the vessels, while possibly having additional symbolism not directly related to chickens, acted primarily as containers.

Chicken-depicting funerary objects were mostly represented by figurines, especially in France. This practice was widespread, but no cemetery in either region contained overwhelming numbers of them. In Britain there were also three graves containing brooches, two of which were of the sitting chicken type (finds 194 and 598). The other

was the dubiously identified magpie brooch (find 760, see 4.3.4).

Funerary monuments with images of chickens are incredibly rare in these regions, with only a single example from Britain and potentially four from France and Belgium, not including early Christian sarcophagi (see below). A carving of Mercury and Rosmerta beneath a triple-headed figure, supposedly found in a small tomb (find 2523), has a more overtly religious meaning, but the lack of a true context makes it difficult to tie into funerary practices. The relief of Lepontius from Strasbourg (Bas-Rhin) (find 1434) may not be funerary, but the name of an apparent soldier on such a carving is suggestive.

Figure 8.16 - grave markers of children with chickens and dogs. Left, find 1421 (Devauges 1988, 98); centre, find 541 (Cunliffe and Fulford 1982, plate 35); right, find 1963 (Valensi 1964-1965, 24).

The final two French examples are more definite, as they contain an inscription to the Manes, the spirits of the dead. These and the British gravestone (**Figure 8.16**) are particularly interesting as they all appear to be for children and also include an image of a dog. The marker from Entrains-sur-Nohain (Nièvre) to one Apinosus Iclius (find 1421) depicts a short, round-faced figure, but the hammer he holds is an unexpected object if this is a child. The other French example, the gravestone of Laetus from

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Bordeaux (Gironde) (find 1963), is more clearly a child, although there is some debate whether the animal he or she carries is a dog or a cat (see 6.3.2). The final marker, found outside Bristol and inscribed "The Hope of Gaius Sentius" (find 541), is more crudely carved, but also includes a dog and a chicken. One has to wonder, if these were the graves of adults, would the interpretations of the images have focused more on the underworld associations of dogs and chickens rather than assuming they were pets, as these were?

Taken as a whole, there appears to be little real evidence for an association between chickens and death or the afterlife, at least within the material culture. Most funerary themed artefacts were associated with chickens through containing their physical remains, which could be easily explained as an affordable offering. The remaining objects were small in number, though widespread. It is far more likely that whatever depictions of chickens were included in the grave were selected for more personal reasons, and not necessarily by the will of the deceased. The dead are buried by the living, and it would have ultimately been their decision what to send with their loved one into the next world. A person may have been buried with a chicken figurine because it was something they loved in life, or maybe a family member always remembered it being on display in their home and found it an appropriate offering. Perhaps there was an association with animals of the household, which regularly interacted with members of the family. Members of a cult, military, or civic group may have favoured the chicken as symbol and worn it into death as they did in life. In short, there are as many reasons for a chicken to appear in a grave as there are for one to appear anywhere.

8.4.5 Religion summary

As Roman and native cultures merged together into something new and unique, so new religions and belief systems evolved out of the old ones. Across Britain and Gaul, Mercury became the god most associated with chickens, but there also appears to have been some connection to his consort, Rosmerta, who represents a wider group of related abundance-themed female deities stretching back into much earlier times. It is this theme of prosperity and wealth that is the most likely link between Mercury and his new companion animal, and this appears in other relationships, such as the other female

deities and possibly Bacchus and local spirits like the Lares.

There is a tendency to view Roman gods as uniform, renamed versions of the Greek originals, conflating all of the mythology into one and assuming it was the same across regions and periods. Carpenter (1991, 7) stated that "the way a story is shown may develop and change over a period of time so that a depiction of a myth from 580BC will probably be very different in context (as well as form) from a depiction of the same myth in 400BC." This would have been even more pronounced in the Roman world, with Roman culture mixing together with many native groups, which, due to the expanded horizons that came with the Empire, would also have mixed with each other. Mercury in Lugdunum would not be the same as Mercury in Eboracum, Rome, or far-flung Moesia (modern Serbia), although even there he was accompanied by his cockerel (Gavrilovic 2010, 71-78). Wherever Mercury acquired his chicken companion, it was to prove a lasting relationship.

8.5 Late Roman chickens

While most of the dating evidence for the artefacts in this collection is quite weak, in both regions there is an apparent change towards the end of the Roman period, resulting in a general drop in the number of artefacts (**Figure 8.17**, see 4.1 and 6.1). This may simply reflect a lack of well dated objects in comparison to previous centuries, especially visible in France and Belgium because of the large number of early Roman ceramic figurines, but changes in society relating to political, economic, and religious factors are likely to have played some part in this.
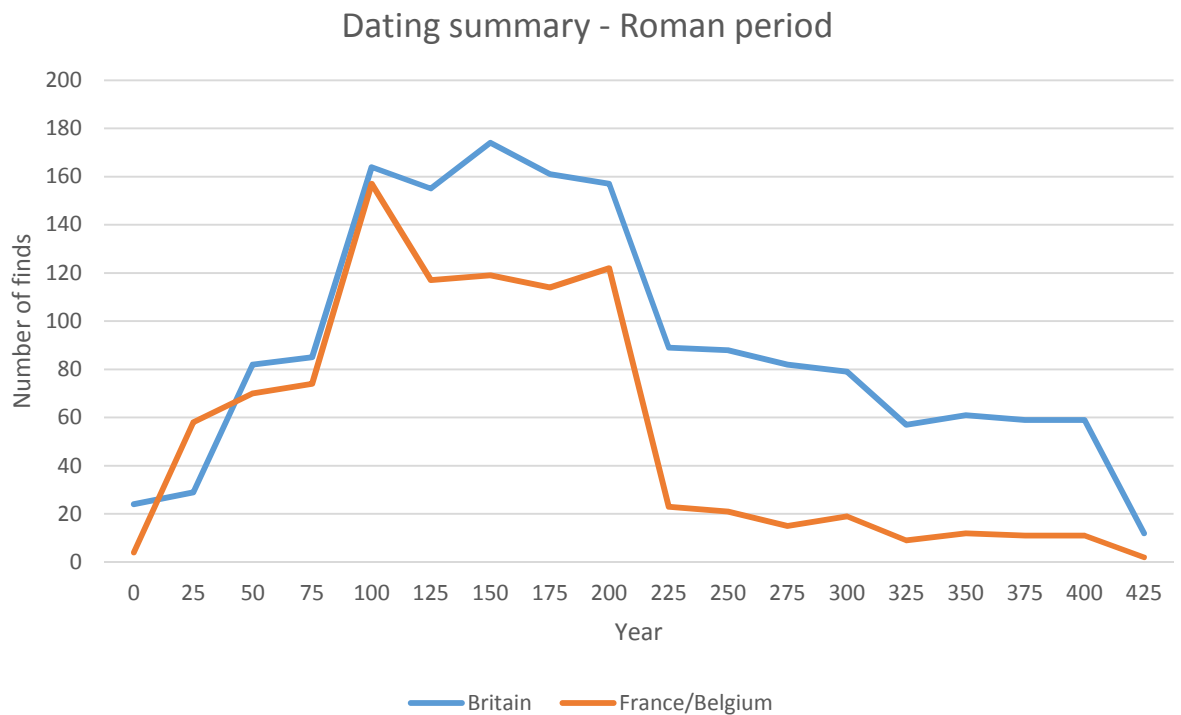
Figure 8.17 - dating summary of finds from the Roman period.

8.5.1 Socioeconomic changes

The Crisis of the Third Century and the splitting of Britain and Gaul into their own Empire are the most obvious events to disrupt the lives of people living in these areas. In Gaul there appears to be little effect until the middle of the 3rd century, when invasions by the Goths and Persians weakened the stability of the entire Empire (Drinkwater 1983, 87-89), but in general it appears that the province suffered less than others, with the resulting drop in long-distance trade causing a slow economic decline into the end of the century (Drinkwater 1983, 221-226). Some cities actually appear to have prospered during this period (Woolf 1998, 83). Likewise, in Britain it is also hard to tell how large an economic impact there was, and whether this was merely an era of stabilisation after a period of rapid socio-economic change (Bédoyere 1992, 76). The decline in towns may also reflect a change in trading patterns, with a shift from the urban centres to small towns (Mattingly 2006, 334). It has been noted that, depending on how the changes are examined, Britain was either in decline or in a new golden age (Mattingly 2006, 326).

While the decline in numbers of some types of finds during this period may have been due to changes in fashion rather than economically-driven (Drinkwater 1983, 220), it is interesting that so many of these are linked in some way to international commerce. Samian ware went into decline in the late 2nd century, possibly as a result of Clodius Albinus declaring himself emperor in Britain (Drinkwater 1983, 82) and possibly because its spread among the lower classes had reduced its appeal (Woolf 1998, 202). It was widely traded across the Western Empire, and the resulting loss of workshops may have contributed to the drop in the numbers of ceramic figurines around this time. This event may also be behind the rapid drop in the use of brooches in Britain at the end of the 2nd century (Hattatt 1982, 35). Rings also appeared in smaller numbers from the beginning of the 3rd century (Henig 1974a, 29), and their role in securing official documents, which would include trading agreements, suggests a decline in that sort of interaction. On a more purely economic note, mosaics, a sign of a wealthy homeowner, also went into decline in the 3rd century before a resurgence in the 4th (Henig 1995, 101). Even if these changes were motivated by stylistic taste, the Crisis and its economic fallout must have had some impact, whether through a reduction in manufacture, a lack of trade in those items being made, or changes in demand.

If these objects, especially figurines and brooches, were primarily decorative, then a decline could be easily explained by economic conditions. However, if they acted in a more culturally significant role, then there must have been a deeper societal change, whether in response to other events or merely coincident with them. The fact that chickens were a symbol of wealth and prosperity may have been related to this, with fewer people embracing the bird as a symbol of their own affluence in an unstable socio-political environment. Unfortunately, the weak dating of most artefacts makes it difficult to trace this sort of development.

8.5.2 Eastern cults

More visible through time are changes in the chicken's place in religion. Earlier religious associations continued into the later centuries of Roman rule, as seen in later depictions of Mercury such as the 3rd to 4th century plaque die from Stibbington, Cambridgeshire (find 543), the Mercury ring from the 4th century Thetford Treasure (find 334), or the restored figurine from Dax (Aquitane) (find 1191). New ones started

to appear as eastern religions, with more of a focus on personal spirituality, made their way into Britain and Gaul.

Mithras is among the best known of these new deities, with an exclusively male cult sometimes liked with that of Cybele (Ferguson 1970, 112). While the remains of chickens, nearly all male where sexing data is available, are commonly found on these temple sites as the remains of feasting (Lentacker *et al.* 2004a, 90; King 2005, 362), and chicken gut was supposedly used to tie the hands of initiates during ceremonies (Daniels 1962, 8), there is little evidence to confirm a Mithras-chicken connection in this study. A chicken is sometimes shown with Cautes, a figure representing sunrise, in mithraic scenes (Lentacker *et al.* 2004a, 90), and a chicken replaces him on a brooch from Ostia, Italy (Lentacker *et al.* 2004b, 73). A fresco from the Santa Prisca mithraeum in Rome is seemingly unique in depicting a chicken in a scene of cult activity (Lentacker *et al.* 2004b, 76), but the bird is otherwise elusive in mithraic art.

A more common figure is a snake-legged, chicken-headed figure usually referred to as Abraxas, who commonly appears on intaglios with the name IAO inscribed somewhere, often on the reverse of the gem. This is a Hellenised version of the Hebrew god Yahweh, and appears in Gnostic writings and Greek Magical Papyri (Philonenko 1979, 299; Henig 1983, 30-31), although no figure of this description appears in Gnostic texts (Boon 1972, 172). In contrast to the more functional rings of earlier Roman times, the images and inscriptions sometimes hidden on the underside of the gems suggest they may have had a more protective role (Boon 1974, 72) or indicated an even deeper devotion to whatever the image represented, especially given the general decline in the use of signet rings at this time.

The source of this enigmatic creature is a mystery. The name IAO gives it Jewish and Greek ancestry, and it appears to have become attached to the familiar snake-legged figure in Egypt, possibly evolving from a snake-legged depiction of Hecate, with a chicken head replacing the three heads of the goddess (Philonenko 1979, 302-303). The name Abraxas appears to have a numeric significance, adding up to 365, the number of days in a solar year (Ferguson 1970, 168, 177; Henig 1974a, 122), and suggests that the figure may be a forgotten sun god. It has been suggested the cockerel head and the snake legs represent solar and healing aspects of the figure, respectively (Ferguson

1970, 167).

This strange newcomer is unlikely to have replaced existing religious figures, but mingled with them in a continuing evolution of belief, as did the Roman gods at the beginning of the Roman period. The similar rings of Mercury (find 334) and Abraxas (find 335) in the Thetford Treasure demonstrate this, and Mercury's sphere, particularly in his more magical form as the Egyptian-derived Hermes Trismegistos, would seem to overlap with that of Abraxas quite nicely. The solar aspect could indicate an association with Mithras, another emerging religion (Henig 1974a, 122), but could also apply to any sun god.

A similar chicken-headed figure at Brading villa on the Isle of Wight (find 332) is sometimes thought to represent Abraxas, and has been called the "most controversial panel on any of the Brading mosaics" (Henig 2013, 254). While the chicken head is reminiscent of the creature on the intaglios, it has been pointed out that he lacks Abraxas's other common elements, such as his snake legs, shield, breastplate, and whip (Witts 1994, 114; Neal and Cosh 2009, 266), and, if it is Abraxas, it would be the only mosaic in Roman Britain to depict a god from outside Classical mythology (Smith 1977, 106, 154). Therefore, this chicken-headed character is almost certainly something else. It may simply be a pun on the name of an individual or priest of Cybele, who were called galli (Witts 1994, 115; Neal and Cosh 2009, 268), or represented a scene in an arena featuring a pun-based character (Witts 1994, 113-116) or purely fictitious creature (Ling 1991, 150). A connection to some other religious figure is not impossible, however, and Henig has examined the other mosaics at the villa and suggested, based on the presence of other saviour-type figures, that it was the centre of an esoteric 4th century cult, with the chicken-headed character representing Hermes Trismegistos, based on the Egyptian god Thoth, whose ibis head was reimagined as a chicken due to lack of familiarity by either the artist or the owner (Henig 2013, 260-261).

Intriguingly, apart from a poorly provenanced chicken-headed figurine (find 1354) that likewise lacks his other attributes, there appear to be no depictions of Abraxas in France or Belgium. While this could represent differences in sampling or recording, if any of these images were found there, it would seem quite natural for such an unusual object to get some attention. The British examples are quite widespread, coming from Somerset

(find 529), Northumberland (find 425), Hampshire (find 386), and Norfolk (find 335). Two of these were found in hoards at Thetford (find 335) and Great Chesters (find 425), but the exact nature of these deposits is uncertain. If they were jewellers hoards, as has been suggested at Thetford (Johns and Potter 1983, 72), then these objects may have been locally manufactured, which would help explain their presence in Britain. Why and how this religion, philosophy, or intellectual club spread to Britain and not Gaul remains a mystery. One dubious possibility is that these depictions took over when the sitting chicken brooches (see above) went out of fashion, but there simply is not enough evidence to be certain.

Mithras and Abraxas, whatever beliefs he represents, were not the only eastern figures associated with chickens, although they do appear to be the strongest. The cult of Cybele, an ancient Phrygian mother goddess, was older, coming to Rome around 204BC, and was very popular in the early Roman period (Potter 1987, 187), but is discussed here because of the eastern origin of her cult. She and Demeter merged somewhat as far back as the 5th century BC (Gantz 1993, 69), and, as she appears to have been worshipped in southern Gaul and Lugdunum in the 2nd century (Drinkwater 1983, 78; Woolf 1998, 229), some of the goddesses discussed above could have been local versions of one or both. It is her consort Attis who is of more interest in this phase, however.

Attis castrated himself by the river Gallus, from which he appears to have taken an association with chickens (Vermaseren 1966, 31-35), and which may also explain why Cybele's priests were known as *galli*. Regardless of the source of the title, the contrast between the extraordinary virility of the cockerel and eunuchs appears to have been a source of humour in the Roman world (Baird 1981, 95-96). It could be that the contrast between the two was symbolically appealing, as well, since chickens appear with other aspects of this cult in various depictions. An image of Attis offering a pinecone to a chicken was found in Campania, Italy (Vermaseren 1966, 16), and a sarcophagus in the J. Paul Getty Museum (number 86.AA.701) includes a figure, presumably the deceased, lounging and offering grapes to a chicken perched on his foot, while to one side dancers wear the Phrygian hats associated with the cult (Koch 1988, 24-26). In Britain, where Attis may have become associated with Apollo Cunomaglus and, in later years, Orpheus (Henig 2004, 234-235), the chicken association is only dubiously expressed on a relief

from Vindolanda (find 469), which depicts a cockerel beneath a crescent moon and a cross. These symbols suggest an association with Attis, or possibly Men, an Anatolian moon god (Coulston and Phillips 1988, 41), but in isolation it is impossible to be sure.

8.5.3 Christianity

The most notable religion to come out of the east into the Roman world is Christianity, and it is in these formative years that the symbols of the Roman world were incorporated into what would be the dominant religion in Europe for centuries to come. The study of animals in Christian imagery is a subject in itself and largely beyond the scope of this research, but the chicken was an early adoptee into this new religion's iconographic repertoire.

Early Christian art has a distinctly Classical influence and old themes were translated into new ones (Ramage and Ramage 1995, 299-301). This was probably not, at least in early years, done with the explicit purpose of replacing existing beliefs, but rather, in a society where religion was more fluid than it would become, a continued use of a familiar symbol. In some cases, earlier images seem to have been reused, especially Roman rings, which had a surge of recycling much later in the 13th century (Henig 1974a, 198). One of these was an intaglio of the Abraxas type (find 437), reset in a contemporary ring and found buried with a bishop in Chichester Cathedral, but there are older examples of the mixing of religious images as well, such as a ring with an image of Venus found in Silchester which had a Christian inscription (Henig 1974a, 28). This suggests that early images, and perhaps even some later ones, may have been owned by Christians, but not actually been Christian in nature, but a pragmatic mixture of contemporary symbolism. There is no reason that early adoptees, especially later in the Empire when it may have been fashionable to claim membership in the legalised religion favoured by the Imperial family, would not have kept their existing mental catalogue of meanings. An image of a chicken could still symbolise a desire for wealth, fertility, protection, or devotion without an explicit connection to a particular religion.

Figure 8.18 - scene from an ivory casket depicting the denial of St. Peter (British Museum number 1856,0623.4, image copyright Trustees of the British Museum).

Over time, new explanations for these adopted symbols were required, and as the chicken makes few appearances in the Bible, the predominant association became that of St. Peter and his denial of Christ three times before the cock crowed (Beaune 1986, 70). An early 5th century ivory casket from Rome in the British Museum (number 1856,0623.4, see **Figure 8.18**) depicts this scene with a chicken perched on a shelf in the corner. Rather unusually, many of these images resurrect the old theme of the chicken on the column, as seen in the two French sarcophagi which follow this theme (finds 1227 and 2225). By the 9th century, the column appears to have evolved into the placement of a chicken on top of church spires (Beaune 1986, 72), although this could also be explained by the placement of a symbol in a highly visible place, which is merely coincident with the earlier elevated placement on a column. Eventually, this further evolved into the weathervane, which continues the tradition even into the modern day (Callisen 1939, 177; Mockridge and Mockridge 1997, 6).

The meaning of the Christian chicken is difficult to establish, as during Roman times it may have carried only the universal associations, with later members of the religion retroactively applying their meanings to the earlier iconography. There appears to be a theme of vigilance and alertness, defending the faithful and keeping them to their path (Toynbee 1973, 222; Beaune 1986, 70), probably drawing on the theme of St. Peter and expanding the cockerel's role as a dramatic timepiece into a divine reminder of his duty. If the chicken did have a more pronounced funerary symbolism in other parts of the Roman world than is seen in this collection, then its appearance on Christian sarcophagi could merely be an extension of this, and the chicken may have served as a symbol of resurrection, and their reappearance on lamps from this period has been used to suggest a possible solar association (Beaune 1986, 70). Three of these late lamps are known from Gaul (finds 1285, 1940, and 2214), but they lack any overt religious connotations.

Going further into the medieval period, chickens, cockerels in particular, seem to take on more than one set of associations. Within the religious organisation, they take on a more positive light, possibly purposely giving a positive spin to a symbol that had already been incorporated into the iconography. Along with the themes of vigilance and protection described above, once again sound may have played a role, with the cockerel's crowing becoming associated with the priests' sermons. Meanwhile, in non-religious contexts like the tales of Reynard the Fox, the cockerel appears more foolish, dominated by lust and aggression (Beaune 1986, 72-73). This change from a revered symbol of abundance and fertility, occasionally associated with phallic imagery, to something more humorous may have been a deliberate effort to purge an undesirable meaning from a symbol adopted by Christianity (Baird 1981, 97), or it may simply have reflected different aspects of a familiar animal, highlighted as desired in the appropriate context.

Figure 8.19 - left, 20 francs coin with a chicken on the reverse (Coinquest.com, coin 3815); right, €100 coin with stylised chicken head on the reverse (Numista.com, 100 Euro rooster).

This dichotomy of symbolism may have had a role in the adoption of the Gallic Rooster as a symbol of France. In Medieval Europe, France's detractors represented it with a cockerel as a symbol of foolishness and stupidity, but with the rediscovery and embracing of their past as Gaul during the Renaissance, this relationship changed. When it became clear that, in addition to the chicken's seemingly diminished role in Christianity, it had an illustrious past in the service of other gods, the French embraced the animal as a positive symbol. Although it went in decline again, it returned as a symbol of the Revolution (Beaune 1986). Even into the 20th and 21st centuries, the French continue to embrace the chicken and, after two millennia, it is fitting that they continue to mint coins bearing its image (**see Figure 8.19**).

9 Conclusion: why did the chicken cross their minds?

Animals are not simply food, devoid of context and meaning. While in many modern cultures human-animal interaction, apart from pets, is kept to such a minimum that some children do not know where meat comes from, in the past this relationship would have been far more intimate. Even those whose wealth or status kept them from personally taking a role in the care of their animals would have shared in this relationship, simply through the social impact on the rest of their society, much like how even the most metropolitan of modern city-dwellers understands the strength and aggression of a bull.

Chickens are an unusual domestic species. Not only are they a relatively recent addition to the menagerie of civilization, they are entirely a creature of the domestic sphere. While other domesticates go out into the wilderness, even if it is the tamed wilderness of the pasture, chickens remain in and around the home of their owners. They spend the day scratching for food and clucking at each other as people go about their business and come inside at night, possibly even roosting in their keeper's home. This close relationship may be why they have such a strong impact on the societies that keep them, a relationship often expressed through that society's material culture.

The cultures of Roman Britain and Gaul left a collection of material that shows a strong affinity with chickens. These birds were a ubiquitous iconographical element during the Roman period in Britain and Gaul, present from the very earliest years to the collapse of the Empire. As a symbol, they were adopted by both natives and immigrants from other Roman provinces, as demonstrated by the variety of artistic styles occurring in these depictions. Objects with a physical association with chicken remains were somewhat lacking in the archaeological record, and it was the depictions that were most effective in this study, offering a glimpse into the minds of the people who made them and what they thought of the creatures they chose to include in their art.

The aims and objectives of this study were achieved, but not without encountering some challenges. None of these were wholly unexpected, however, with only their magnitude being uncertain at the beginning of the project. The most notable issue with this dataset is the lack of archaeological context for so much of it. While this is understandable for material collected many years, decades, or centuries ago, often found in museum collections, and metal detectorist finds, which collectively make up a significant proportion of the assemblage, many artefacts from more recent excavations are similarly

sparse on details. Sometimes this is simply because the artefacts were found in the topsoil or other disturbed contexts, but often the published report does not contain enough information to properly cross-reference the archaeological features, the zooarchaeological remains, and the artefacts in a meaningful fashion. This is a widely recognised issue (Eckardt 2002, 29), and can be partially explained by limits in what can be included in published reports. For more detailed site studies, the information is almost certainly available in the archives.

This study, by its very nature, looked at broad regional trends. To get a true picture of what was happening on a local level would require a more detailed study of the individual sites, which would involve accessing those archives. As an example, a site with a high concentration of chicken figurines may not demonstrate a particular affinity for them if it contains many figurines in general, but that detail may not be apparent when that site is included in a larger catalogue broken down by species. For that matter, this study was focused on a single species, and while some comparisons to other species was possible by looking at some of the published material, specifically catalogues of particular find types, a true comparison between them was not possible. As a result, it is still unclear how typical or unusual depictions of chickens were in relation to those species.

However, this study has succeeded in its goal of extracting some idea of meaning from this material. The clues to this meaning were often subtle and individually intangible, but cumulatively create a picture of the chicken in Gallo-Roman and Romano-British life.

Of the objectives, the investigation of chronological variation and development was the most difficult to fulfil. The poor dating of the assemblage is a side-effect of the lack of context and prevented the creation of a precise timeline of how these artefacts varied over the centuries of Roman rule. However, as demonstrated in Chapter 8, it was still possible to broadly group them into earlier and later periods, and to trace the development of chicken iconography leading up to this period. The resulting timeline, although imprecise, reveals enough of the general trends to examine the evolution of chicken iconography over these few centuries.

Most chicken iconography was small, portable, and personal, representing generally low-impact artefacts. Large, public, high-impact objects were relatively uncommon and nearly always religious in nature. With the early appearance of chicken-related

artefacts, and the hints of their place in at least some Late Iron Age groups, it seems the former probably influenced the latter. Chickens were a symbol adopted by the people as opposed to an idea pushed down from the upper levels of society. They were already known, although uncommon, by the time they appear in material culture, and the beliefs of those cultures would have had time to engage with them. It is very unlikely that chickens represented a "Roman" concept, but rather, as with so many aspects of life at the time, were a multi-cultural melange of ideas and beliefs (Webster 2001, 219). The incorporation of Britain and Gaul into the Roman world was a catalyst resulting in a period of rapid cultural evolution in these regions.

Much like a modern Briton is unlikely to purchase a tea towel featuring a chicken because it reinforces their connection to the source of the food in the kitchen they hang it in, the people who owned these objects may have thought little about the meaning behind them, but that meaning will have lurked somewhere in their subconscious and influenced how they interacted with them.

When examined collectively, the meanings embodied in these objects came into focus. As discussed in Chapter 8, the commonly cited meanings of light and death are quite tenuous when examined in depth. The light association is based on the cockerel's crow at dawn, and could have been such a central concept that no embellishment was needed in these depictions, but the lack of birds shown in the act of crowing, as well as their limited appearance on and with objects associated with light, suggests this was not a primary symbolic source. Likewise, the paucity of chicken depictions in funerary art, and the individual nature of those objects deposited in the grave, suggests that the underworld association, if any existed, was quite weak as well.

A connection to combativeness or victory is somewhat more plausible, but mostly supported by chickens crouched in an aggressive stance. As with the association between crowing and light, this may have been something so inherent to the nature of chickens, and the males are undoubtedly aggressive creatures, that the bird itself represented aggression. If so, it is unusual that the most visible male element, the spur, which is also his weapon, is so rarely depicted. So competition and victory, themes seemingly exemplified centuries earlier in the Panathenaic amphorae of Greece, also appear to be only minor components of the illustrious chicken at best.

The strongest theme appears to be that of abundance and prosperity. This is mostly represented through associated images of agricultural plenty like pieces of grain, fruit, or the cornucopia, but some objects, most notably signet rings, had a more direct use in

financial transactions, and the common appearance of chickens on them may be connected to this. It could be that the lack of chickens on Imperial Roman coins is not only due to a lack of interest from the highest levels of Roman society, but a taboo on including an image of wealth on the representation of that wealth. This theme best explains the ubiquity of chicken imagery. The acquisition and preservation of, if not wealth, then a comfortable, prosperous life is a universal goal, shared across cultures and levels of society, and a symbol associated with it would be expected to be among the most common encountered.

This attachment to prosperity appears to be an important component of the chicken's religious associations, which in the Roman period is most strongly represented with Mercury, although this relationship was by no means exclusive. As a popular, multi-purpose god, Mercury has many aspects that could forge a link between his worshippers and chickens, and these have been thoroughly explored (see 8.4.2), but his connection with commerce and production appears to be where the two overlap the most, with the often attributed "herald of the dawn" and psychopomp associations failing to stand up to close scrutiny.

The chicken appears with Mercury most often, but Romano-native male deities were more uniform in appearance than female ones, and the cockerel, once adopted by a few equated with Mercury, likely became a standard "Mercurial" element when applied to local variations. Female deities were more individual, and may have only adopted chicken imagery when the local cult found it appropriate or appealing. The association between chickens and Rosmerta, the female half of a native divine couple, appears on the surface to only be through her consort, Mercury, but she, and other goddesses who may represent local variations, also share symbolism of abundance. Chickens, when they appear with them, are a further symbol of abundance.

The types of objects most strongly associated with chickens, mostly small and personal, support the idea of an individual connection with the concept of the animal. The artefacts of personal adornment are the strongest of these, creating an even more intimate bond than, for example, merely displaying a figurine in the home. Again, this is appropriate for a symbol of prosperity, possibly viewed in even simpler terms as a good luck charm.

For the most part, Britain and Gaul appear to have been quite similar in their distribution of chicken-related material culture. Some of the differences can be explained in practical terms, such as the ceramic figurines, much more common in Gaul

than Britain, being found closer to where they were manufactured. Others are less clear, with perhaps the best example being the sitting chicken brooches; so common across Britain, but unknown beyond its shores. The later Abraxas rings, although significantly less common, are another example of geographically restricted objects. These show that, while the chicken may be universal, its expression, and potentially its associations, had regional differences, and there was no single "Roman" culture across this area. Some of the iconographic associations vary by time and region, as well. The tortoise, Mercury's companion for centuries as Hermes, all but disappears as he moves north, as do the palm leaves appearing with chickens in the early lamps of southern Gaul. These objects, becoming ever more alien on the journey to Britain, would have lacked the pervasive symbolism of their native lands, and so faded away.

There is not often a strong correlation between large or unusual assemblages of chicken bones and the material culture. This is most apparent at religious sites like Mithraic temples, which tend to have large deposits of male chicken bones, but nothing in the way of artefacts. The temple of Mercury at Uley, Gloucestershire is an even better example. Unlike Mithras, who rarely appears with chickens, Mercury and his cockerel companion are a common pairing, but there, apart from some religious sculpture, chicken-themed objects were almost entirely lacking. Clearly, their presence on a site was more complicated than what deity they were associated with, but as each temple may have worshipped a different version of that god, there is probably no universal explanation.

This highlights one of the main objectives of this study, which is to demonstrate the need for greater interaction between the different sub-disciplines of archaeology. As a zooarchaeologist needs to know the details of where the bones were found, whether articulated in a pit or scattered along the length of a ditch, so do they need to know what other objects were found on a site to fully understand how humans and animals interacted there. This is especially true when those interactions were on a mental or spiritual level that may not be reflected in the physical remains of those animals. The coins of the Late Iron Age are a prime example of this, as northwest Gaul and southern Britain were unexceptional in terms of chicken remains, but the coins offer a far different picture. To understand chickens there requires a different focus. Likewise, the disconnect between the physical remains and imagery mentioned at the temples above only becomes a subject of further inquiry when the two lines of evidence, namely the faunal remains and the small finds, are considered together. Equally, should a specialist

of another field read this, it is hoped that it will inspire them to engage with the zooarchaeologist whenever they find an object depicting, used with, or made from an animal.

There is still plenty of scope for further research. As mentioned above, more focused studies on individual sites with a high concentration of chicken-related material culture would build a better picture of what was happening on a local level, and, when looked at together, address some of the issues of context and dating. On a broader scale, this study needs to expand beyond these three countries to explore what is happening in the rest of the Empire. Most significantly, by extending into Italy, it would show if chickens were viewed the same way in the heart of the Empire, and possibly shed further light on the origin of Mercury's chicken. It is entirely possible that these meanings were not driven by Rome, but were provincial in origin.

This study was also focused on only the few centuries of Roman administration in these regions. While earlier examples of material culture are unlikely, it would be informative to see how chicken symbolism developed along with the remains of the Empire into the early medieval period and beyond, expanding on the brief summary in Chapter 8. Chickens did not vanish from the home during these periods, nor did their symbolism. Whatever came after would grow from the seeds of these earliest associations.

Perhaps most significantly, this approach should be applied to other species. Knowing how similar or different these relationships were may say as much, or more, than any one species in isolation. While looking at one species is informative, only by examining the rest will a true picture of human-animal interactions emerge. The true goal of the zooarchaeologist should not be to merely know how humans exploited and consumed animals as a physical resource, but to explore how humans engaged with and consumed animals symbolically, spiritually, and culturally.

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