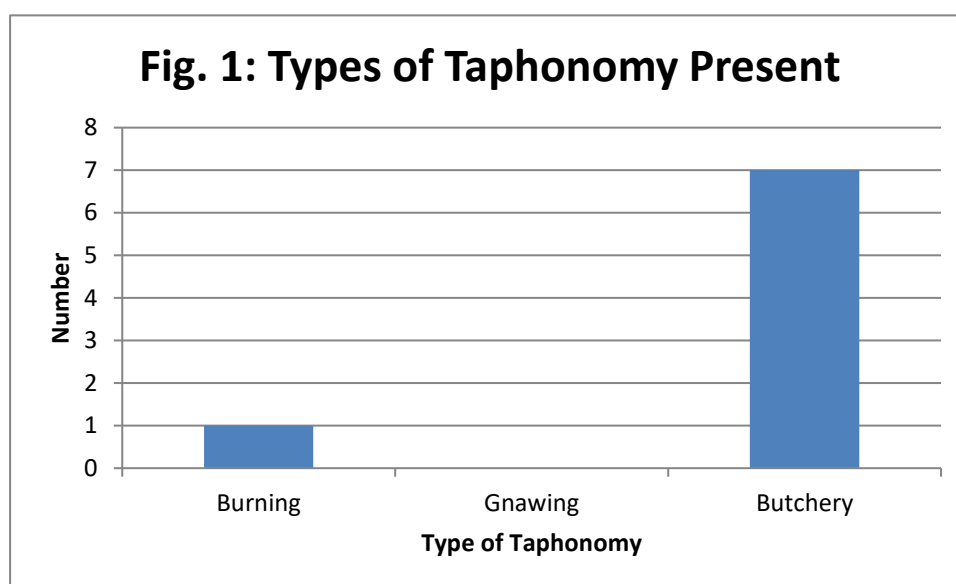


## NINE WELLS – ZOOARCHAEOLOGY

Overall, 67/375 (17%) of the bones could be identified to species and element and were therefore entered into the database. Most could not be entered due to their fragmentary natures. The small size of the assemblage means that some analysis is difficult (such as MNI and the age profile of the assemblage) and that any interpretation is not wholly accurate.

### Taphonomy

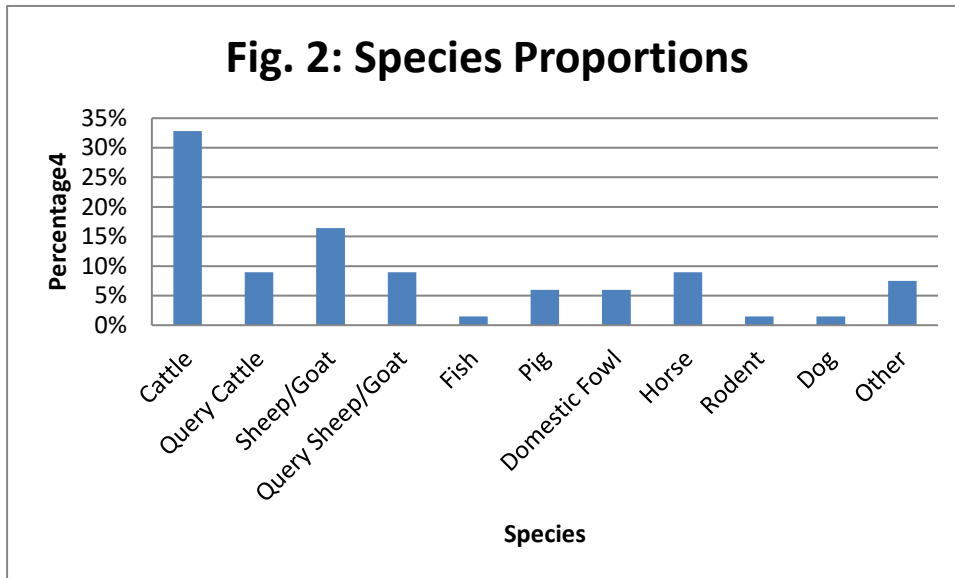
The condition of the bones able to be identified was on the whole, rather good. Taphonomic processes (burning, butchery or gnawing) were only identified on 8 elements (Fig. 1). Butchery was the most common, with 7 elements having marks of different kinds. This was mainly present on domestic mammals used for eating – cattle, pig and sheep. A possible chop mark was identified on a horse metapodial, which could indicate butchery, but could also possibly be excavation damage. Burning was the other type of taphonomic processes identified, with one element possible exhibiting this – on a domestic fowl femur, which would suggest that the meat was cooked on the bone.



The wide variation in in element type could possibly indicate that butchery was undertaken on site. This is supported by the high number of teeth and the presence of feet bones.

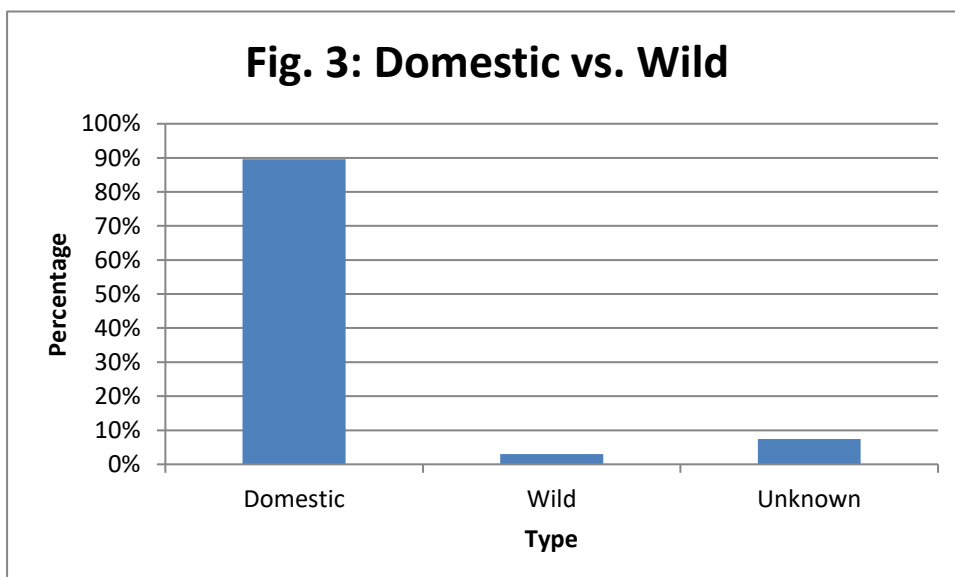
### Species

The percentage of different species using NISP (Number of Individual Specimens) can be seen in Fig. 2. This is not the best indication, as it can often overestimate the number of animals present. MNI (Minimum Number of Individuals) is difficult to calculate in this case due to the small number of element identified, therefore, the NISP has been used.



The proportion of species is typical of Roman zooarchaeological assemblages, with cattle being present in the higher percentage. Sheep/goat is the next most common eating animal, followed by pig and domestic fowl. Horse is the third most common animal overall, possibly to do with the more rural location of the site.

Domestic species make up the majority of the assemblage (89%) (Fig.3). Wild species are the fish and rodent (possibly rat). The population relied almost solely on domestic animals, with a small amount (1 element was identified) of fish. Birds identified were domestic, though it is possible that some wild species were consumed. This sway in the data could be due to the poorer preservation of these smaller bones compared to those of mammals and also the ability of excavators to spot them.



### Age

The age profile of the species on site was not able to be determined. There is not enough data to be able to make any reliable interpretation. This is due to the fragmentary nature of the elements, the small number of elements of each species and many of the dental evidence being from single loose teeth.

### Conclusion

The zooarchaeological assemblage from Nine Wells appears to be typical for the Roman period – with a high proportion of domestic animals, especially a reliance on cattle in the diet. Any interpretations should be treated with caution however, due to the very small size of the assemblage.