

COTTAM A

WORKED BONE AND ANTLER, BY STEVEN P ASHBY

1. Composite Comb. Ashby Type 3, single-sided handled. L.115 (incomplete) H.34 (incomplete) Th.13 mm (conjoined) COT96, 5043, sf621; 5000, sf106

Part of a single-sided handled and composite comb (50% complete), indeterminate antler. The piece comprises: 2 connecting plates (one now detached) of shallow plano-convex section, and straight, gently tapering longitudinal profile; and 4 billets (2 toothplates and 2 endplates; the comb's full complement). The proximal endplate has a straight edge, and graduated teeth; the distal endplate also has graduated teeth, but has a curving, convex outer edge. The comb originally had a single gauge of c 6 teeth per cm (typical of the form), but all teeth are now lost (0 /c 50 remain). However, tooth bases are well enough preserved for marked beading to be visible; this comb had experienced heavy and prolonged use before it was finally lost or discarded.

2. Composite Comb. Ashby Type 3, single-sided handled. Fragment of connecting plate. L.26 (incomplete) W.20 (incomplete); Th.6 mm (conjoined). COT 96, 5000, sf428. Part of a single-sided handled and composite comb (<25% complete), antler, probably red deer. The specimen comprises a small fragment of one connecting plate from the handle. The fragment is concavo-convex in cross-section, but probably represented a handle that, when complete, was of circular section. Porous core material is visible on the interior surface, confirming that the handle and upper edge of this comb were modelled (unlike the above find sfs106/621) in the 'southern' style. That is to say that the handle would have consisted of a single antler tine, rather than a pair of connecting plates. No rivets, perforations, or staining are visible, and little can be said of the comb's means of manufacture.

3. Socketed point. L.53.76; Diam.17.94 mm. COT96, 5009, sf241.

An implement cut from the proximal end of a sheep metatarsus. 28mm below the proximal articulation, a deep circumferential channel has been worked, though it is unclear whether this has a function or is merely for decorative effect. Just below this channel, the bone is roughly sheared, such that the end is transversely broken, and comes to a point. The proximal articular surface is centrally perforated, so that a central channel runs through the entire length of the object.