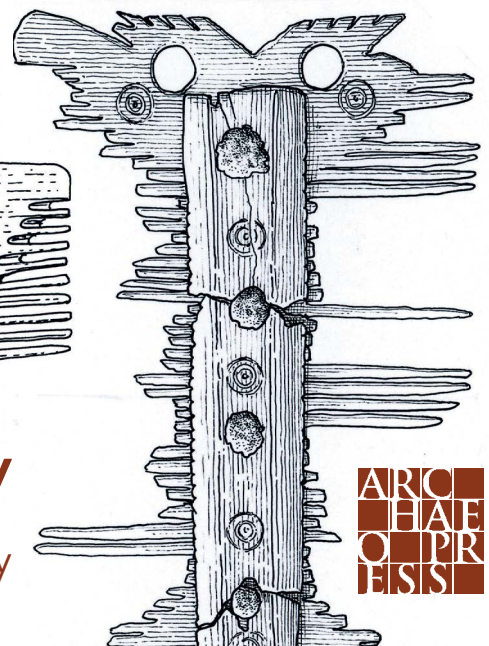
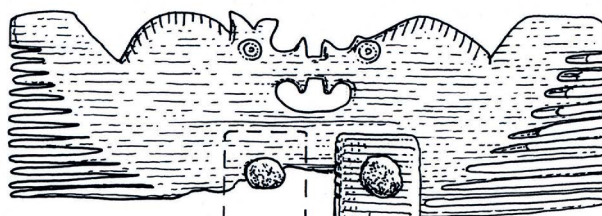
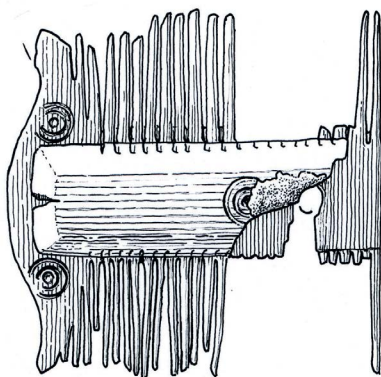
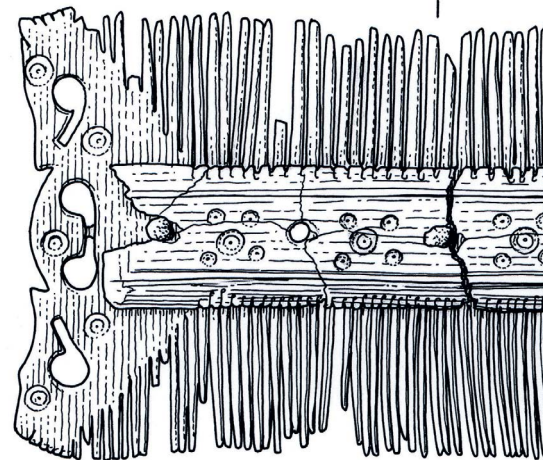
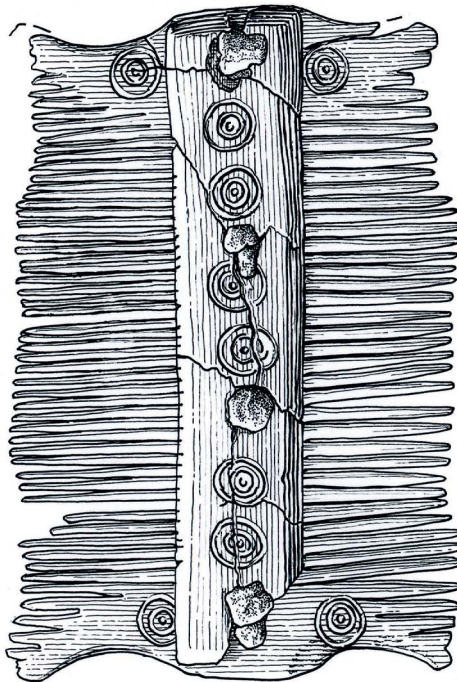
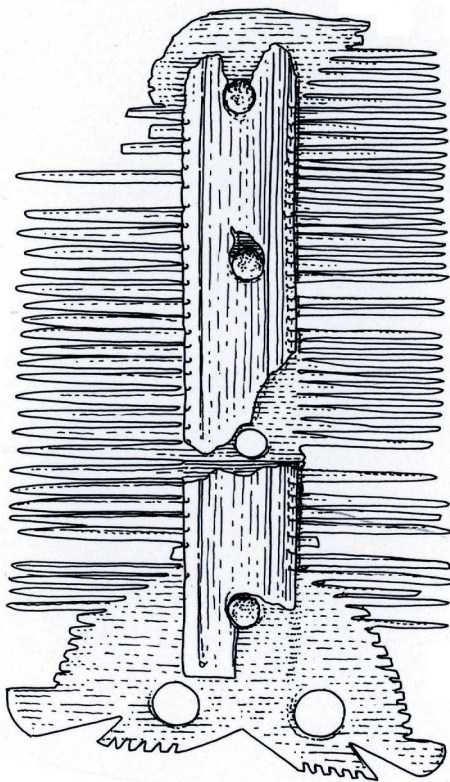
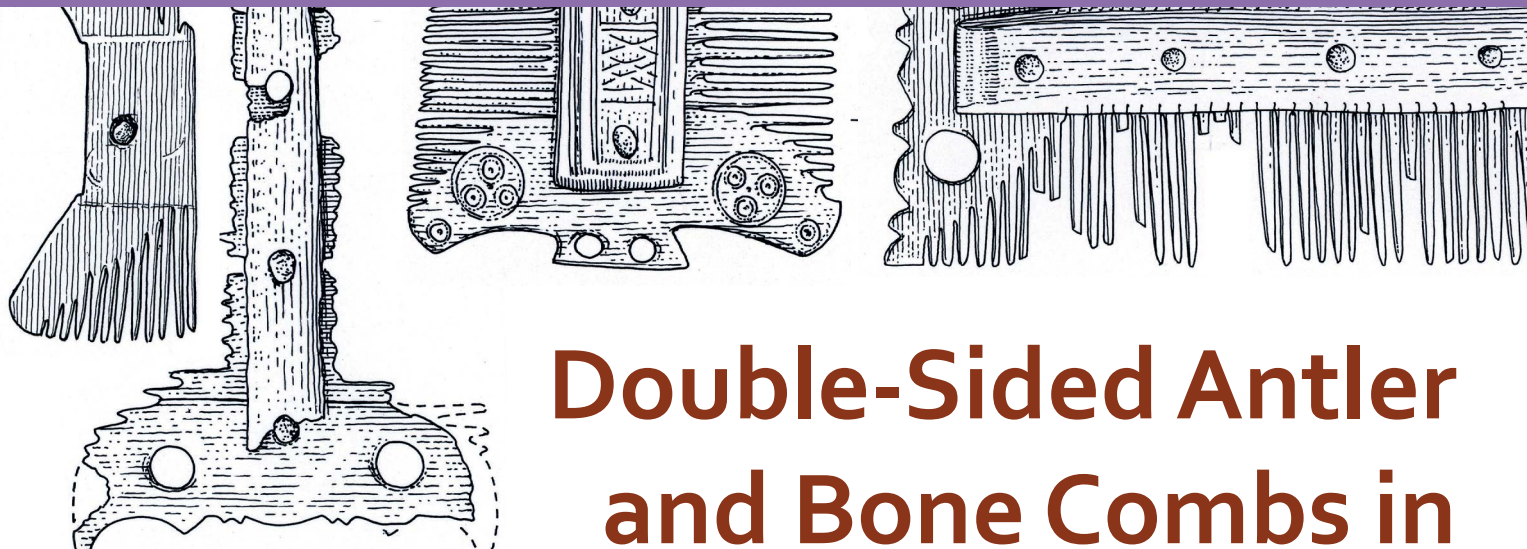


# Double-Sided Antler and Bone Combs in Late Roman Britain

Stylistic Groups, Context and Status



**Nina Crummy and Richard Henry**

Illustrations by Nick Griffiths and Richard Henry



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## Preface and Acknowledgements

Nina Crummy writes: My interest in combs of this form was first raised in the 1980s not, as might be expected, by those from Colchester's Butt Road cemetery, despite my close involvement at the time with both the small finds from that town and in particular that funerary site, but by some remarkable examples with zoomorphic end-plates from Winchester. For the invitation to be involved in the publication of first the bone-working debris and then, more broadly, the non-ferrous small finds from the Winchester suburbs I am grateful to Patrick Ottaway and Ken Qualmann, both then of Winchester Museums Service, which led not only to a long interest in combs but also to fruitful and much appreciated working relationships with their colleagues Gillian Dunn, Sandy Mounsey, Geoff Denford, and most particularly, Helen Rees, the latter being the driving force behind completion of the long-gestated small finds volume, *Artefact and Society in Roman and Medieval Winchester. Small Finds from the Suburbs and Defences, 1971–86* (Rees *et al.* 2018).

In the 1990s, when I was employed in the Archaeological Archive of the Museum of London, Ian Riddler, then of the Museum's Archaeological Service (MoLAS), drew my attention to an unusual comb with a central parade of zoomorphs, which was from a burial on the unpublished Giltspur Street site. Knowing my involvement with the Winchester material, he suggested that I contribute a chapter on the Romano-British examples to a multi-period volume on combs he was planning with Arthur Macgregor, then of the Ashmolean Museum. This volume never materialised, but my contribution morphed into 'Bone-working in Roman Britain: a model for itinerant craftsmen?', an article published in Michel Polfer's 2001 *Instrumentum Monograph, L'Artisanat romain: évolutions, continuités et ruptures (Italie et provinces occidentales)*. I am grateful to all three of them for these opportunities, and to Nick Merriman, then of the Museum of London, for arranging for Nick Griffiths to provide the drawings for the article.

At the end of the 1990s I shifted to working as an independent specialist, and over the next twenty-five years was commissioned to write small finds reports by Reading University and by a number of archaeological units based in southern and central Britain, which enabled me gradually to collect information on other combs that I came across in site assemblages and earlier publications. It was at this period that Nick Cooke, then of Wessex Archaeology, engaged me in discussing combs and their use, and subsequently provided me with information on new finds, especially those from more recent excavations in Winchester's Lankhills cemetery. Patrick Ottaway, by then working for York Archaeological Trust, drew my attention to the Wellington Row combs from the city, and both he and Nick's encouragement kept the 'comb project' alive in the 00s, for which I owe them many thanks.

This volume, then, has been a long and slow developer. It was first planned as a book chapter, then a journal article, and, having grown beyond that, has finally reached fruition here. Its completion is the result of collaboration with Richard Henry, who, alongside the technical ability to generate many of the necessary illustrations, has supplied the enthusiasm to bring the study to a conclusion. His interest in combs is far more recent, as they form part of his doctoral studies at Reading University on the material culture of late Roman Britain, and this has led him to learn of several recent discoveries from southern Britain. It is to him that I owe the greatest thanks.

Both Richard and I owe a huge debt of gratitude to Nick Griffiths, who overcame the varied styles and sizes in which many of these combs were drawn in a number of publications, old and new, in order to make the visual appearance of the assemblage both comparable and coherent. We would also like to thank the Roman Finds Group for a grant towards Nick's work, and Stephen Greep for sharing updated information and images of combs in York Museum.

Over the course of the last 30 years or so many other people have helped in many ways, from discussion, to providing contextual information, to notifications of newly-excavated combs, to photographs and permission to use them; we are immensely grateful to them all. There is no fairer way to list those not mentioned above but alphabetically: Robert Atkins (MOLA Northampton), Alistair Barclay (Cotswold Archaeology), Kath Barclay (Winchester Excavation Committee), Mili Bhatt (volunteer, Southampton Cultural Services), Paul Booth (Oxford Archaeology), Ian Cartwright (Institute of Archaeology, Oxford), Hilary Cool, Geoffrey Dannell, Ellie Drew (York Archaeological Trust), Hella Eckardt (Reading University), David Evans (Pontefract Museum), Martin Green, Luke Harris (Wardell Armstrong), Rachel Jones, Jenny Mann (City of Lincoln Archaeology Unit), Christine McDonnell (York Archaeological Trust), Aleks Osinska (Cotswold Archaeology), Rachael Seager Smith (Wessex Archaeology), Jacky Sommerville (Cotswold Archaeology) and Stephen Upex (Institute of Continuing Education, University of Cambridge). Our families have been supportive, as always, and Kate and Jamie Crummy also provided practical help.

Thank you to Andy Murdock and Ioannis Sofos from Maploom for their work creating the interactive map which includes the distribution of late Roman double-sided antler combs.

We are particularly grateful to Mike Fulford (Reading University), who kindly read through the text, much to its benefit, and to David Davison, Mike Schurer, Ben Heaney and Kristina Gwartzman of Archaeopress for steering the volume through to publication.

#### *Interactive map*

An interactive distribution map for the various stylistic groups of combs is available at:  
<https://doi.org/10.32028/9781803276441-Map>



# Chapter 1

## Introducing the combs

### The dataset

The dataset of late Romano-British double-sided composite combs is not large by many standards, but it can nevertheless be used in a variety of ways. We have concentrated on various contextual and stylistic themes, such as date, typology, archaeological, social and geographical contexts, age, gender and identity. The decorative cutting of the end-plates can be linked to contemporary Romano-British artefacts that use a similar repertoire of motifs. Over time it passes from elaborate to rudimentary, adding to the dating evidence for individual combs. The less elaborate examples are here referred to here as ‘devolved’, rather than debased or degenerated, as the change does not represent a linear shift but one that leads to a variety of forms. The Catalogue gives summary details of the provenance, archaeological contexts and descriptions of the combs, and provides a bibliography for each. Appendix 1 groups the combs from burials by sex and age, Appendix 2 is a concordance by end-plate form and Appendix 3 by site type.

We have not discussed the practical use of these combs and the benefits of combing to the hair and scalp, as they are covered in Paola Pugsley’s discussion of the use of the H comb (2003: 23–25), nor have we discussed hair in Roman literature and life, and readers wishing to follow this line of research are referred again to Pugsley 2003, and also to Boon 1991, Croom 2002, Eckardt and Crummy 2008, Stephens 2008, Olson 2009, Derks and Vos 2010 and Jones 2013.

Collection has not been absolute but has concentrated on combs from burials, or with stylistically relevant end-plates, or those providing good dating or contextual evidence, the main aim being to answer questions of typology, chronology and social distribution. Many comb finds are only teeth or broken tooth-plate fragments that could not be assigned to a comb type, or in some cases a certain Romano-British date, and only a selection has been included here. New notifications have also not been included, such as two tooth-plate fragments from Piddington villa in Northamptonshire (S. Greep, pers. comm., 2022). Some items listed in Greep 1983 are used in our distribution map but have not been catalogued here as they either have no archaeological context attached, or the context is ambiguous, or the identification as Roman could not be verified (see the list at the end of the Catalogue). For example, a small (24 by 18mm) piece of a double-sided composite comb from the villa at Frocester, Gloucestershire, has not been included in the Catalogue because it is too small for a Roman date to be confirmed, there was pottery dating from the 5th to 8th centuries from the site, and it came from medieval ploughsoil (Price 2000: vol. 1, 113; vol. 2, 99, no, 56). Also from ploughsoil is a comb fragment from Farthinghoe, Northamptonshire, logged on the Portable Antiquities database (NARC-242E72). It is so little worn, with crisp ring-and-dot ornament and barely corroded iron rivets, that the recorder noted that its preservation ‘is extraordinary given that it was discovered on the surface of a ploughed field’. The end-plate design could be slotted into the scheme outlined in Chapter 5, but replica combs can be found at craft and re-enactors

markets (a good replica of a Winchester comb has been seen at one) and a Romano-British date for this fragment is not absolutely certain.

### Terminology

Different finds specialists have used a range of terms to describe the three structural elements of late Roman double-sided combs. The terminology used here is based on that of Patricia Galloway (1979; 1983) and is preferred for its lack of ambiguity. The rectangular central sections with teeth cut along the full length of the outer edges are known as *tooth-plates*, the two end sections as *end-plates*, and the two long strips that are riveted onto these plates to combine them into a comb as *connecting-plates* (Figure 1.1). End-plates have sometimes been referred to as handles or end segments (Henderson 1949: 151; Grep 1983: 305), and terms used for the connecting-plates have included cleats, handles, side-plates, strengtheners, retaining plates, reinforcing bars, central bars and connecting bars (Ward 1911: 264; Radford 1932: 82; Jones 1975: 113; Grep 1983: 305; MacGregor 1985: 74–75; Allason-Jones 2006: 236; Booth *et al.* 2010: 91, 121, 169, 181).

### The combs in a wider context

Late Roman composite combs, both double- and single-sided, represent the first appearance of a comb-making technology that continued into the medieval period. They are major signifiers of the late fourth- to fifth-century transition, along with distinctive pieces of metalwork such as zoomorphic belt-fittings and spurs (Hawkes and Dunning 1961; Shortt 1959; Leahy 1996; Henry 2022a). Just as the arrival of one-piece combs of ivory and wood represented a new technology of grooming in Britain in the mid 1st century AD (Pugsley 2003: 22–23), the introduction of antler or bone composite combs to Britain over three hundred years later heralded a shift in comb-making technique that persisted into the 2nd millennium. Such a prolonged survival argues for the success of the technology, which over that period enabled various forms to be produced, single- and double-sided, handled, boxed and cased, all able to fulfil their prime function of grooming human hair.

The origins and development of composite combs lie in the 1st or 2nd century AD in northern Europe, principally in the lands around the Baltic, and have been set out in Thomas 1960 and MacGregor 1985. A summary of all the various forms, technologies and chronologies of both one-

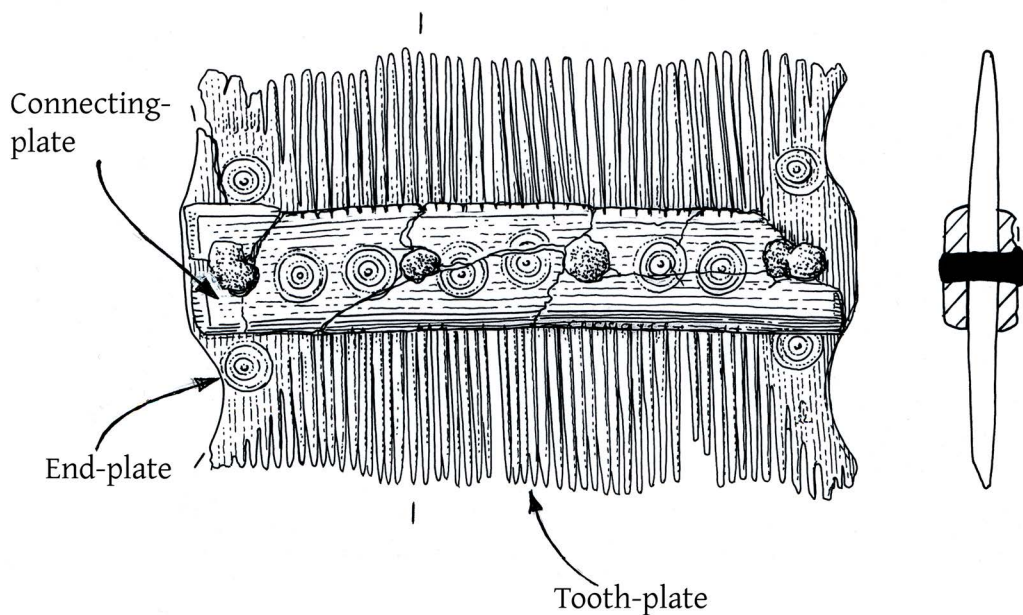


Figure 1.1. Terminology used for the parts of a comb.

piece and composite combs made of ivory, antler, bone and horn can be found in MacGregor 1985 (73–96), while early historic and Viking-period combs from Atlantic Scotland have been studied in detail by Ashby (2009; 2011), and early Irish combs by Dunlevy (1988). Late Roman double-sided combs are the equivalent of Ashby's pre-Viking Age type 10. There are substantial assemblages of Saxo-Norman combs from London and Anglo-Scandinavian to medieval combs from York that chart the changes in materials and the technology of manufacture over those periods (Pritchard 1991; MacGregor *et al.* 1999: 1923–1940).

The end-plates of late Romano-British composite double-sided combs are decoratively profiled, even if only slightly, and may be further ornamented by incised decoration and/or variously shaped perforations. Some have zoomorphic end-plates, showing dolphins, horses, and what are defined here as owls. Dolphins and horses are also shown on the contemporary metal buckles described by Hawkes and Dunning (1961), suggesting that the appearance of these combs in Britain might also be linked in some way to the social upheaval and military activity of the AD 360s. A broad classification scheme is proposed here for the combs, and explorations of their distribution and range of contexts, particularly in terms of funerary use and gender associations, sets them within the wider social and material culture of late Roman Britain. They are summarily described in the Catalogue and are referred to in the text and illustrations by the Catalogue number in bold type.

Before focusing on these late Roman composite combs, it is worth setting them briefly in the context of combs in the preceding centuries.

### ***Combs and grooming in Iron Age and Roman Britain***

In the sense of a comb being an object with teeth, and given that wooden and horn objects do not survive well in the archaeological record, there is no concrete evidence to show that the Iron Age peoples of Britain ever used such an implement to untangle or style their hair. There are a very few copper-alloy, single-sided, coarse-toothed combs, although their use on human hair is far from certain (Ashby and Bolton 2010). There are also substantial one-piece, single-sided bone or antler combs that are often markedly curved at the lower coarse-toothed end and are generally

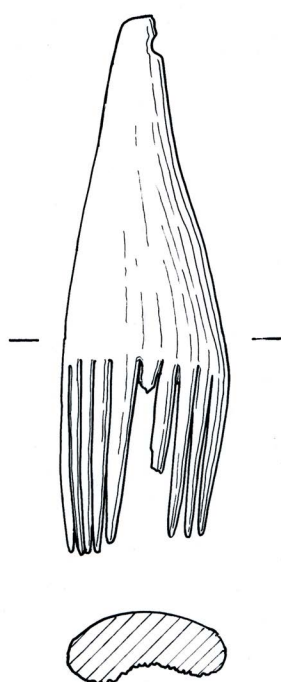


Figure 1.2. Antler weaving (?) comb from Colchester (after Crummy 1992: fig. 6.10). Not to scale.

accepted from their contexts and associations as weaving tools used to beat down the weft on warp-weighted looms (Figure 1.2; Wild 1970: 66–67; Sellwood 1984: 371–378). Although there is an example from a Middle and Later Bronze Age context at Birka in Sweden, these combs do not appear in Britain until around the middle of the 1st millennium BC and there are many examples that suggest they remained in use in the north into the 2nd century AD (Hodder and Hedges 1977; Greep 1998: 279–280). Various authors have explored alternative interpretations for their function, and Greep in particular has argued that, where they occur on Roman sites with little or no other weaving equipment, they may have been used for other purposes (Greep 1998: 279–280), but there is as yet no substantive evidence that they were used for combing the hair of either animals or people. None has been found in a burial in direct association with other grooming equipment, and it is only primary contextual evidence of this kind that is likely to provide grounds for reinterpretation of their use.

That personal grooming in Britain took on new forms from the 1st century BC is evident by the increase in grooming implements, and particularly in the immediate pre-conquest period (Hill 1997). Instead of combs, personal grooming is chiefly evidenced by metal cosmetic grinding sets, tweezers, nail-cleaners and ear-scoops found either linked together as small toilet sets or as individual instruments, razors and hand mirrors (Jackson 2010; Eckardt and Crummy 2008; Stead 1967: 38; Stead and Rigby 1989: 105; Boon 1991: 28; Johns 2006; Sealey 2006; Joy 2010).

The Sicilian historian Diodorus Siculus, writing c. 60-30 BC, briefly described the Britons, or more accurately *some* Britons, from a 'soft' primitivist viewpoint (Piggott 1975: 92), albeit one that included statements that can be verified historically and archaeologically. He noted that their houses were built of logs and thatched with reeds, that they harvested grain by cutting off the ears and storing them in pits, and that they used chariots in warfare. He did not describe their dress or hair, but implied that they were not vain or overly concerned with their appearance:

*They are simple in their habits and far removed from the cunning and vice of modern men. Their way of life is modest and they are free of the luxury which is begotten of wealth. (History V, 21)*

Caesar's description of British men, taken at first hand, is well known, even if again this can only apply to those in direct contact with Gaul and Rome:

*Indeed, all the Britons dye themselves with woad, which produces a blue colour, and gives them an even more terrifying appearance in battle; they wear their hair long and shave every part of their body apart from the head and the upper lip. (de bello Gallico V.14).*

Iron Age British women also seem to have kept their hair long, with Cassius Dio describing Boudica as having thick, tawny locks that came down to her hips (*Roman History*, LXII.ii.2-4). Even allowing for Dio's taste for exaggeration, the image is close enough to that given by Caesar for British men that we can assume it was reasonably accurate. Yet the hair of males in Britain may not have been as long as this implies, as perception of the hair length of others is dependent upon what the viewer regards as the norm, and men's hair in the Julio-Claudian period, and particularly in the Julio-Claudian family, was short enough to leave the lower brow and face clear (Zanker 1990: 293; Croom 2002: fig. 23, 1).

Grave 203 at King Harry Lane, Verulamium, is dated to c. AD 40-60 and gives some substance to Caesar's statement. It has been identified as a male burial that contained a toilet set and a cosmetic set, suggesting that the man was concerned with his appearance, both cleaning his nails and ears and grinding pigments with which to colour his face and body (Stead and Rigby 1989: 326; Eckardt and Crummy 2008: 77-78, 90; Jackson 2010: 62, 178, no. 436). We might, though, query whether or not this really was a male burial, as there were no items generally regarded as male-gendered within the grave. Similarly, Grave 13 in the same cemetery appeared to be a male buried with a mirror (Stead and Rigby 1989: 103, 278), an artefact generally regarded as female-gendered but with some debate as to whether this is indeed the case (Johns 2006: 68-71; Sealey 2010; Joy 2010: 220-223). However, recent theoretical approaches to material culture have emphasised that identity is not static but complex and mutable, that in the past an individual was unlikely to have an egocentric view of self-identity but one based within a framework of gender, kinship or class, and that artefacts cannot always be taken *prima facie* as evidence of gender (Díaz-Andreu 2005; Díaz-Andreu and Lucy 2005; Insoll 2007: 3, 15; Meskell 2007: 28-35). A case in point is that of the Late Iron Age cist burial from Bryher, Isles of Scilly (Johns 2006). Dated to the first half of the 1st century BC, this grave was furnished with a scabbarded sword with its belt, a shield, a mirror, a brooch, a finger-ring and an unidentified tin object; fragments of haematite in the burial fill show signs of wear consistent with grinding to produce a red powder that could be used as body paint. Given this array of grave goods, some have argued that the cist contained a double burial, a male with a sword and shield and a female with a mirror, but the excavation was very carefully done

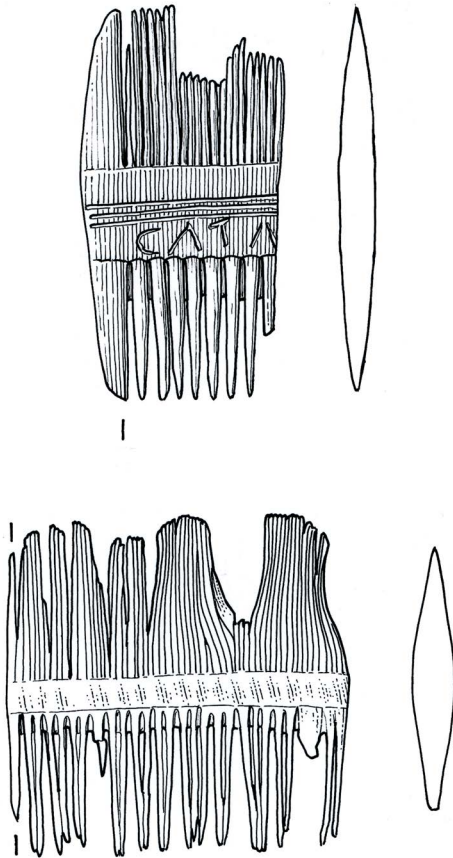


Figure 1.3. Horn and boxwood combs from Fishbourne (after Henig and MacGregor 1996: fig. 54, 1-2). Not to scale.

and there is no substantive evidence to support the inclusion of a second body, while recent DNA analysis of the enamel peptides from the teeth judged the deceased to have a c. 96 per cent probability of being female (Johns 2006: 18–19; Mays *et al.* 2023).

The absence of a comb from any Late Iron Age burial, male or female, is quite striking, particularly when set against a list of Iron Age mirror burials (Johns 2006: table 15). A double-sided, one-piece horn comb residual in soil used as make-up c. AD 75 for the Period 2 garden at Fishbourne might imply that Iron Age Britons used combs made from materials that need anaerobic conditions to survive deposition, yet the form of the comb is so similar to the one-piece ivory, bone and boxwood combs of the Mediterranean world, and Fishbourne itself is a site so redolent of wealth and continental influence well before AD 75, that this comb may well be an import (Figure 1.3; Henig and MacGregor 1996).

As no wooden, horn, bone or ivory comb that can conclusively be shown to have been used for grooming the hair has been found in an Iron Age context in Britain (Pugsley 2003: 22; Greep 1983), it seems that the conquest-period influx

of new people with new ideas of how to look and how to live was the point at which one-piece combs in these materials reached Britain, and it was certainly when they reached the province in any quantity. It seems that most would have been made of wood, as although horn, ivory and wood are all materials that require damp conditions to survive in the archaeological record, only wooden combs have been found in any number. One-piece bone combs of much the same double-sided form as those of ivory and wood are known from Pompeii, but none has been found in Britain (Ward-Perkins and Claridge 1976: no. 70), while a rare find of an ivory comb came from a late Roman inhumation burial, probably of a juvenile female, during the Cambridge to Matching Green pipeline excavation of 2001–2002. Although in poor condition and fragmentary, enough remained of the comb to show that it was a one-piece type made of ivory, >70mm long and 40mm wide. The grave also contained a figurine of Mercury and a necklace made up of silver, jet and glass beads (CMG01, Site 3, excavated by Network Archaeology Ltd, SF 13176, context 13456; Crummy 2004.)

Two surveys of ivory artefacts from Roman Britain have estimated that there are fewer than 70 from the whole province, with combs making up a very small proportion of the total. Although the data for one survey were gathered over 40 years ago, and the other did not set out to be comprehensive, the number of ivory combs from Britain is unlikely ever to have to be great (Greep 1983; 2004: 403; Eckardt 2014: 96–104). In contrast, 153 wooden combs have been found in Britain, 61 of them from waterlogged contexts at Vindolanda; most are of boxwood but some are of Norway spruce or fruitwoods (Pugsley 2003: 14–26). Given that both wood and ivory need specific conditions to survive in the ground, the difference here between combs of the two materials undoubtedly reflects their economic value.

Although so few combs dating from the conquest up to the late 4th century have survived in Britain, we can be sure that there would have been many thousands more, especially of wood, found in a wide range of social and economic contexts. Pugsley has stressed that combs were used not only for grooming but also for cleaning and delousing the hair (2003: 25), and Derks and Vos also point out that there is evidence from Roman military contexts that cleanliness, neatness and conformity of appearance were prime factors in bonding groups of soldiers, an observation supported by the quantity of combs from Vindolanda in Britain and Vechten in the Netherlands (2010: 65). Compared to military personnel, some post-conquest Romano-Britons, male or female, may have left their hair comparatively poorly groomed while continuing to use cosmetic grinding sets and small toilet kits containing nail-cleaners, the first a purely indigenous artefact type, the second a continental La Tène introduction that survived in post-conquest Britain even though Romanisation had effectively removed the nail-cleaner from the grooming equipment of Gaul by the Augustan period (Jackson 2010: 67; Eckardt and Crummy 2008: 69–72).

With the arrival of the new composite comb-making technology sometime in the AD 360s and with antler and bone being less prone to decay except in very adverse soil conditions, the number of combs in the archaeological record increased. The Catalogue in this volume is by no means comprehensive but lists just over 150 from a period covering some 60–70 years at the broadest, compared to the 153 wooden combs from the preceding 320 years from c. AD 43 to c. AD 360 (Pugsley 2003: 145–150). As with the wooden combs, we can be reasonably certain that many more double-sided composite combs would have been in use than are listed here, and the extent to which they penetrated the material culture of late Roman Britain is demonstrated by their recovery from a wide range of social contexts.

### **Combs and Winchester: a preliminary note**

A particularly distinctive feature within the assemblage of double-sided composite combs from funerary contexts is the substantial number from Winchester, particularly from its northern cemeteries and most particularly from Lankhills. Although from a purely local viewpoint these combs form only one small element in the town's range of grave deposits (Ottaway *et al.* 2012: 350), they make up nearly a quarter (22.5 per cent) of the wider British assemblage. Combs from Winchester are referred to throughout the following chapters describing style, distribution and context, and it seems reasonable to propose that a workshop making double-sided composite combs was established in the town in the mid to late 4th century. Stylistic evidence points to other workshops in the north and east (see Chapter 6), but these were not necessarily large and in some cases they appeared to serve only a local community, while Winchester and its hinterland appear to lie at the heart of the comb data. How far that hinterland spread is not certain. It certainly included Andover, some 18 miles to the north, and may have embraced several urban centres, such as Silchester and Dorchester-on-Thames, about 30 and 50 miles north respectively, Dorchester, some 60 miles to the south-west, and Cirencester about 65 miles to the north-west, none of which have so far produced large numbers of combs (Figure 1.4).

INTRODUCING THE COMBS

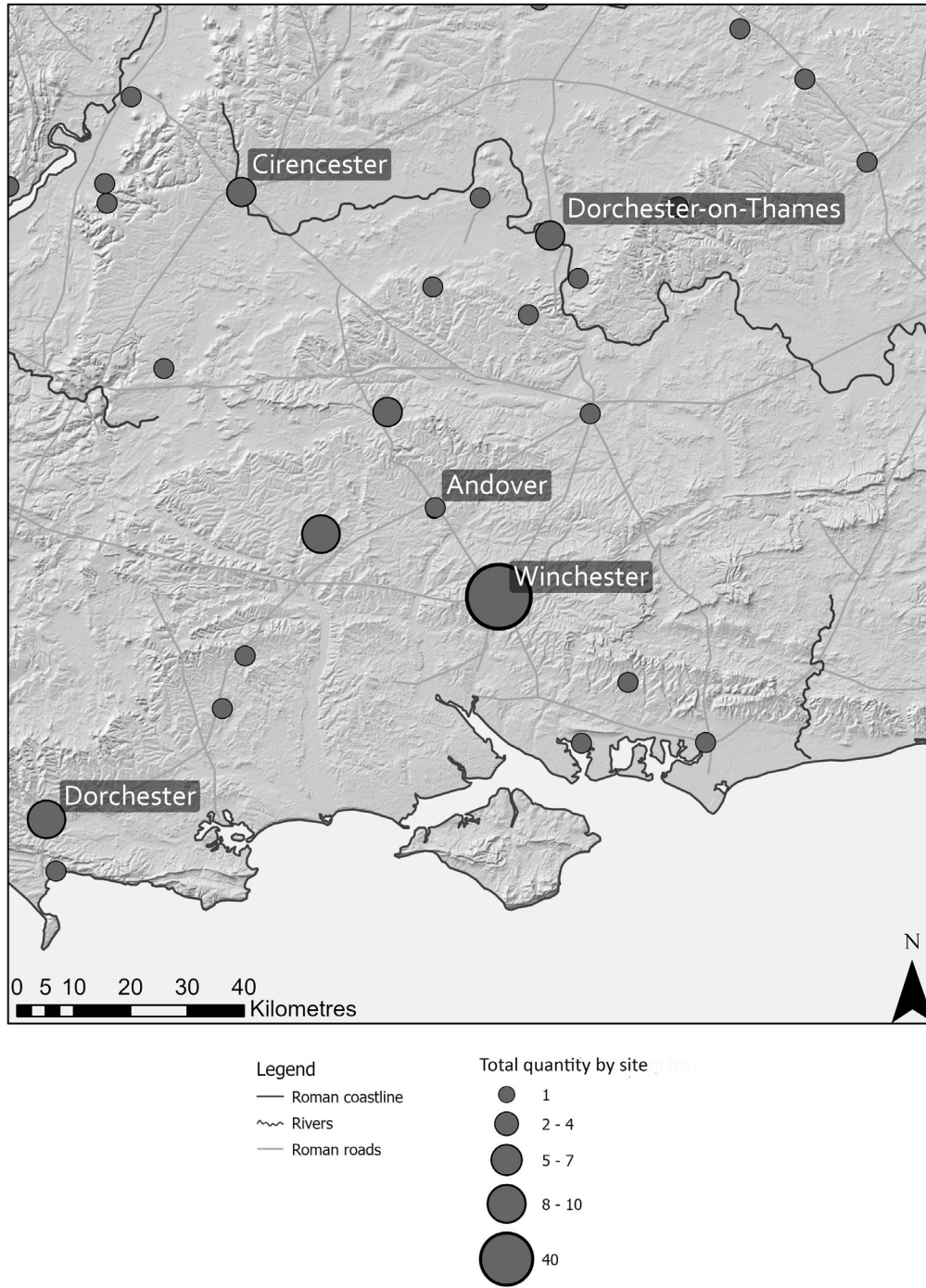


Figure 1.4. The distribution of combs in the Winchester region.

## Chapter 2

### Their date of arrival in Britain

#### The evidence

Many composite double-sided combs from Romano-British occupation sites are unstratified or are from contexts dated only as 'late Roman', while others are from even more broadly dated contexts, usually because of the presence of pottery produced over a long period. Much of this vague and ambiguous dating is the result of convention (Crummy 2006a: 129), but it continues to blur the issue of the arrival of the form in Britain and in some cases prevents refinement of site phasing (Allason-Jones 2006: 235–236).

Reliable contextual evidence from occupation sites places the arrival of these combs somewhere in the later years of Constantius II, the reign of Julian, or the early years of the reign of Valentinian I (broadly c. AD 350–370), and their use continued into the early 5th century. A selection showing the consistency of the evidence across a broad geographical spread is given here (catalogue numbers in bold), and many other examples can be found in the Catalogue; these data were supplied for use in Cool 2010. References to the relevant site reports or museum accession/registered find numbers are given for each of these combs in the Catalogue:

- 76. Uley, Gloucestershire: fragment from demolition debris from the Structure II (temple), Phase 6b, early 5th century;
- 80–83.** London: one complete comb and three other comb fragments from a bath-house drain deliberately filled in c. AD 370;
- 85.** Canterbury, Kent: fragment from dark earth post-dating AD 370;
- 91.** Colchester: destruction debris with late Roman pottery dating into the 5th century;
- 92.** Great Dunmow, Essex: complete comb deposited in the upper layer of votive Pit F219 together with a pewter dish; the layer also contained a copper-alloy finger-ring and two irregular FEL TEMP REPARATIO falling horseman coins dated to AD 353–361, but these three items were not necessarily linked to the comb and dish (see below); the lower layer contained six more coins of the same type and a spindlewhorl made from a recycled potsherd;
- 93.** Chelmsford, Essex: fragment from robbing material dated to later than c. AD 390;
- 106.** Langton, Yorkshire: fragment from a well in use up to at least c. AD 395; the comb was found close to a coin of Theodosius I (AD 379–395) and above a layer that contained only late Roman pottery;
- 109.** Shiptonthorpe, Yorkshire: fragment from a late fourth-century or later surface;
- 110–116.** York: combs and comb fragments from rubbish deposits thrown inside a disused stone building after c. AD 380;
- 117.** Newton Bewley, Co. Durham: fragment from building; carbon-14 dated to AD 350–535.

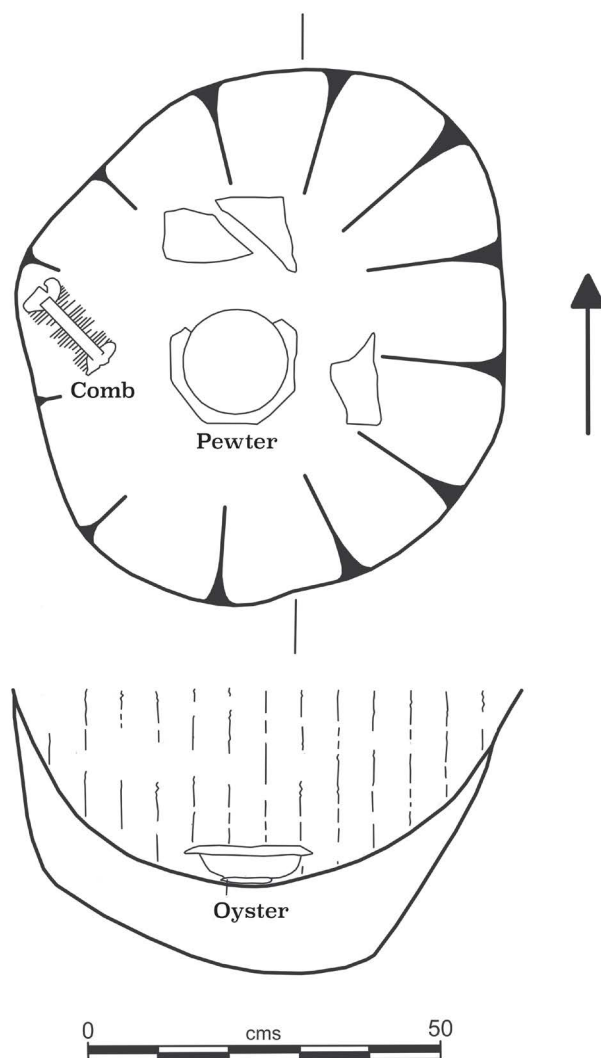


Figure 2.1. Great Dunmow votive pit F219 (after Wickenden 1986: fig. 29).

**131-132.** Bath, Bath and North East Somerset: fragments from Periods 5d and 5e, very late 4th to early 5th century;

**134.** Bancroft, Buckinghamshire: fragment from sub-Roman destruction of the villa.

On stratigraphic grounds the Great Dunmow comb (92) was deposited later than *c.* AD 360. Wickenden allocated a date-range of *c.* AD 355-365 to both layers in votive Pit F219 (1988: 38), but the section suggests that all eight coins were placed in the lower, primary, fill, perhaps as a purse group, but were disturbed when the pit was later cut into for the deposition of the dish and comb, with two subsequently being redeposited in the upper layer (Figure 2.1). The date of the coins therefore provides a *terminus post quem* for the secondary fill. The finger-ring may belong in either layer.

The mid to late fourth-century appearance of these combs suggested by the examples from occupation sites above is confirmed by those from inhumations, with associated grave deposits, particularly coins, suggesting that none was buried before *c.* AD 364. This may be optimistically early, given the wear on the coins, the late fourth- to early fifth-century date of some of the associated bracelets and the dates for the Winchester Lankhills graves proposed by Clarke (1979:

table 2), all of which point to a manufacturing date in the AD 360s for the combs in the earliest burials, towards the middle or end of the broad AD 350-370 range proposed above. A selection of burials with a comb and other items dated to the very late 4th or early 5th century is given below, but many others that have been dated to this period on stratigraphic grounds by the excavators can be found in the Catalogue:

- 10. Winchester, Hampshire: Lankhills, grave 63, dated AD 370-380: bone bracelet;
- 11. Winchester: Lankhills, grave 333, dated AD 390-410: ivory bracelet;
- 14. Winchester: Lankhills, grave 365, dated AD 370-390: coins of AD 335-337 and 364-378;
- 15. Winchester: Lankhills, grave 381, dated AD 390-410: coin of AD 364-378;
- 17. Winchester: Lankhills, grave 413, dated AD 390-410: two coins AD 388-395 and three of AD 388-402;
- 26. Winchester: Eagle Hotel, Andover Road, grave 311; coin of AD 387-388;
- 29. Winchester: Winchester Hotel, Worthy Lane, grave 2045: coin of AD 366;
- 31. Andover, Hampshire: Winchester Street, grave 8: two bone bracelets;
- 35. Roden Down, Compton, Berkshire: two coins of AD 364-378;
- 126. Amesbury Down, Wiltshire: grave 5059: two coins of AD 364-378, one of AD 378-392;
- 43. Poundbury, Dorset: grave 1122: two copper-alloy multiple-motif bracelets, bone bracelet;
- 51. Colchester, Essex: Butt Road, grave 109: bone bracelet;
- 57. Colchester: Butt Road, grave 647: six copper-alloy toothed cogwheel bracelets, plus a coin of AD 367-375 residual in the fill;
- 60. Guilden Morden, Cambridgeshire: inhumation 38/3: copper-alloy toothed cogwheel bracelet, two bone bracelets;
- 62. Orton Waterville, Cambridgeshire: Lynch Farm, grave 24: bone bracelet;
- 65. Norton, North Yorkshire: St Peter's Church: three poorly-recorded skeletons with grave goods that include bone bracelets.

The burials with coins are self-explanatory and the two copper-alloy bracelet types are well-researched British types and their dates are also reliable (Crummy 2006a: 122, 128; Swift 2010: 247-253). The date range for multiple-motif bracelets is established by their presence in burials at Lankhills dated to AD 370-390 and AD 390-410 and at Colchester to later than AD 360 (Clarke 1979: 307, 309, Type E; Crummy *et al.* 1993: tables 2.52, 2.67). Particularly distinctive is a child burial from Chesterton (*Durobrivae*) furnished with grave goods that combine elements of both late Romano-British and early Migration Period material culture: eight copper-alloy armlets (two of multiple-motif type), three or four ivory armlets, a necklace of six wedge-shaped amber and four black glass beads, and a possible earring (Crummy 2006b). Note that the settlement of *Durobrivae* is in the parish of Chesterton, not Water Newton, to which it was wrongly ascribed by early archaeologists (S. Upex, pers. comm.; pace Smith and Fulford 2019, table 3). Toothed cogwheel bracelets also occur in burials at Lankhills and Colchester dated to later than AD 360 (Clarke 1979: 305, Type D1e nos 554, 568; Crummy *et al.* 1993: tables 2.52, 2.67), and two come from one of the well-known early fifth-century graves at Dorchester-in-Thames furnished, like the Chesterton burial, with both Romano-British and early Migration Period artefacts (Kirk and Leeds 1954: fig. 29, 2, 5; White 1988: 109).

The value of bone and ivory bracelets as dating evidence is not so clear-cut. Cool has demonstrated, using the Lankhills assemblage, that burials there with a high proportion of bone or ivory to copper-alloy cable-twist bracelets are most likely to date to the late 4th century at the earliest (2010: 303). This does not make the presence of a single bone or ivory bracelet a totally secure signifier of a late grave, but it adds to the evidence.

### **Anomalies explained**

Anomalies of dating will often be met when dealing with small finds assemblages from archaeological excavations, ranging from the gross, such as post-medieval finds in features phased as Roman, to

the more subtle, such as late Roman objects in features phased as mid Roman. While an open mind should always be kept in case an expected date-range needs to be stretched, such problems will usually disappear when the site records are closely examined, having arisen by mislabelling, over-excavation, section collapse, or the downward slump of pit or grave fill and the subsequent infilling of the dip. On a larger scale, it is often the case that deep linear features such as ditches remained as open landscape features for centuries or even millennia after the period in which they were dug, only gradually being filled in by the build-up of humus (dark earth) as the seasons passed, the casual discarding of rubbish by people living nearby or moving across the land, and the brute force of modern agricultural machinery.

Four anomalies between the date-range of these combs and the date of their contexts assigned by the excavators are resolved here. Lankhills grave 5, containing comb **8**, was dated to AD 310-350 based on horizontal, not vertical, stratigraphy and the presence of a pottery flask only tentatively dated to ?300-350 as no exact parallel for it was known (Clarke 1979: table 2; Fulford 1979: 226 no. 2). As Clarke was writing before the date of these combs had been much researched, this single discrepancy is negligible. Today the comb would be accepted as the best indicator of date for the burial, as were those found using the data listed above during the more recent Lankhills excavations (Cool 2010: 272-273).

Three combs were from occupation contexts dated by the excavators to earlier than the AD 360s, one from Orton Hall Farm, Cambridgeshire (**96**) and two from Thorplands in Northamptonshire (**98**, **99**). They can be resolved by looking more deeply into the published records. The Orton Hall Farm context was assigned to Period 3 (c. AD 225/250-300/335) and it was acknowledged by Mackreth that this made the comb unusually early, with one suggested reason being conservative dating of the pottery (1996: 100). At Thorplands the excavators found the site difficult to phase, and they stated that the published chronological sequence may not be accurate (Hunter and Mynard 1977: 102). The context date for each comb is certainly ambiguous. Comb **98** was from context 32, a dark soil that was phased as probably of first- or second-century date but overlay ditch fill containing a sherd of a third- to fourth-century mortarium. Comb **99** came from the upper fill of a very large pit that in its main (tertiary) fill contained up to 1,000 pots and a coin of Elagabalus dated to AD 218-222. The majority of the pots provided a date for this fill of the second half of the 3rd century, but it was acknowledged that there was 'intrusive' material in the fill above. Given the size of the pit, it is probable that the main fill compacted over time, causing the surface to settle, with the resulting hollow being levelled at a later date. The position of the comb was unfortunately not defined and it cannot now be proven that it was among this later material, but there is a marked absence of combs of this form from other sites in Britain, or on the continent, in contexts dated to between c. AD 250 and AD 350/360.

Similarly, it is a truism that knowledge is cumulative, and it applies no less to archaeological research. Derks and Vos have associated the adoption of double-sided composite comb technology with the economic crisis of the late 3rd century, suggesting that supplies of one-piece Mediterranean boxwood combs were interrupted at this point and that bone and antler combs filled the gap, but without producing any specific evidence in support of this date (2010: 56). Special soil conditions are needed for the survival of wood in archaeological levels, and any sudden break in comb supply will inevitably be difficult to pinpoint. Even though many of the 153 wooden combs from Britain in Pugsley's corpus are dated only as 'Roman', she does list eight from late third- to mid fourth-century contexts (2003: 15, 145-150). Acknowledging their possible prolonged survival in use, and that the last two listed below may be residual, six point to the continued supply of boxwood combs after c. AD 260-275, as well as the use of other woods for making combs:

- Portchester, Hampshire: unidentified wood, mid fourth-century context, Pugsley no. C084; another example from Portchester, which was built in the late 3rd century, is from a context dated only as Roman (Pugsley no. C083);

- Chew Valley Lake, Somerset; two boxwood combs and two of *Prunus* sp., late third- to mid fourth-century contexts, Pugsley nos C088-C091;
- Winchester, Hampshire: boxwood comb from a child's grave at Lankhills dated to AD 310-350/370, preserved by contact with copper-alloy bracelets, Pugsley no. C102 (Clarke 1979: table 2; Galloway 1979: 246, grave 155);
- Combe Down villa, Bath and North East Somerset: unidentified wood, late Roman context, Pugsley no. C131;
- London: unidentified wood, fourth-century context, Pugsley no. C149.

Boxwood combs are mentioned in Diocletian's Edict of Maximum Prices of AD 301 (Kropff 2016: 28, XIII.7), and Meiggs, in his discussion of possible deforestation in the late Roman Mediterranean world, does not mention any shortage of boxwood for the manufacture of small objects (1982: 280–282, 382). Any hiatus in wooden comb supply in the north-west provinces in the late 3rd century may therefore have been due to political upheavals interrupting trade for a short period, and there is no evidence that composite double-sided antler combs appeared at this time to be used as an alternative.

### Contemporary material and events

The end-plate designs on Romano-British double-sided combs share many features with late fourth- to early fifth-century horse and dolphin buckles and it is within the same date range and much the same social milieu that they belong. Nail-cleaner strap-ends should also be mentioned here, as several have animal heads below the socket (Eckardt and Crummy 2008: 137–138). Hawkes and Dunning linked the appearance in Britain of Type IIA zoomorphic belt-buckles to the Theodosian campaign of the late AD 360s in the wake of the barbarian conspiracy, and Type I buckles to the same, or later, military activity (1961: 5–10, 23, 26, 28–34). Composite combs in other northern provinces can also have strong military associations (Petković 1999; 2006: 363; Bíró 2002), although this may in some cases be questioned (Tica 2018: 402, 417). The appearance of the double-sided form in Britain appears to have coincided with the arrival of the army units brought to Britain in response to the 'barbarian conspiracy' by Count Theodosius – the Batavi, Heruli, Jovii and Victores (Ammianus Marcellinus: *Rerum gestarum*, xxvii.8.6; Frere 1994: 340–341; Esmonde Cleary 2002: 36). However, given other shifts in material culture at this time, such an association cannot be accepted without question (Reece 1994), not least because the Heruli and Batavi, together with two *numeri Moesiacorum*, had earlier been on campaign in Britain in AD 360 (Ammianus Marcellinus: *Rerum gestarum*, xx.1.1; Johnson 1982: 121–123; Esmonde Cleary 2002: 35). Moreover, the general movement of groups, individuals and even high-status gifts within the Empire no doubt influenced local material culture, as did the inward movement of peoples from beyond the *limes*, and untangling this web is far from simple (Allason-Jones 2002: 131; Cool 2002b: 147).

It is probably just coincidence that the only two unfinished combs from this Romano-British assemblage are both from military sites (**86** from Richborough and **141** from Carrawburgh; see Chapter 3: Manufacture), as grave goods in Britain suggest that the possession and use of these double-sided composite combs were not restricted to the army or even to males, but were instead chiefly, perhaps even wholly, female activities. While military and civilian trade routes no doubt overlapped, and while manufacture of bone and antler artefacts may be made at any place with access to the raw material (Crummy 2017), this emphasis on the combs as female-gendered artefacts in turn suggests that the earliest examples probably arrived in Britain via civilian trade routes. Whatever the means whereby the form was first introduced – and the same question hangs over its appearance in the eastern Empire (Tica 2018: 415–416) – it certainly lay within this late fourth-century period of social upheaval and military response,

while the success of its adoption can probably be explained by three main factors: a demand for the form by the provincial population, the ready availability of the raw material, usually antler, and workshops able to meet the demand. This sequence may, of course, be reversed, with workshops producing innovative artefacts and thus triggering their desirability.

## Chapter 3

# Manufacture and marketing

### Manufacture

Late Roman double-sided combs were generally made of red deer antler rather than bone (MacGregor 1985: 74). Analytical work has shown that the preference of late Roman and medieval comb-makers for this material was based upon a practical appreciation of its mechanical properties, as the ‘work to break’ measure of a narrow plaque of shed antler was found to be 2.7 times greater than a similar plaque made from a cow tibia and meant that an antler comb, and its teeth in particular, would be far less likely to break during use (MacGregor and Currey 1983; MacGregor 1985: 28–29). Shed antlers could be harvested from the countryside, as was evident in late Roman Silchester, and unshed ones were a by-product of hunting (Bacon and Crummy 2015: 255–256; Crummy 2017: 258). Perhaps either free or at least cheap to acquire, unlike bone they required little or no cleaning before use. All these factors may have contributed to the general increase in their use in the later 4th century (Deschler-Erb 2005: 213; Greep 2014). Many small finds reports do not attempt to distinguish between bone and antler, but this was done at Piercebridge, where comb **139** was described as bone, although the wide, flat and solid areas of material required for such a comb could usually only be supplied by antler (Allason-Jones and Large 2008: 11.235, no. 3). In this respect note a medieval double-sided comb from York that was made from whale bone, which could be cut into large, flat plates, and bone was sometimes used for medieval narrow, single-sided composite combs, with an example using ribs, again from York, described as ‘mechanically inferior’ (MacGregor et al. 1999: 1926, 1930–1931, 1933).

The rivets used in the late Roman period are nearly always of iron, but traces of copper-alloy plating survive on a rivet in **56** from Colchester and similar plating may have worn off the rivets on other combs. Presumably because of green staining on the connecting-plates, Ward wrote of comb **45** from Woodyates: ‘It appears to have been held originally by bronze rivets, but was afterwards repaired by iron ones’ (1911: 264). Combs **24** from Winchester and **151** from Gussage All Saints have rivets of both iron and copper-alloy, and **147** from York has copper-alloy rivets. The preference for iron rather than copper-alloy rivets was no doubt driven by their greater strength, and where the less robust material was used its brighter colour may have been the chief consideration. This appears to be so for **151** and **24**, where the copper-alloy rivets serve as a decorative element between those of iron; on both these combs the copper-alloy rivet shanks were tubular, a feature that may point to the same maker having produced both. Decoration also probably lies behind the copper-alloy plating on the rivets of **56** and perhaps on those of the Woodyates comb. (Note that a medieval comb with copper-alloy rivets from the Jewry Wall site at Leicester was erroneously published as Roman: Kenyon 1948: fig. 92, 3).

Largely informed by concentrations of waste material, the stages in the manufacture of late Roman antler combs have been explored by practical experiment by Patricia Galloway and Mark Newcomer (1981), and of Viking Age combs by Kristina Ambrosiani (1981: 103–118), who worked with her father, Sten Svensson. Clear descriptions of the techniques involved are also given in MacGregor 1985 (74–76), MacGregor et al. 1999 (1905–1912), and Dunlevy 1988 (345–347). Ambrosiani (1981: 117–118) also reported on the independent work of Lars Lindberg, who worked ‘blind’, without researching either the archaeological finds or the literature. Galloway and Newcomer estimated that about a day was needed for a craftsman to produce a comb, a period matched by Ambrosiani, although she also considered that two simpler combs could be made in the same time; Lindberg took over three days to complete a comb, but would have been faster with any subsequent products. The complexity of having to deal with multiple elements is evident by comparing it to seven minutes for a bone hairpin and 20 minutes for a piece of leaf-shaped bone veneer (Crummy 1981: 284). Time taken affects cost price, and in a Roman monetary economy the price charged to the customer could raise an article from mundane to high status.

Tool marks on waste material and finished combs, and the practical experiments mentioned above, point to the use of cleavers, knives, saws, rasps and files for cutting up the raw antler and shaping the various components. Knives and scribing tools were used for shaping the plates and incising the decorative motifs, all of which also occur on late Roman metalwork. Holes in the end-plates were probably cut by a drill or a combination of a scribing tool and a punch, and on some combs small holes have been extended to produce more elaborate openings, probably using a fine knife or saw. Sometimes lightly scored guide-lines were used to mark the position of the connecting-plates, as on **135** from Love’s Farm in Cambridgeshire (Crummy 2018: fig. 6.51). Once the connecting-plates were fixed on, the end-plates and tooth-plates might be shaved down on each face to reduce their thickness, resulting in a pronounced raised area beneath the connecting-plates, as on comb **78** from Cirencester (see Figure 3.4 below).

The probable sequence in which the components of combs were put together and decorated is shown on Figure 3.1. Galloway and Newcomer suggested that connecting-plates on late Roman combs were decorated before the comb was assembled, while the end-plates could be decorated later (1981: fig. 1). Ambrosiani, making a Viking-type single-sided comb where only the connecting-plates were embellished, also thought that their decoration came before final assembly (1981: fig. 60). The latter argument is supported by unfinished late Roman combs from Richborough, Kent (**86**), and the Hadrian’s Wall fort at Carrawburgh, Northumberland (**141**), both of which have a decorated connecting-plate (Figure 3.2). (The comb from Carrawburgh is mistakenly described as coming from Chesters in Greep 1983: 302, 758, fig. 74, 3).

The stage at which the end-plates were cut to shape is more ambiguous. Some connecting-plates lie very close to, even over, elements of the end-plate decoration, which must therefore have been cut first. The surviving end-plate of the Carrawburgh comb is certainly shaped, while that on the Richborough comb might be further cut and embellished. On balance it seems likely that most end-plates were finished and decorated before assembly, but without physical evidence it is difficult to argue that it *never* happened afterwards. A practical solution that embraces both points of view is that to ensure symmetry, especially on the most elaborate combs, the parts may have been temporarily pegged together, marked in some way, unpegged, shaped and decorated, and then riveted together. Ambrosiani also saw this as a useful method of ensuring the symmetry of Viking Age connecting-plates (1981: 112), and any visible guidelines for the position of the connecting-plates support this idea.

The teeth are usually narrow on one side and wide on the other, but on comb **63** from Glasshoughton, West Yorkshire, they are the same size on both sides. A point on which practical

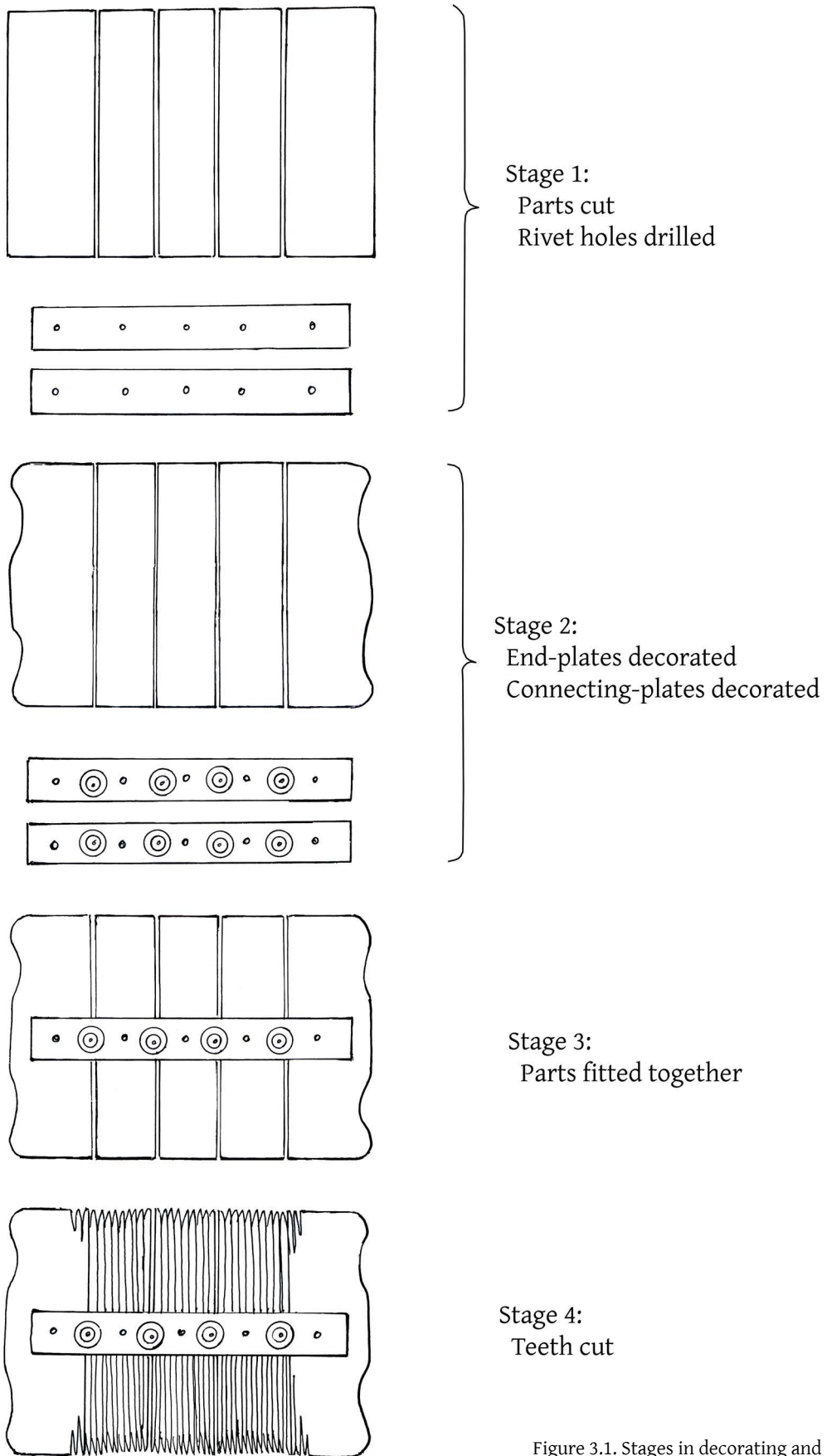
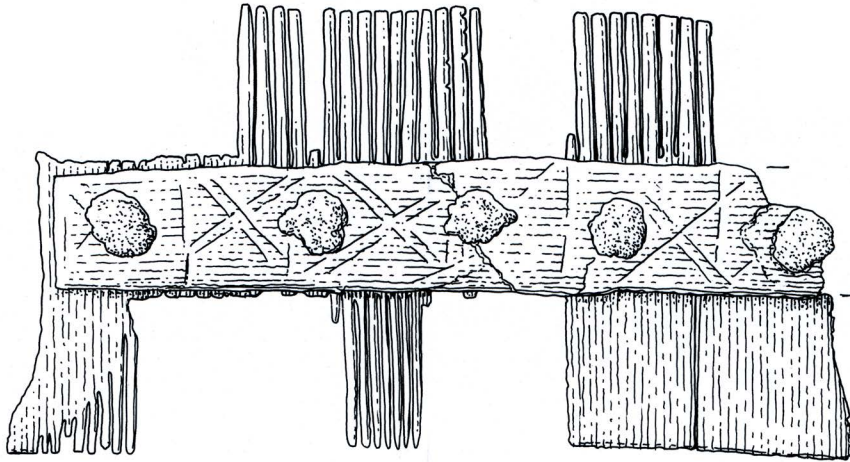
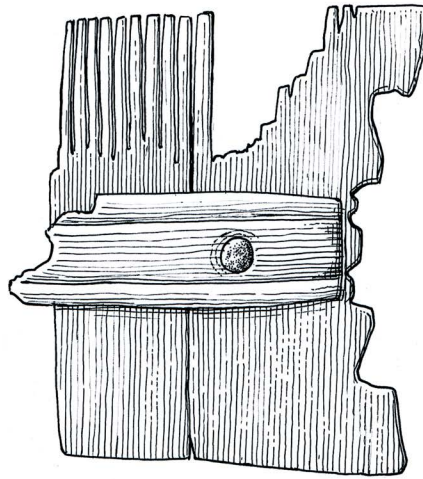


Figure 3.1. Stages in decorating and assembling a comb.



86



141

Figure 3.2. Unfinished combs: Richborough 86,  
Carrawburgh 141.

experimenters and finds archaeologists agree is that the teeth were cut and sharpened last, after assembly, largely because this enables the teeth to be kept to a uniform length and because the edges of the connecting-plates have often clearly been notched by the saw. This is confirmed by the Richborough and Carrawburgh combs, on both of which some teeth are cut but not sharpened, while others are not cut. The teeth on comb **147** from York may also be unfinished, but given the worn condition of the object this is far from certain. Its teeth are certainly squarer in section for more of their length than is generally the case, but some appear to have been pointed and then blunted through wear (see Chapter 5: Straight-centred combs with long connecting-plates; Greep 1983: 302, 760, no. 404, fig. 74, 2). Some of the teeth on comb **148** from Great Whelnetham, Suffolk, are also quite square for much of their length and many are blunt while others appear to be worn, and the edges of its connecting-plates are not notched (Figure 3.3). On some combs the notching of the connecting-plate edges is only partial, or only occurs on one edge, features that may be due to irregular cutting, although on poorly-preserved combs the original edge may have been lost to decay. On others the notches are so long that they may have been considered as a decorative feature, as, for example, on comb **14** from Winchester (see Chapter 5).



Figure 3.3. Great Whelnetham comb 148, with some blunt teeth and unnotched connecting-plate. Photograph by Richard Henry; permission to publish kindly given by Wardell Armstrong and Archaeological Solutions.

It is not, however, the case that the edges of *all* connecting-plates were notched, and on these combs the tooth-plates were either cut before assembly, or cut so carefully that damage to the connecting-plates was avoided, or the connecting-plates have been replaced, or again there was an initial temporary pegging together that would allow a point to be defined to which the teeth should be cut when the plates were separated for shaping and decorating. An incised line on an uncatalogued tooth-plate fragment from Piercebridge, Co. Durham, was taken to be a guideline for cutting the teeth before assembly (Allason-Jones and Large 2008: 11.235, no. 1), but in the absence of the connecting-plates this cannot be confirmed and may instead be a guide to their width (see above). Good examples with unnotched connecting-plates include **148** from Great Whelnetham (Figure 3.3), **80** from London (see Figure 3.5 below), **75** from Great Bedwyn (see Chapter 4: An unusual variant) and **151** from Gussage All Saints, Dorset (see Chapter 5: Owl Group 3), and on all these examples the cuts for the teeth do not extend right up to the connecting-plates, so may have been made before assembly or were deliberately kept short. With a much larger dataset it is perhaps minor features such as this that may allow individual makers with preferred methods of working to be identified.

### Marketing

Evidence for local manufacture and regional marketing is found throughout this study, and, as stated in the Preface and Acknowledgements, an interactive map for the distributions of the stylistic groups of combs defined in Chapter 5 is available at <https://doi.org/10.32028/9781803276441-Map>.

Regionality is shown by some combs from the same area being closely similar, such as two combs with horse protome end-plates found 20 miles apart at Great Dunmow and Heybridge in Essex (**58** and **92**; see Chapter 5: Horse Group 2), and comb **135** from Love's Farm may have an exact counterpart in **136** from the same site (Crummy 2018: fig. 6.51), but the latter is poorly-preserved and its precise end-plate form is not absolutely certain.

Small details of manufacture may also suggest a common maker: several combs from York and Malton (again about 20 miles

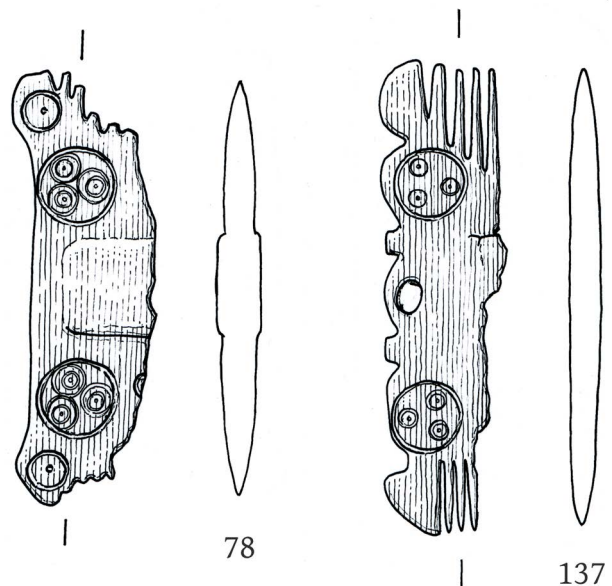


Figure 3.4. Combs with a circle filled with ring-and-dots: Cirencester 78, Malton 137.

apart) are 58mm wide, and others from York are only 1-2mm wider, a consistency of width that argues strongly for a single local maker working to a preferred size if not a precise template. Combs 58mm wide from York and its hinterland are **110**, **111**, **114**, **115**, **137**, **146**, and Greep 1983: 760, no. 402, fig. 237, 27 (York Museum, RE 1874).

Three combs share a distinctive motif of an incised circle filled with three ring-and-dots, **78** from Cirencester in Gloucestershire, **137** from Malton in North Yorkshire (Figure 3.4), and **11** from Winchester in Hampshire (see Chapter 5: Owl Group 3). The combs do not share an end-plate form and while the ring-and-dots on the two southern combs are double, those on the Malton one are single. The range of motifs used to decorate combs was limited, so this link between the three might mean nothing, but might equally well be evidence for one maker trading over a wide area.

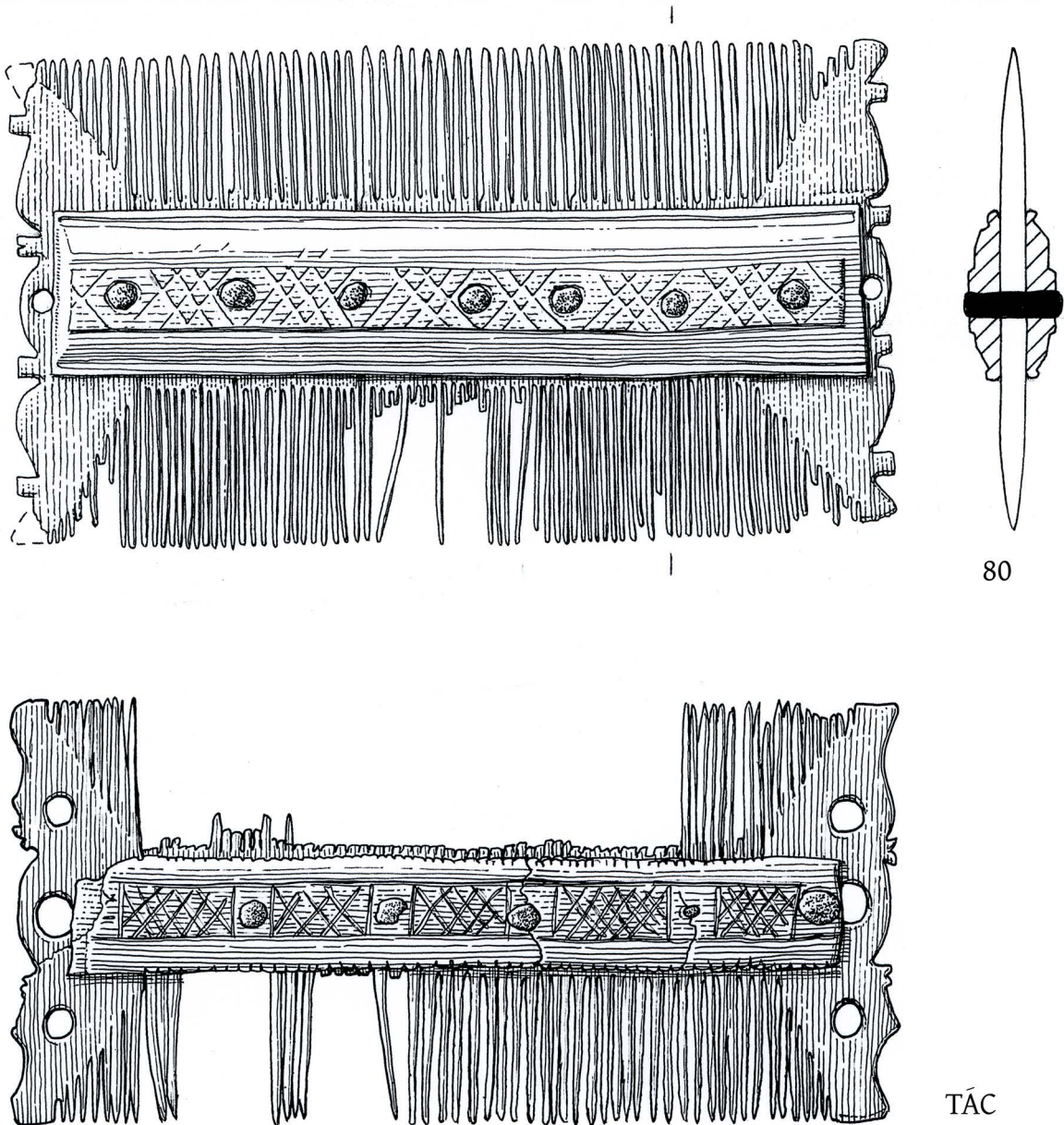


Figure 3.5. Similar combs from London (80) and Tác, Hungary (after Bíró 2002: no. 29).

Wide trade networks are also implied by similarities between other combs, such as those with two connecting-plates flanking an openwork animal design from London and Childrey Warren, some 70 miles apart (48; 145; see Chapter 4: An unusual variant). Two combs, again one from Winchester and one from Cirencester, are matched by a third from Wendens Ambo in Essex, and all are so similar that they must surely be by one maker (5, 47, 143; see Chapter 5: Owl Group 1). From Cirencester south-east to Winchester is about 70 miles, while from Winchester north-east to Wendens Ambo is close to 120 miles. Wendens Ambo is the site of a villa some five miles south of the defended vicus of Great Chesterford; does this comb provide a good argument for a wide trade network, using countryside as well as urban markets (Brindle 2017: 277–279), or is it the result of the movement of an individual?

An exhaustive analysis of the combs from the continent is beyond the scope of this study, although it would be worth pursuing in order to determine which may be imports to, or indeed exports from, Britain, as inter-provincial trade and the movement of people is bound to mean that not all the combs listed in the Catalogue are necessarily of Romano-British manufacture. Indeed, combs found in different provinces may be so closely alike in both end-plate form and connecting-plate decoration as to be by the same hand (Figure 3.5), as is the case with comb 80 from London, which shares several features with a comb from a grave found at TÁC, Hungary (Gorsium-Herculia in Pannonia; Bíró 2002: 36, no. 29). Other combs with much the same style of end-plate may also be seen on Figure 5.8. While such similarities could be evidence for either inter-provincial migration or a workshop with wide trade networks, studies such as Deringer 1967 and Bíró 2002 also clearly show local trends in design and execution within a common pool of decorative techniques and styles, highlighting the value of a single-province study.

## Chapter 4

### Aspects of the assemblage

#### Late Roman or Anglo-Saxon?

Distinguishing late Roman double-sided combs in Britain from those of the succeeding Migration Period is not always possible, especially for fragments or where there is no contextual information, but there are some general criteria that can be applied. These are: a) a comparatively short length, with a width:length ratio of, or close to, 1:2 (range 1:1.5 to 1:2.3); b) comparatively broad connecting-plates (range 14 to 23mm); c) decoratively-shaped end-plates instead of straight plain ones; d) rivets and decoration more carefully placed with respect to each other; and e) graduated end teeth, coming down to only 1 to 2mm long. Although useful, not all the criteria will necessarily apply in every case, and such a summary cannot be taken as a straightforward means of allocating a comb to within one cultural period or the other, nor of identifying the ethnicity of the owner. The shift in proportion was not absolute, nor was the shift in style, as the end-plates of combs in Migration Period contexts were occasionally concave rather than straight, and might even be cut into decorative shapes. Rather than simply being residual, such combs may chiefly belong to the period of transition from the earlier form to the later.

The difference in connecting-plate width is shown in Figure 4.1 and the difference in width to length ratio in Figure 4.2, chiefly using the measurements of complete combs from Romano-British burials and from the early Anglo-Saxon village at West Stow, Suffolk (West 1985). Figure 4.1 shows that very broad connecting-plates are invariably Roman and very narrow ones Anglo-Saxon, but there is a considerable overlap between the two extremes. In Figure 4.2 the West Stow combs all lie in the upper left corner and all the Romano-British combs below and to the right. To demonstrate that the criteria listed above are guidelines rather than rules, a comb from an early Anglo-Saxon cemetery at Alwalton, Peterborough, has been added to the graph. It lies outside the West Stow group and is an outlier to the main Romano-British group (Figure 4.2; Crummy 2007: 264, fig. 31, 1035/2). It has a width to length ratio of 1:1.9, broad connecting-plates with unevenly but symmetrically spaced rivets and carefully graduated teeth. Its end-plates are almost identical to those of comb 62 from a late Roman inhumation found less than two miles away at Lynch Farm (Figure 4.3), and it is striking that the Lynch Farm comb also lies apart from the main Romano-British group and close to the Alwalton comb. Together they form an independent group, shorter than the West Stow combs and narrower than most combs from Romano-British burials, and can be seen as either evidence for a local style that survived through copying, but more probably as contemporary products of a north Cambridgeshire maker working in the first half of the 5th century. A comb from Foxton in Cambridgeshire (94) is not dissimilar to that from Lynch Farm and may be part of the same small group (Price *et al.* 1997: fig. 66, 18; see Chapter 5: Straight-centred combs with long connecting-plates).

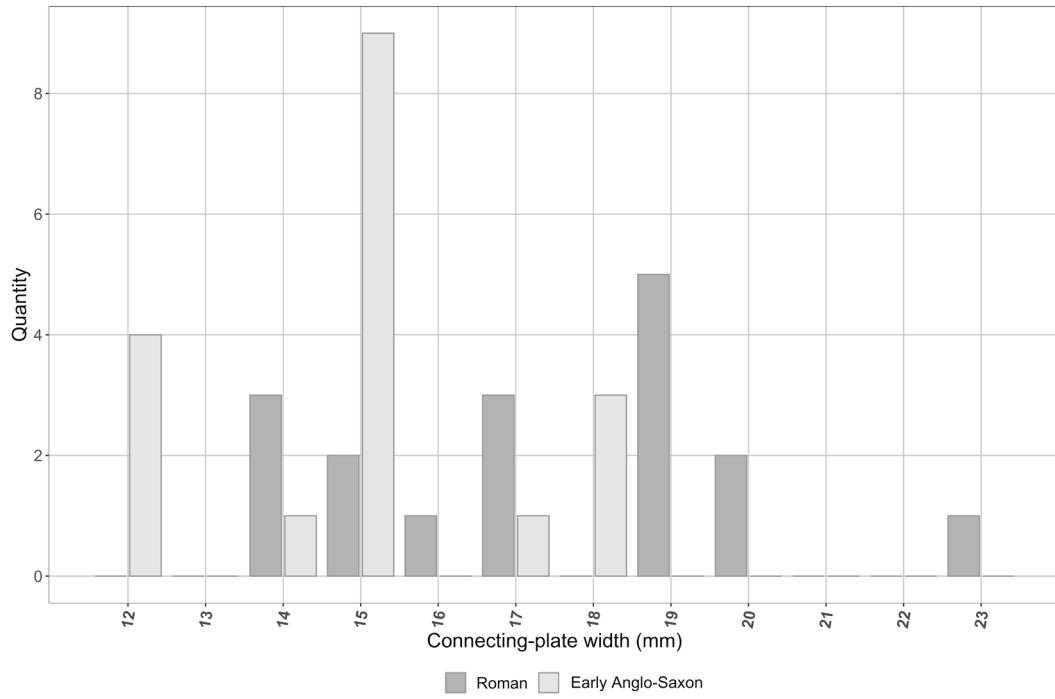


Figure 4.1. Connecting-plate widths on Romano-British combs and early Anglo-Saxon combs from West Stow.

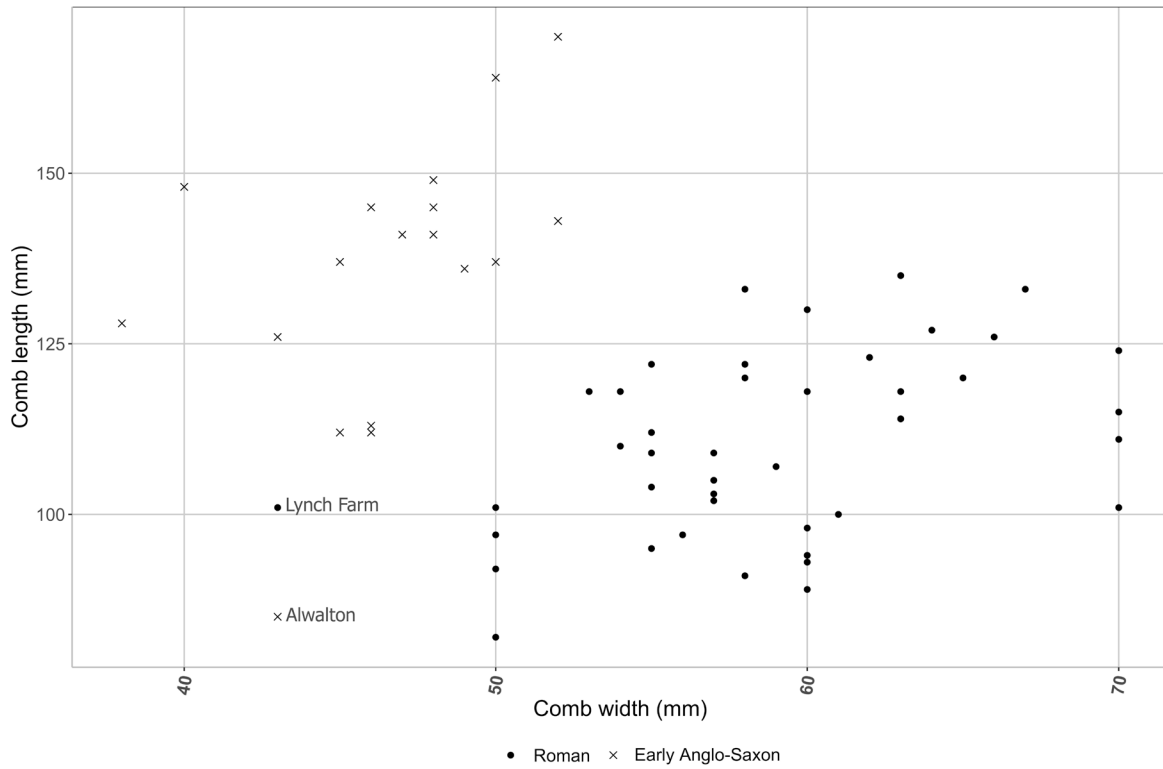


Figure 4.2. Width:length ratio of Romano-British combs and early Anglo-Saxon combs from West Stow.

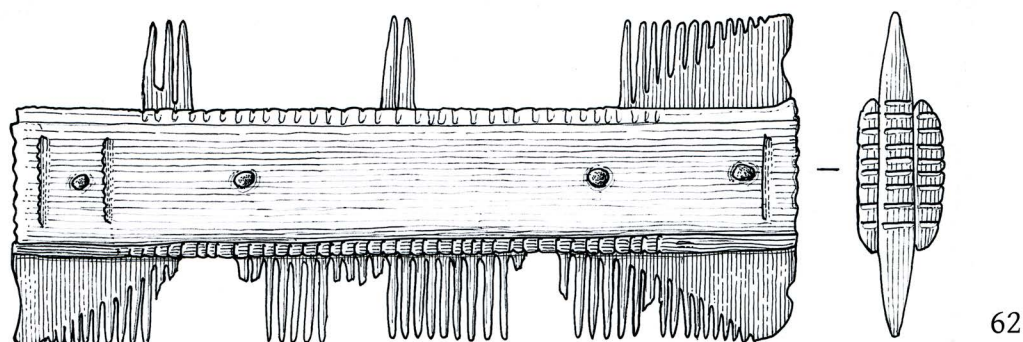


Figure 4.3. Lynch Farm comb 62. Scale 1:1.

Even if the Alwalton comb were a local Romano-British product that has survived in use, by both its provenance and context it is set in an Anglo-Saxon milieu. In contrast, an unstratified comb from Cambridge was published as Romano-British but despite having measurements that would place it in that group it is regarded here as later (Gardiner *et al.* 2000: 88, pl. XII, 107). It has a width:length ratio of 1:1.9 and broad connecting-plates with regularly-spaced rivets set between groups of ring-and-dot motifs, but, unusually for a comb from Roman Britain, the number of motifs varies from group to group, while the most convincing argument for allocating it to the Anglo-Saxon tradition is provided by its narrow, straight end-plates, which show only minimal graduation of the end teeth. Visually odd in a Romano-British assemblage, it would not be out of place in one of early Anglo-Saxon date.

There is then a reasonable basis for following the criteria suggested above in attributing combs to one period or the other, but the Lynch Farm, Alwalton and Cambridge combs urge a nuanced approach to their application, with context and local tradition forming additional elements to be considered. Figure 4.2 suggests that where context is unambiguous a clear morphological distinction may exist, but also that there was a gradual shift from the Romano-British period style to that of the Anglo-Saxon period, subtly reflecting the fluidities of social change in eastern Britain during the very late 4th and 5th centuries. In addition, the wide range of size and style points to comb-makers who were willing to experiment either through personal choice or as a response to customer demand, and who set the dimensions of each comb within the limits of the material immediately to hand and with a feel for acceptable proportions within a general and gradually shifting framework.

Double-sided combs matching those from late Roman contexts found in the early Anglo-Saxon cemetery at Spong Hill in Norfolk have not been included here, nor have any others noted from Anglo-Saxon cemeteries, such as the concave-ended 1254/1 from another cremation at Alwalton (Crummy 2007: 264, fig. 32), but the few that have been examined support the conclusions drawn above regarding the fluidities of social change. An exceptional comb from Spong Hill has zoomorphic end-plates that may be seen as devolved from either Horse or Dolphin combs (see Chapter 5), but at 1:2.4 it lies just outside the width:length ratio for late Roman combs defined above, and it is also unusual in having a row of copper-alloy rivets along the edges of the connecting-plates (Hills and Penn 1981: 31, fig. 174, 1743). It has been described as late Roman (Hills and Lucy 2013: fig. 2.57, 1743/6), but does not sit happily within the assemblage gathered

here, and is perhaps better defined as a transitional comb that sits at the junction of the shift from Romano-British into early Anglo-Saxon.

In western and northern Britain combs followed different patterns of development and chronology (Ashby 2009; Dunlevy 1988), and the only comb from Scotland included in the Catalogue as being of a late Romano-British form is a cave find from Kintyre (Ritchie 1967: 108, no. 4, fig. 2, 4; see Chapter 5: Dolphin combs).

### **Other forms of composite comb used in late Roman Britain**

Three other composite comb forms, all single-sided and all essentially 'Germanic', occasionally occur in late Roman contexts in Britain but are not included in this study. The first is the triangular comb (Figure 4.4, a; see also Fig. 5.18, bottom), examples of which may have incised decoration on the large connecting-plates and the protruding upper ends of the tooth-plates are sometimes worked into zoomorphic or elaborately sinuous forms closely comparable to the decoration on the end-plates of double-sided combs (Ashby 2011: type 1a). They occur on both Romano-British and Anglo-Saxon sites, such as Great Chesterford, Richborough, York, London and West Stow (Greep 1983: fig. 240, 42-43; Ottaway 1993: fig. 71; Barber and Bowsher 2000: 183-184; West 1985: from SFBs 12, 21, 44-45, 48, 55-56, 59, 61, 63-64, and 66). They have been studied by both Thomas (1960) and Böhme (1974: 122-126), and a classification system for those from Spong Hill, North Elmham, Norfolk, is outlined in Hills and Lucy 2013 (108-118).

Combs that have a more rounded apex or a fully rounded back are not often found in Roman Britain (Figure 4.4, b). Greep lists four of these combs from Romano-British sites: Chesters, Dorchester, Richborough and Braughing, of which only the two last were stratified (1983: 760, nos 409 and 417, 761, nos 419-420, fig. 240, 44-47). The Richborough comb came from the middle fill of the inner stone fort ditch, which also contained coins of the House of Theodosius (Henderson 1949: 151, pl. 56, 270; Bushe-Fox 1949: 70). The Braughing comb was from the fill of a well dug in the 3rd century but filled in sometime in the 4th (Potter and Trow 1988: 12-13, 88, no. 37, 170). A coin of Constantine I provides only a *terminus post quem* of c. AD 330 for the closure of the well, and the relative positions of coin and comb within the well were not defined. The coin assemblage from the site ran up to the House of Theodosius (Shotter and Partridge 1988: 30-34), providing evidence of occupation contemporary with that at Richborough and more suited to the date of the comb.

The third form has a close-set pair of narrow connecting-plates on one side and a single broad connecting-plate on the other, and has end-plates cut to show the profile of a horse head and its maned neck (Figure 4.4, c). They are sometimes referred to as Frisian (MacGregor 1975) and in Britain their contextual associations are generally early Anglo-Saxon, with numerous examples dated to the late 4th to early 5th century coming from the Spong Hill cemetery (Hills and Penn 1981: 118-125). There is also part of one from a transitional (late to post-Roman) context in the legionary fortress at York and an almost complete example from another transitional context at the Romano-British and early Anglo-Saxon farmstead at Orton Hall Farm near Peterborough, Cambridgeshire (Hills 1981; Cool *et al.* 1995: 1547; MacGregor 1975: 195, fig. 76, 2; 1985: 85, fig. 48, 1; Mackreth 1996: 105, fig. 75, pl. IX). The York fragment has been described as 'less accomplished' than a more complete example from a somewhat later context in the city (MacGregor 1975: 195, fig. 1, 1-2), but its profile is clearly that of a horse, its mane defined by a long row of nicks, while on the more complete comb the end-plates have devolved and the zoomorph is unidentifiable. The end-plates of the Orton Hall Farm comb show zoomorphs that are more akin to dolphins.

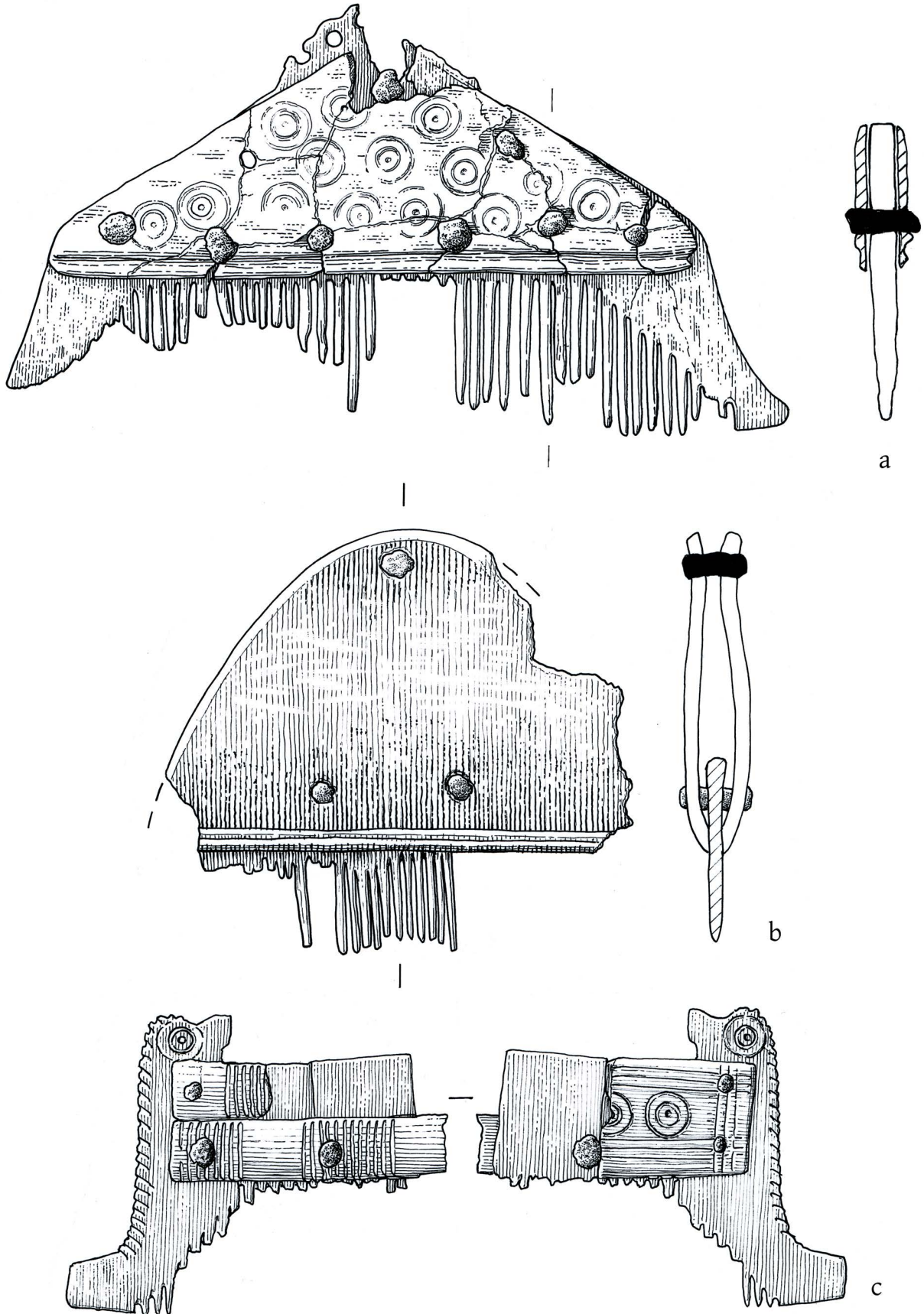


Figure 4.4. Other forms of composite comb used in late Roman Britain: a) London (after Barber and Bowsher 2000: 184); b) Braughing (after Greep 1983: fig 240, 46); c) York (after Cool et al. 1995: 1547). Scale 1:1.

### An unusual variant

The majority of the Romano-British double-sided combs considered here have a single connecting-plate on each side, but there is a comparatively rare variant with two narrow connecting-plates on each side, set somewhat apart so that the exposed centres of the tooth-plates became available for openwork and incised decoration. There are seven catalogued here from Britain (Table 4.1), three from occupation contexts on villa sites, of which one is from southern Britain and two from Yorkshire (**75**, **107**, **108**), one from the fort at Piercebridge, Co. Durham (**139**) and three from burials in southern Britain: **48** from London, **35** from Roden Down in Berkshire, and **145** from Childrey Warren in Oxfordshire (Figure 4.5). There are others from Germany, Luxembourg, France, Slovenia, the Czech Republic and Italy, the last may be later than the rest (Payne 1997: 313; Hills 1981: 97–98; Haupt 1970: pl. 31, 3–4; Keller 1971: pl. 33, 2; Bíró 2002: no. 28; Seillier and Demolon 1983: 103, no. 117c; Tica 2018: fig. 9, 3, 5; Menis 1990: 212, fig. 4, 111).

| Catalogue No. | Site                       | County       | Site type      | Stylistic links to | Distance to in miles (approx.) |
|---------------|----------------------------|--------------|----------------|--------------------|--------------------------------|
| <b>35</b>     | Roden Down                 | Berkshire    | rural / burial | <b>48</b>          | 65                             |
|               |                            |              |                | <b>145</b>         | 15                             |
| <b>48</b>     | London                     | -            | urban / burial | <b>35</b>          | 65                             |
|               |                            |              |                | <b>145</b>         | 70                             |
| <b>145</b>    | Childrey Warren            | Oxfordshire  | rural / burial | <b>35</b>          | 15                             |
|               |                            |              |                | <b>48</b>          | 70                             |
| <b>75</b>     | Castle Copse, Great Bedwyn | Wiltshire    | villa          | -                  | -                              |
| <b>107</b>    | Langton                    | N. Yorkshire | villa          | -                  | -                              |
| <b>108</b>    | Beadlam                    | N. Yorkshire | villa          | <b>139</b>         | 50                             |
| <b>139</b>    | Piercebridge               | Co. Durham   | fort           | <b>108</b>         | 50                             |

Table 4.1. Combs with two narrow connecting-plates on each side.

Four, perhaps five, of these combs form two stylistic groups. The first is composed of the three from burials and the second of two from northern Britain. Any interpretation based on such low numbers is highly speculative, but as no combs belonging to the first group have been found in occupation contexts, there may be some possibility that they were custom-made, perhaps specifically for use as grave deposits. Only a token fragment from comb **145** had been placed in the Childrey Warren burial (Crummy 2023; see also Chapter 7: Comb position), leaving open the question of where the remainder was deposited – in another burial, or in a non-funerary context?

The openwork centre of comb **48** (Figure 4.6) from London shows four quadrupeds in profile in what appears to be an attempt at naturalistic portrayal, although the identification of the creatures is now obscure (MoL Archaeological Archive, WES89 <46>). From the angles of the backs two species were probably represented, but none is so clearly defined that it can be identified with any certainty. Possibilities include dogs and horses, and perhaps also large felines or bears, all of which had a chthonic significance (Green 1992: 197–210; Crummy 2010: 52–53, 56–60, 72–77). Childrey Warren comb **145** is a well-preserved fragment with part of a quadruped in the openwork area between the connecting-plates (Figure 4.7), and so seems to have been similar to that from London (Crummy 2023). The comb from Roden Down is in poor and fragmentary condition, but it too may have had animals in the centre and its end- and connecting-plates are of a similar form to the London comb (Hood and Walton 1948: 39, fig. 11, 8).

Combs **107** and **108** come respectively from the villas at Langton and Beadlam, both in North Yorkshire (Stead 1971: fig. 10; Corder and Kirk 1932: 73, fig. 20). The Langton comb has confronted dolphins on the end-plates but too little remains of the area between the connecting-plates

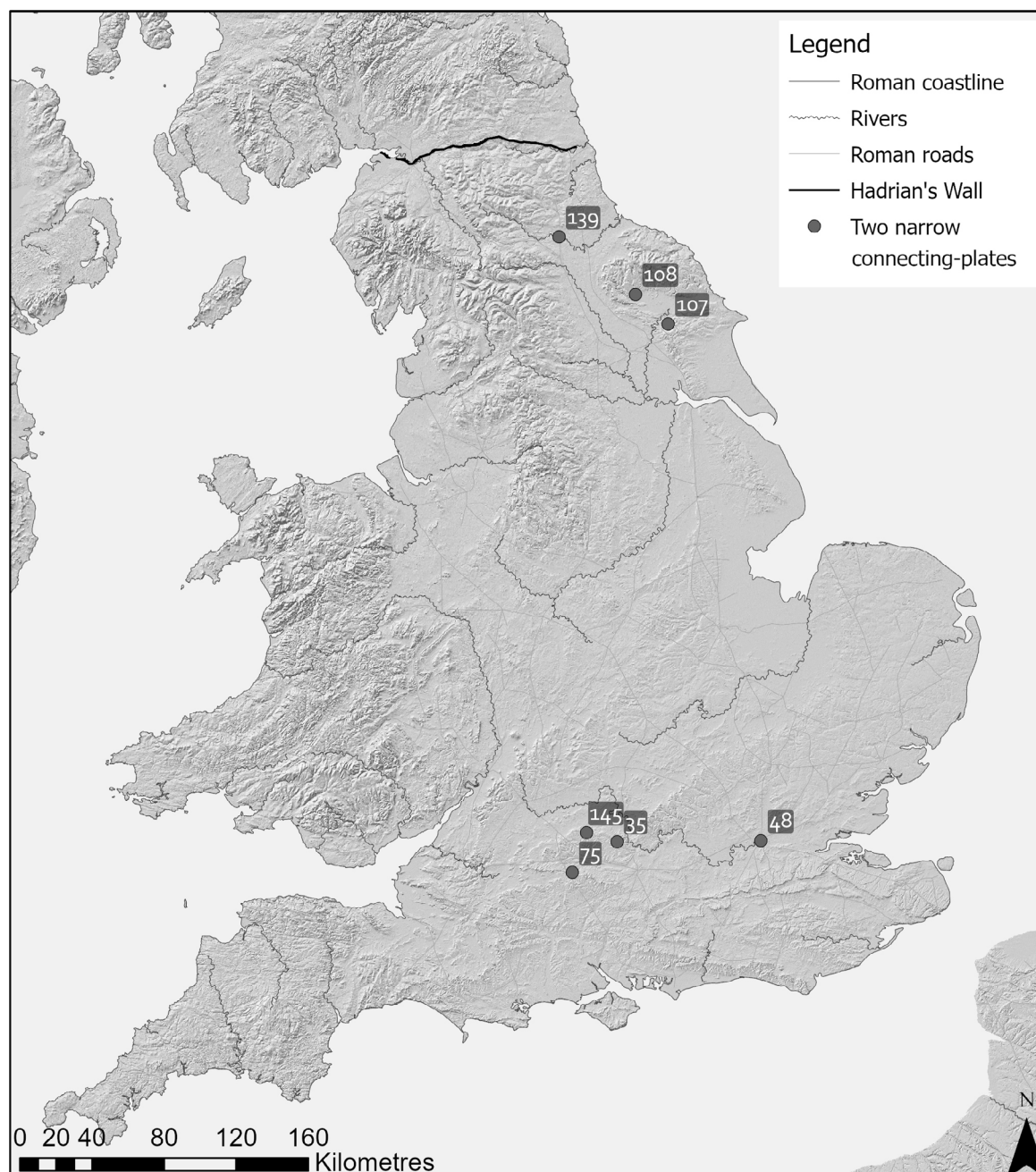


Figure 4.5. Distribution of combs with two narrow connecting-plates on each side.

to determine what the decoration there might have been (see Chapter 5: Dolphin combs). The Beadlam comb has confronted horse heads and the connecting-plates flank an almost solid area with P-shaped cut-outs and incised ring-and-dot motifs repeated from the end-plate design (see Chapter 5: Horse combs). The end-plate fragment from the inner fort ditch at Piercebridge (**139**) is very close in form and choice of decorative motifs to comb **108** from Beadlam, and it also uses P-shaped cut-outs (Cool 2008: 251–252, fig. 11.6). Its connecting-plates are missing but there is slight scarring on the surface where they lay and the width of the comb sets it unmistakably within this group. Both combs must have been made by the same hand. All three of these combs belong to more widespread stylistic groups illustrated and discussed in Chapter 5.

The particularly large and ornate comb **75** from the villa at Castle Copse, Great Bedwyn in Wiltshire, has antler or bone strips and layers of lead-tin sheeting sandwiched between two wide connecting-

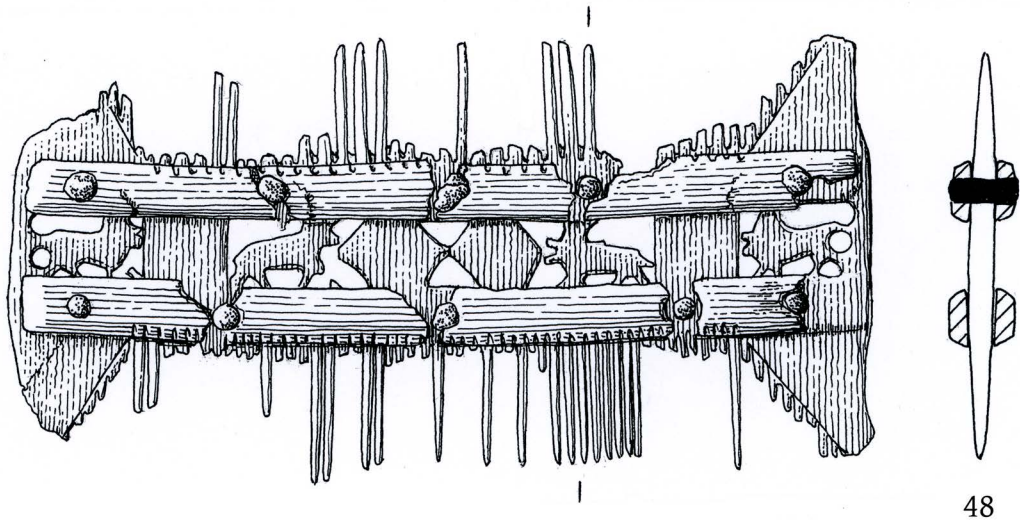


Figure 4.6. London comb 48 with a line of zoomorphs between the connecting-plates. Scale 1:1.



Figure 4.7. Childrey Warren comb 145 with a zoomorph between the connecting-plates. Image copyright Cotswold Archaeology; photograph by Aleks Osinska. Scale 1:1.

plates and the tooth- and end-plates; the antler is decorated with openwork crosses and circles to expose the metal beneath (Figure 4.8.; Payne 1997: 312–313, fig. 145, no. 464). Each of its connecting-plates is as wide as those of combs with only one on each side. There is some doubt of its late Roman date, but even if it were later it may be a special commission that demonstrates both the willingness of craft workers to experiment and the decorative opportunities offered by even slightly varying the construction method. In this it can be compared to a Roman boxwood comb from Carlisle that has tinned and gilded copper-alloy plating bearing a design of three linked aediculae on one face of the central section, and chip-carving on the other face (Pugsley 2003: 17, 21, figs 2.3 and 2.11). Unusually for a wooden comb from a first-century context, the terminals of the Carlisle piece are worked into a form similar to that of the end-plates of late Roman composite antler and bone combs, sufficiently so for its ascribed date to be questionable. Pugsley noted that with a length of only 7mm the teeth of this comb were too short for practical use, and that it must have been purely for display (2003: 21). The surviving teeth of the Castle Copse comb also appear to have been particularly short, and it too may have been a display piece (Payne 1997: fig. 145).

The last column of Table 4.1 shows the distances between some of these combs, which may be pertinent in terms of marketing or the other ways in which material culture might travel. Twenty miles is a good day's walk for someone moving at an average speed and with occasional stops, while

a horse, even if kept to a walk, might increase that to 30-35 miles. In terms of possible markets for these combs, if the large town of York was where the Langton and Beadlam combs were bought, then the Langton buyer would have to travel just under 20 miles and the Beadlam buyer about 24, but if they were acquired at the fort of Malton, then the Beadlam buyer had to travel 15 miles and the Langton buyer only four. Similarly, if the Roden Down comb had been acquired at Silchester or Winchester, then that buyer would have to travel 16 or 36 miles respectively, while the Childrey Warren buyer would have to go 30 miles to Cirencester, 36 to Silchester, or 45 to Winchester. Alternatively, if these combs were bought in the small town of *Cunetio* (Marlborough), then the Childrey Warren buyer would have to travel 20 miles, the Roden Down buyer about 27, but the Castle Copse buyer only six, while Dorchester-on-Thames is only 16 miles from Roden Down and 18 from Childrey Warren. However, if London were the source of all three combs from burials and also of the unusual Castle Copse comb, then even greater distances would have to be travelled.

Precisely how specialised goods such as these were moved about the country is a matter of conjecture, but it is probably correct to assume that shorter distances were travelled by individual buyers and larger ones by merchants moving trade goods between provinces, between large and small towns, and between both urban and rural markets. Whatever the case may be, throughout this study we will occasionally note distances between similar combs in order to tease out evidence for both regional manufacture and marketing. The distances given are not precisely matched to the roads and trackways of late Roman Britain, but they are a fair approximation.

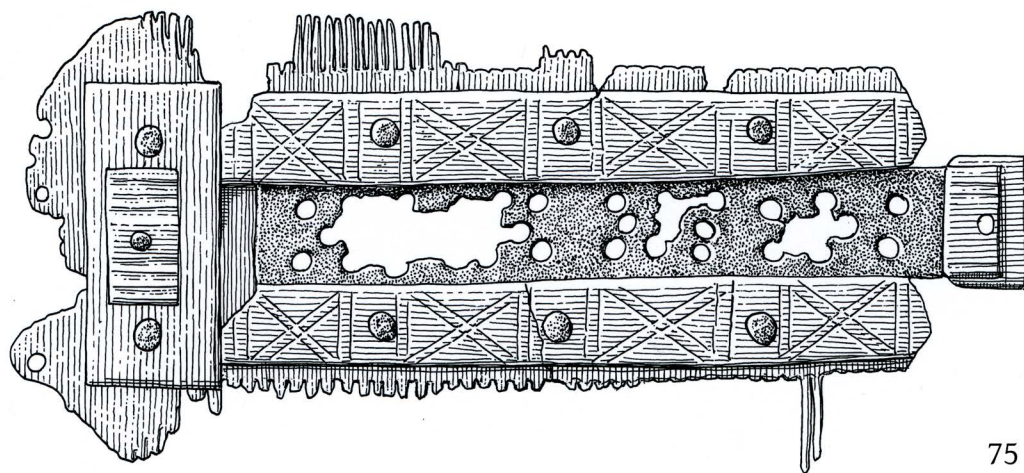


Figure 4.8. Elaborate comb 75 from Castle Copse, Great Bedwyn  
(excavator's reconstruction). Scale 1:1.

## Chapter 5

### Stylistic groups

The varied profiling and decoration of the composite double-sided combs means that very few of them can be said to form true types, intentionally made to a specific template (Adams and Adams 2008: 157–168). In the past this has caused the more restricted decoration of the connecting-plates to dominate the drawing of parallels both within the Romano-British assemblage and with combs found on the continent, e.g. Galloway at Lankhills, Colchester and Poundbury (1979; 1981; 1983; 1993). There are four main groups of connecting-plate decoration (Figure 5.1) and three main types of section in Roman Britain, with no absolute links between them: a) plain, and either flat or convex in section (simple), sometimes with stepped or bevelled margins; b) a line of ring-and-dot motifs, and usually simple in section, though occasionally stepped; c) ring-and-dot motifs grouped more elaborately, sometimes stepped in section; d) various form of geometric decoration utilising, alone or in combination, transverse grooves or mouldings, latticing and crosses, sometimes stepped in section. The connecting-plate designs are here regarded as subsidiary to the profile and decoration of the end-plates, and any possible links between the two are explored at the end of this chapter.

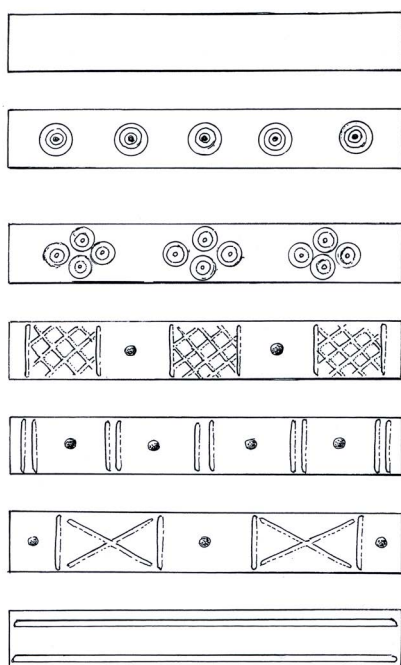


Figure 5.1. Decorative designs used on connecting-plates.

End-plate designs may appear to be more variable than those on the connecting-plates, but many fall into loose stylistic groups. Some are quite simply shaped, others evidently zoomorphic, representing horses, dolphins and ‘owls’, and many can be seen to have a profile similar to one of these groups, having devolved from them. Indeed, owls probably developed from dolphins, and there are some combs that may be seen as either adorned dolphins or an owl, with the form of the end-plate warring with large ‘eyes’ for the viewer’s attention. Two of the fully zoomorphic groups (horses and owls) show some pattern of association in connecting-plate and end-plate style, but it is not rigidly applied (see below). On the whole each comb appears to represent the response of its maker to a variety of considerations, such as the available material, contemporary trends in artefact design, a desire to experiment or emulate, time, cost, marketing potential and customer demand (Crummy 2001: 103).

We have seen in Chapter 4 that three of the combs with two narrow connecting-plates on each side came from burials, and that at least two, possibly all three, contained openwork centres depicting animals. No combs of this particular form have been found in occupation contexts, raising the possibility that they were custom-made, perhaps specifically for use as grave deposits. This may also apply to other combs from burials or ritual contexts.

**Customised combs or devolved designs?**

One way of approaching the variety of the end-plate profiles is to apply a practical view based upon cost and customer preference. Hilczzerowna suggested that at Gdansk, Poland, medieval comb-makers made many plain mass-production combs, adding decoration to order (1961: 96), and Galloway and Newcomer also recognised that exceptional combs in Roman Britain must have been made to order (1981: 87). Their observation appears to be borne out both by the combs with central openwork designs mentioned above and by an elaborate comb from Winchester (2) that was stored in a matching bone-veneered box (Figure 5.2; Rees *et al.* 2008: 66, fig. 35, 315, fig. 57).

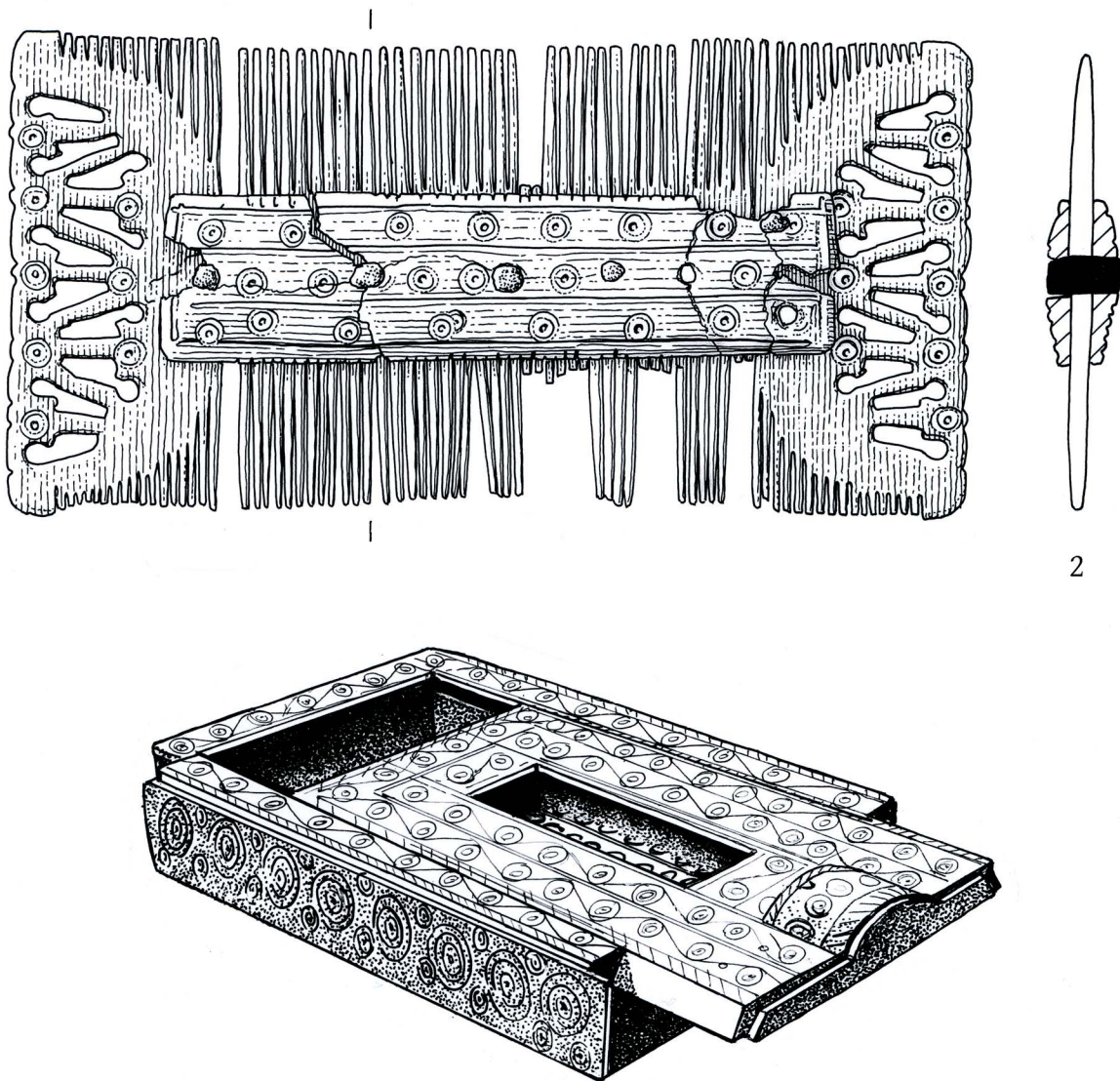


Figure 5.2. Comb 2 from Winchester and its box. Comb at 1:1, box not to scale.

Prompted by the medieval marketing model, a series of stages related to cost and customised decoration was initially proposed for Romano-British combs, and also explored the possibility that comb-makers were itinerant, making basic combs between markets and customising them at the point of sale (Crummy 2001: 103, 105, 107, fig. 4). Under this early scheme the plainer combs were thought to be the cheapest and the most elaborately decorated ones the most expensive, while some, such as the Winchester comb with its matching box, might have been special commissions.

While the latter point almost certainly still applies, there is now no way of ranking the bulk of the assemblage in terms of price, for not only has the early scheme long since been abandoned, but, in terms of decoration, it has been reversed. Although it went some way towards accounting for the forms of the end-plates and the range of decoration on the connecting-plates, it did not take into account the processes such as copying, experimentation and devolution that are more generally recognised as creating variety and transformation within artefact groups. Moreover, while medieval combs are very alike and ubiquitous as site finds, so that they can readily be seen as to some extent mass-produced, Romano-British combs are comparatively scarce and the wide range of both end-plate and connecting-plate form and decoration means that variety appears to have been favoured over consistency, very close stylistic links are rare and direct parallels even more so.

A new general guide to the forms of the end-plates and their progression from early to late is shown on Figure 5.3, reading from bottom to top. The first combs, and almost certainly the earliest within the limited date-range for these artefacts, are those with recognisably zoomorphic end-plates; then come those on which the end-plate edge has been worked into a fairly similar form but there are usually no specifically zoomorphic features such as eyes (this is the largest group, generally referred to below as devolved); and finally the latest combs, again bearing in mind that the date-range is limited, include those on which the edge is almost, but not quite absolutely, featureless (Figure 5.3, top left), those with long connecting-plates that run up to an edge that has rather more definition (as on Figure 5.3, top right), and straight-centred and concave-ended combs (not shown). Long connecting-plates running to, or close to, the edge, may occur on any of these late combs.

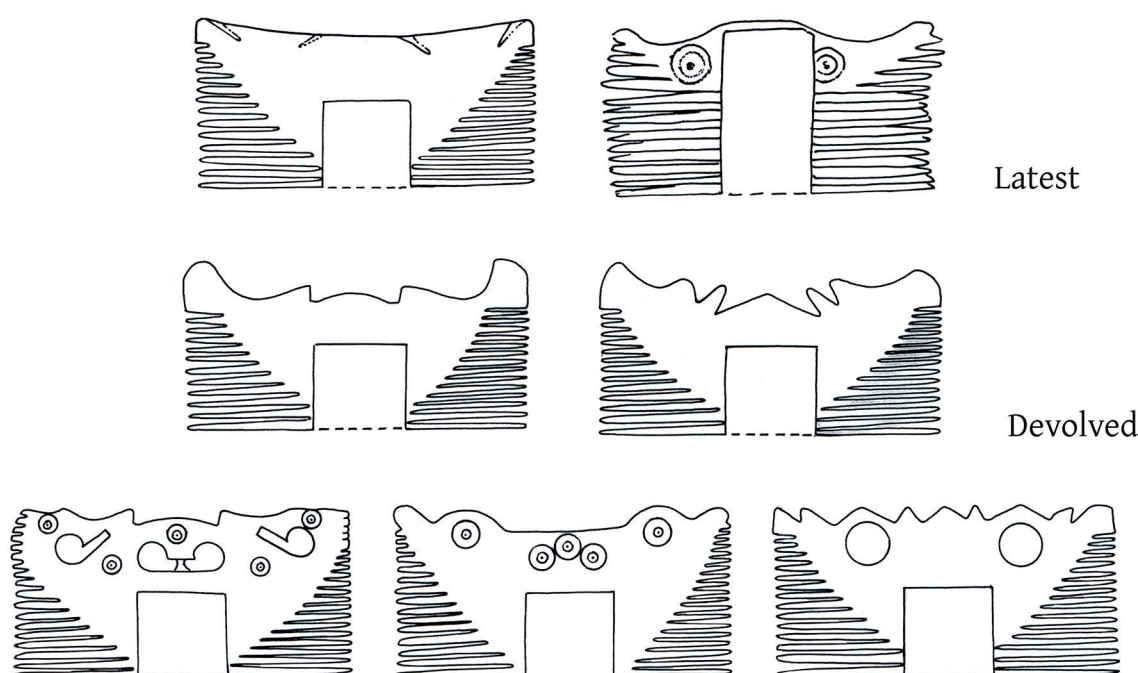


Figure 5.3. General guide to end-plate form, with the earliest at the bottom and latest at the top.

The same processes of copying, experimentation and devolution are particularly evident in metalwork contemporary with the double-sided combs, of which the most pertinent are the zoomorphic buckles studied by Hawkes and Dunning (1961). Horses and dolphins occur both on the combs and the buckles, and, even where comb end-plates do not show clearly-defined zoomorphs, the profile can be comparable to that of the buckles.

The confronted dolphins on some type IA and IIA buckles are well-defined and are shown clasping a ball in their beaks, (Figure 5.4, 1-4; Hawkes and Dunning 1961: fig. 13, m and o, fig. 17, i, fig.18, b). This motif was used on earlier dolphin drop-handles, pointing to an origin in the Mediterranean world (Riha 2001: Taf. 6). These buckles were produced on the continent apart from Figure 5.4, 4 from North Wraxall, which is probably an early insular example. On other buckles made in Britain the dolphins are scarcely recognizable and have so exaggerated a crest that it resembles a horse's mane, while on others the image is so condensed that it resembles an animal mask (Figure 5.4, 5-7; Hawkes and Dunning 1961: fig. 13, b and f, fig. 17, b). Similarly, on some type IB horse-and-dolphin buckles the addorsed horse heads are well modelled and the dolphins, although devolved, are still clearly derived from those of type IA buckles (Figure 5.4, 8-9; Hawkes and Dunning 1961: fig. 15, a and m), while on the stylistically later examples the dolphins are no longer in evidence and the horse heads have degenerated to mere protrusions with an eye motif, again resembling an animal mask (Figure 5.4, 10; Hawkes and Dunning 1961: fig. 15, c).

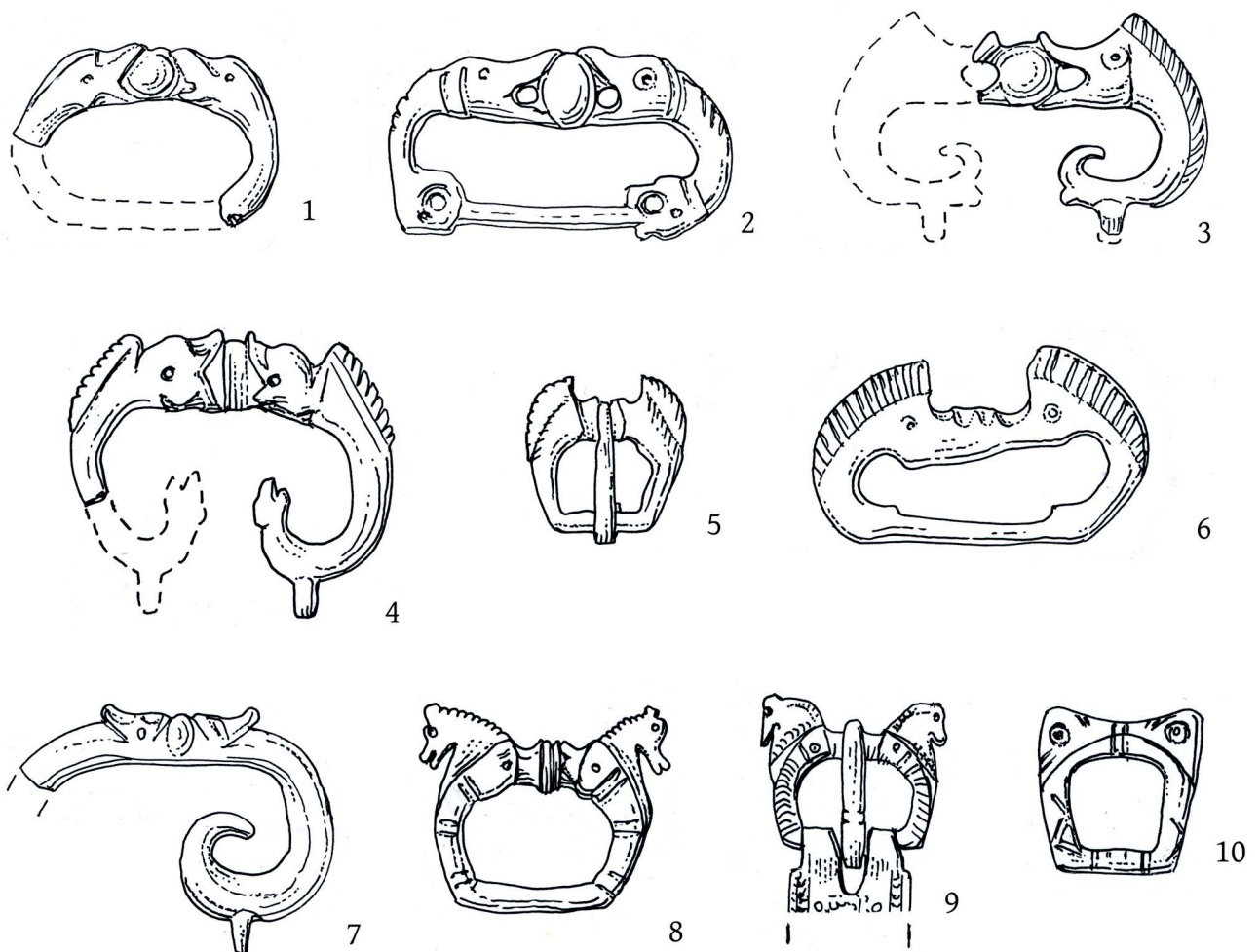


Figure 5.4. Devolving zoomorphic images on type 1 and II buckles (after Hawkes and Dunning 1961: 1) type IA, fig. 13, m; 2) type IA, fig. 13, o; 3) type IIA, fig. 17, i; 4) type IIA, fig. 18, b; 5) type IA, fig. 13, b; 6) type IA, fig. 13, f; 7) type IIA, fig. 17, b; 8) type IB, fig. 15, a; 9) type IB, fig. 15, m; 10) type IB, fig. 15, c. Scale 1:1.

While the combination of horses and dolphins may seem odd, found together they convey an image of travel by land and sea, such as the bridled horse and dolphin on a fourth-century lead shrine to Mercury, patron of travellers, from Wallsend, and the four dolphin drop-handles and horse-head key from a chest in a late third-century burial at Krefeld-Gellep (Allason-Jones 1984; Pirling and Siepen 2000: 155–156, grave 5393, Taf. 117, 1-4, 6).

The same process of iconographic decay evident on the buckles can also be seen in combs and is traced through the stylistic groups defined below, a concordance for which forms Appendix 2. An interactive distribution map for the groups is available at <https://doi.org/10.32028/9781803276441-Map>. Starting with clearly carved horses and dolphins, the groups end with simply profiled end-plates, moving effectively in the opposite direction to that of the customised stages first proposed and ultimately leading to the straight end-plates of Anglo-Saxon period combs. That this interpretation offers a more valid approach to the variety of the end-plates is suggested by contextual evidence that the plainer forms are the latest.

### Horse combs

The Horse combs fall into two groups, summarised in Table 5.1. They follow the general pattern of Hawkes and Dunning dolphin, rather than horse-and-dolphin, buckles in that the heads or protomes are confronted, not addorsed as they are on the buckles or on triangular combs, and the lay-out of the various elements is similar to that used on the buckles. That all these combs represent horses instead of dolphins is evident in the profile of the animals, especially the jaw lines, the ears on most of the end-plate corners, and the manes formed by the cutting of the teeth and in the case of comb 1 as additional nicks on the corners.

| Catalogue No.        | Site                    | County         | Site type / context                          | Stylistic links to               | Distance to in miles (approx.)     |
|----------------------|-------------------------|----------------|--|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| <i>Horse Group 1</i> |                         |                |  |                                  |                                    |
| 1                    | Hyde Street, Winchester | Hampshire      | large town / <i>civitas</i> capital / burial | 64<br>108<br>139<br>(107)<br>(2) | 280<br>270<br>275<br>(255)<br>(<1) |
| 64                   | Woodhall, Askrigg       | N. Yorkshire   | rural settlement / burial                    | 1<br>108<br>139                  | 280<br>50<br>27                    |
| 108                  | Beadlam                 | N. Yorkshire   | villa / dispersed                            | 1<br>64<br>139                   | 270<br>50<br>27                    |
| 139                  | Piercebridge            | Co. Durham     | military / fort / area of fort ditch         | 1<br>64<br>108                   | 270<br>27<br>50                    |
| <i>Horse Group 2</i> |                         |                |  |                                  |                                    |
| 58                   | Heybridge               | Essex          | nucleated settlement / burial                | 92<br>133                        | 20<br>55                           |
| 92                   | Great Dunmow            | Essex          | small town / shrine / votive pit             | 58<br>133                        | 20<br>35                           |
| 133                  | Cambridge               | Cambridgeshire | small town / dump / dark earth               | 58<br>92                         | 55<br>35                           |

Table 5.1. Combs of Horse Groups 1 and 2.

Horses appear on both double-sided and triangular composite combs both in Britain and across Europe, and the animals are among the stylised creatures depicted on single-sided handled combs from Pannonia (Bíró 2002: 35, 44, 50–52, 61; Petković 1999; Tica 2018: fig. 12). On the eastern limes the horse may have been taken as a symbol of male military power and status, and this may also apply here to some of the Horse combs from the north and east of Britain. Where they are from female burials such an interpretation might be pertinent if the family as a whole had a military connection, while in the context of late Roman Britain the animal's association with the goddess Epona is equally hard to establish with so little data.

### ***Horse Group 1 and related combs***

A comb from a burial at Hyde Street in Winchester's northern suburb (Ottaway *et al.* 2012: fig. 55), is the best example of Horse Group 1, with a rounded feature derived from the ball held by the dolphins on the buckles lying between the horses (Figure 5.5, 1). The heads of the animals are defined by distinctive P-shaped cut-outs below the jaw, ring-and-dots provide the eyes, and a broad convex central element marked by a double ring-and-dot is emphasised by a pelta-like linked double P-shaped cut-out. Most of these elements are also present on the Beadlam and Piercebridge combs that have two narrow connecting-plates on each side (see Chapter 4), except that the extra width needed is here provided by three convex elements beneath each of which is a large double ring-and-dot rather than a double cut-out (Figure 5.5, 108, 139). Most are also present on a comb from a burial at Woodhall, Askrigg, North Yorkshire (Figure 5.5, 64), but this is a more devolved form with no ring-and-dot eyes, less definition in general to the heads of the animals or the three small convex elements between them (some are in fact straight-topped rather than rounded), and three perforations replacing the double ring-and-dot motifs beneath the convex elements. The cut-outs are also less clearly P-shaped, but this could be the result of wear and burial conditions.

On all four combs the P-shaped cut-out is a distinctive and unifying feature. It does not appear on any other combs and so is a strong indication that all four might have been made by the same hand despite being so geographically distant (Table 5.1; Figure 5.6), and despite 64 from Woodhall seeming to be a devolved version.

There are two combs allied to this group. The first is the very elaborate comb 2 found in a custom-made box in a burial at Winnall in Winchester's eastern suburb (Figure 5.2; Ottaway *et al.* 2012: figs 87–88). A very accomplished product, and almost certainly from the same hand as comb 1 from Winchester, it uses knife-shaped cut-outs, not dissimilar to those of P-shape, to define a row of six confronting (butting) horse heads, and there is a small raised element between each pair marked with a ring-and-dot. The edges of the end-plates are almost straight, but here this is not the result of a devolving design but of the need to fit the comb neatly within its box.

More loosely allied to the group is Dolphin comb 107 from Langton, North Yorkshire (Figure 5.8). It has a cut-out lying near the end of the connecting-plate that is similar to the pelta-like double P-shaped cut-out on comb 1.

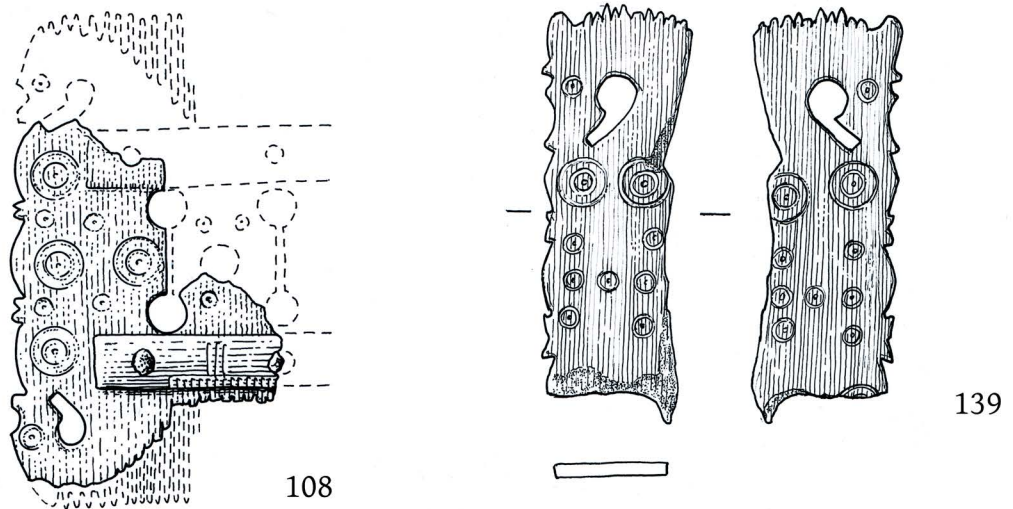
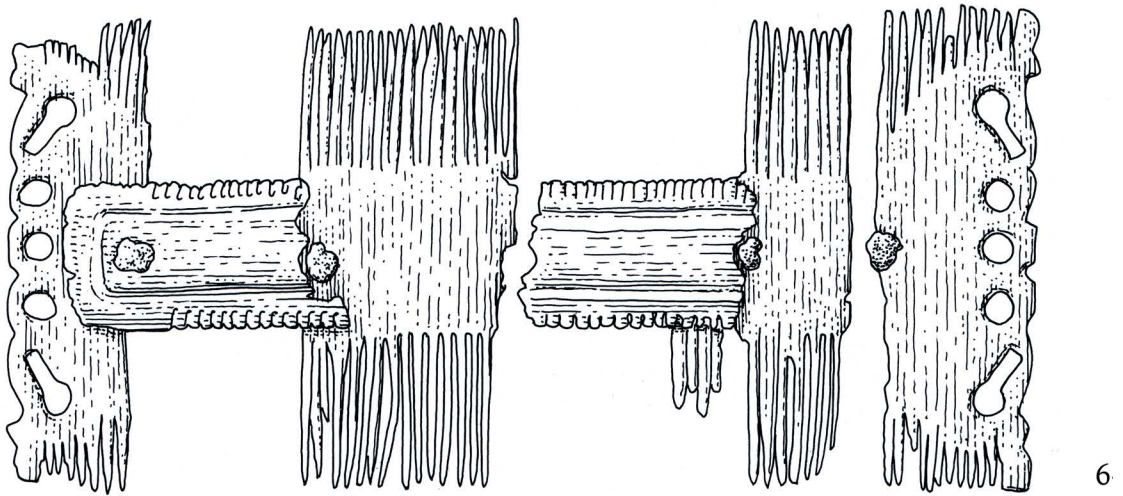
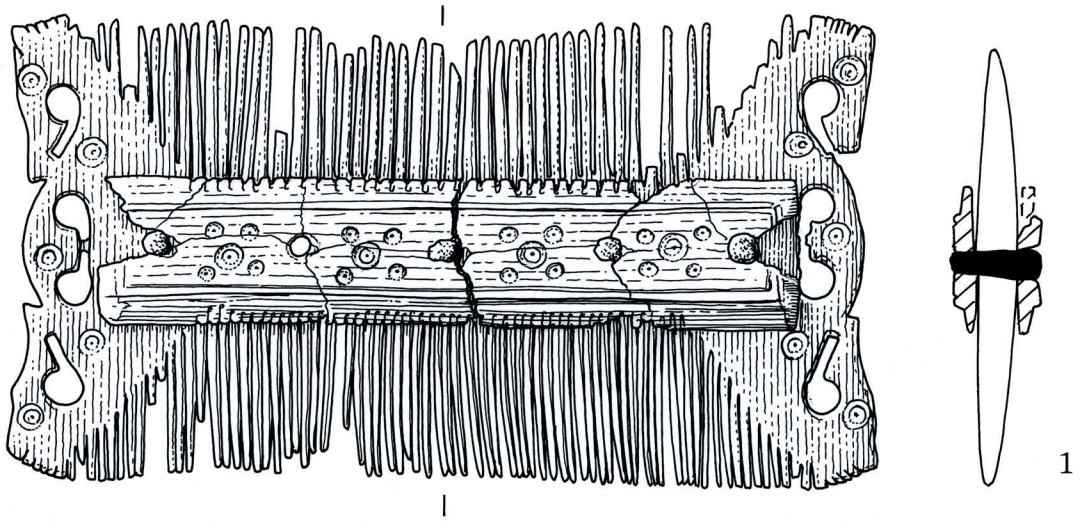


Figure 5.5. Horse Group 1 combs; Winchester 1, Woodhall 64, Beadlam 108, Piercebridge 139. Scale 1:1.



Figure 5.6. Distribution of Horse Group 1 and Group 2 combs.

### *Horse Group 2 and a related comb*

The second stylistic group is formed by two combs from Heybridge and Great Dunmow in Essex that lie about 20 miles apart (Figure 5.6; Figure 5.7, **58**, **92**). The combs are very alike and can be assigned to a single maker, but differ from Horse Group 1 in having irregular cut-outs defining the jawline of the horses. These cut-outs also define the sides of a rectangular frame around the central 'ball', which is further emphasised by a round hole. This squaring of the central element can perhaps be linked to the way the two connecting-plates on the Beadlam and Piercebridge combs defined a square that is emphasised on the edge by two pairs of low points (Figure 5.5, **108**, **139**).

Part of a comb from Cambridge bears some resemblance to the two Essex combs, but the irregular cut-outs are so exaggerated here that what remains of the end-plate could be described as openwork (Figure 5.7, **133**). Found in Arbury Road in 1952-3, about 35 miles from Great Dunmow, it was in a layer interpreted as a build-up of late Roman rubbish in a building that probably went out of use in the early 3rd century (Frend 1955: 20, 26, pl. IV, 20). It appears to be like **58** and **92** in general form, but beneath the surviving horse head (if that is what it is) is a very large open space, to one side of which is an upright bar, part of what was probably a frame around a ball. (This comb was mistakenly described as from 'Arbury, Suffolk' in Greep 1983: 759, fig. 235, 12).

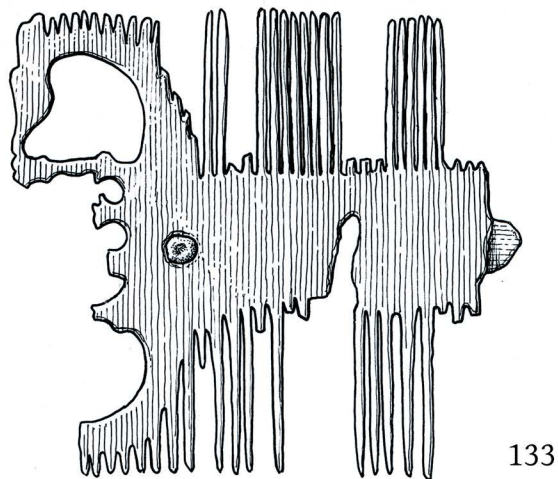
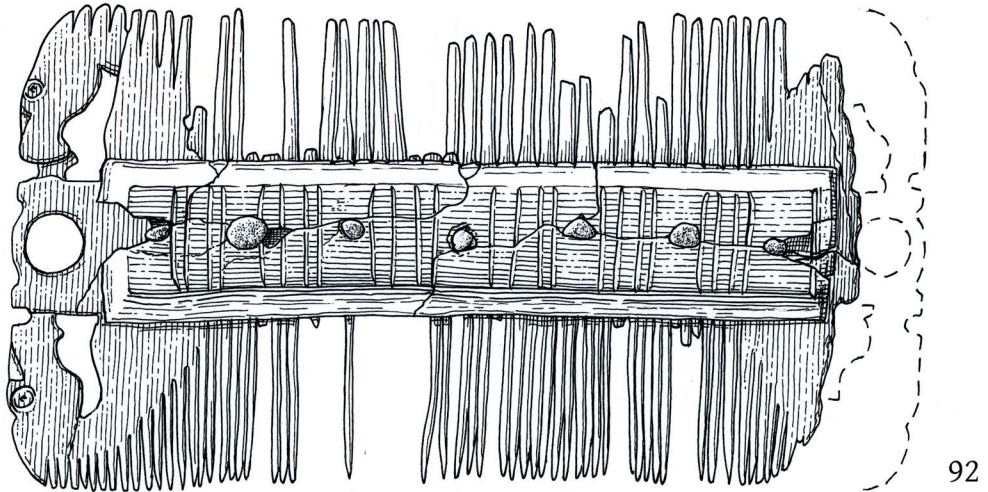
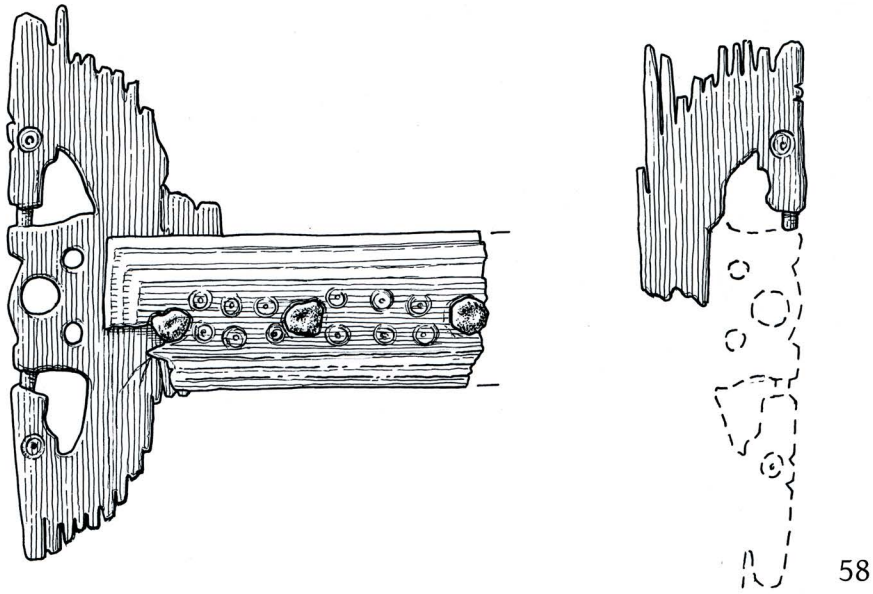


Figure 5.7. Horse Group 2 combs and a related comb: Heybridge 58, Great Dunmow 92, Cambridge 133. Scale 1:1.

## Dolphin and Devolved Dolphin combs

### *The Langton Dolphin comb*

Belonging to the group with two narrow connecting-plates on each side, a dolphin end-plate fragment from the villa at Langton in Yorkshire depicts the creatures much as they are shown on Type I and II buckles. It shows two confronted dolphins with eyes and notched crests, and has a pelta-shaped cut-out defining the lower jaw (Figure 5.8, **107**). The latter allies it to Horse comb **1** from Winchester, but there is otherwise no point of similarity. While there is some possibility that they are crudely-cut horses, especially given the 'ears' on the animal head on the left, they are more comparable to the dolphins on buckles that are set beak-to-beak rather than beak-to-ball-to-beak (Figure 5.4). Many dolphins on buckles also have no ball, or only a very rudimentary one, and many also have notched crests (Hawkes and Dunning 1961: figs 13-15, 17-19).

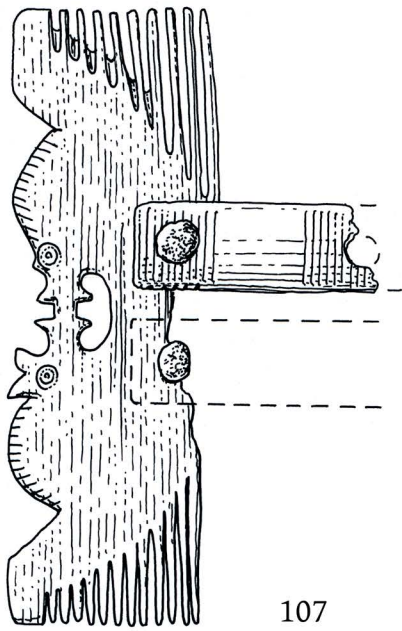
### *Complex end-plates*

Most other combs referred to here as Dolphins or Devolved Dolphins rely on the general profile of the end-plates being similar to that of dolphin buckles, with the unifying features being the central rounded element or ball, also seen on some horse combs, and the fluid curves running from the ball towards the corners. Pointed or rectangular peaks might flank the central element (again seen on some Horse combs), and the corners are generally raised like a dolphin's tail and might also incorporate similar peaks. A comb from Pudding Lane, London is a well-preserved example (Figure 3.5, **80**), while a fragment with holes for eyes from Newton Bewley, Co. Durham, presents a slightly different version of the form (Figure 5.8, **117**).

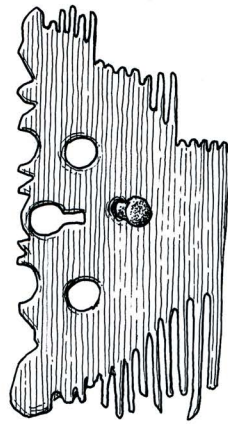
A group of combs with end-plate profiles rather more complex than those seen on **80** and **117** are **81** from London (from the same Pudding Lane site as **80**), **73** from Dorchester-on-Thames and **122** from the Big Cave at Keil, Kintyre (Figure 5.8). The two latter are very similar to each other, sharing not only an edge profile and the position of the eyes, but also a keyhole-shaped cut-out in the centre; it seems more than probable that they are products of the same hand. By land they lie about 520 miles apart (Figure 5.9), less if at least part of the journey were made by sea. Keil lies on a fairly accessible section of the rocky coast at the southern tip of Kintyre and within a comparatively short distance of mainland Scotland and Ireland. Traders, deliberately or as a result of shipwreck, may have landed either there or perhaps at nearby Dunaverty, which later became the site of one of the royal fortresses of the sixth- to seventh-century kingdom of Dál Riata (Clarkson 2013: 88). Local legend suggests that Keil is also associated with the arrival in Scotland of St Columba in AD 563, as near the caves are St Columba's Footsteps and Well (Clarkson 2013: 141). The comb fragment pre-dates both fortress and saint and there is no reason to directly associate it with either, especially as other Roman material has been found in the Keil caves (Ritchie 1966), but these legends serve to point up that a cave in antiquity was not necessarily regarded as a low-status dwelling.

None of these combs is from a burial, and the overall similarity of their end-plates to those of continental combs suggests that they were brought to Britain by incomers.

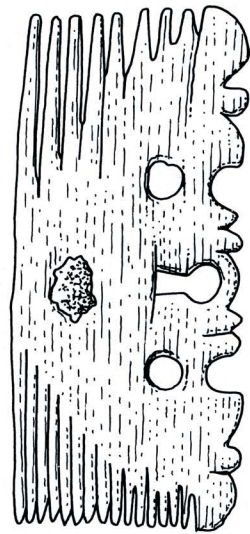
Rather different to this group is a comb fragment from Grave 1094 at Amesbury Down, Wiltshire (**124**: Wessex Archaeology, report in prep.), on which the end-plate has a short central section divided into two halves by a notch, with a small perforation in each half; the dolphin-like fluid sides have two mounds, with a small perforation (eye) beneath each inmost mound. This is classified with the Devolved Dolphins (see below) but seems to stand between the two groups.



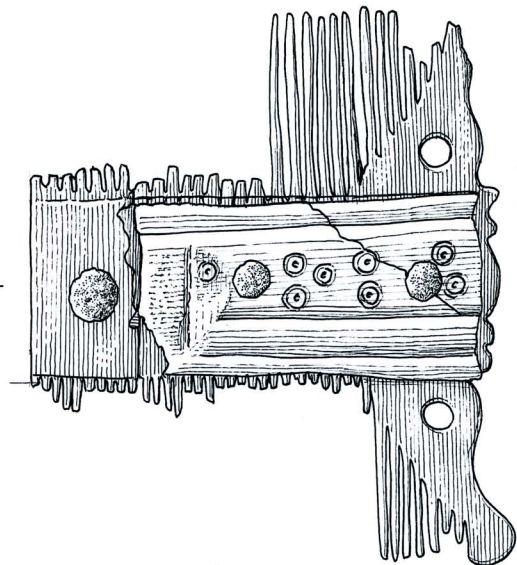
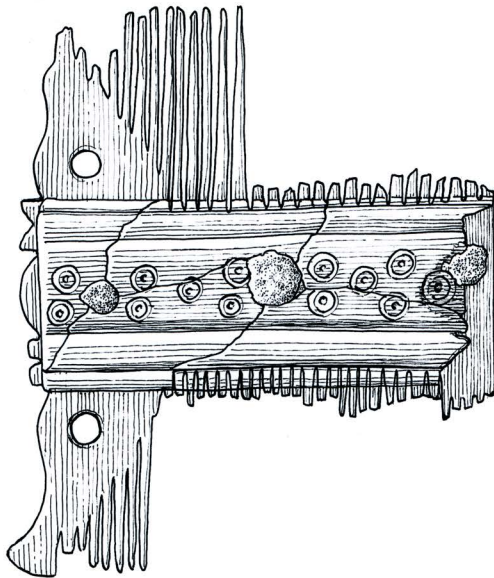
107



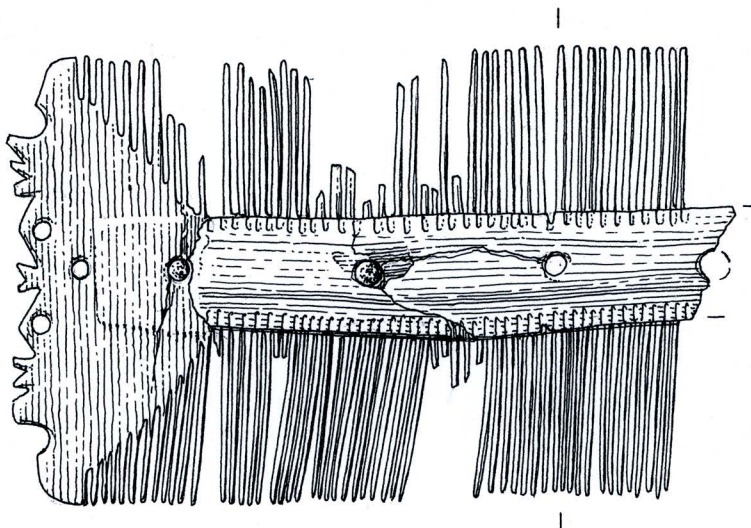
73



122



117



81

Figure 5.8. Dolphin comb and Devolved Dolphin combs with complex end-plates: Langton 107, Dorchester-on-Thames 73, Keil 122, Newton Bewley 117, London 81. Scale 1:1.



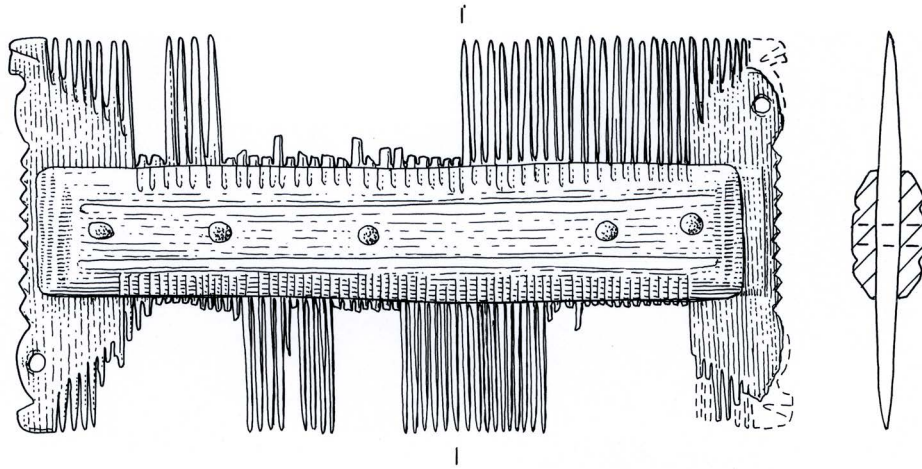
Figure 5.9. Distribution of Dolphin comb 107 and Devolved Dolphin combs with complex end-plates.

***A swimming dolphin?***

A comb from Lankhills, Winchester is distinguished by having a notched or rippled centre and a small hole beneath a convex element in the corner of one end-plate that combines with the small blunt peak at the extreme corner to resemble a dolphin's beaked head with eye, while the opposite corner is notched as if to represent the tail (Figure 5.10, **14**). This appears to represent a single dolphin with rippling water between head and tail. Comb **32** from Snell's Corner, Hampshire, is the closest in style, as it has a notched/rippled centre flanked by two dolphins, each with an eye (Knocker 1955, fig. 9, RB.5). Both these combs belong within the wider Devolved Dolphin group (see below). A not dissimilar Devolved Dolphin comb from Colchester has grooves filed at an angle across the centre but no eye holes (Figure 5.14, **53**) and a comb from Lynch Farm near Chesterton has a rippled centre but belongs to the Straight-centred group (Figure 4.3, **62**); as both the latter have very devolved end-plates they do not seem to be allied to **14** in any other way.

*Devolved Dolphins, and beyond*

The distribution of Devolved Dolphin combs is very wide, from Carrawburgh in the north down to Kent and across to Dorset (Figure 5.11), and their end-plates vary considerably in shape, features that are to be expected in a group of artefacts that represent both the spread of combs into the wider population and the decline of an original design, and it is doubtful that their makers were working to anything other than a general concept of an acceptable end-plate form.



14

Figure 5.10. A swimming Dolphin? Winchester 14. Scale 1:1.

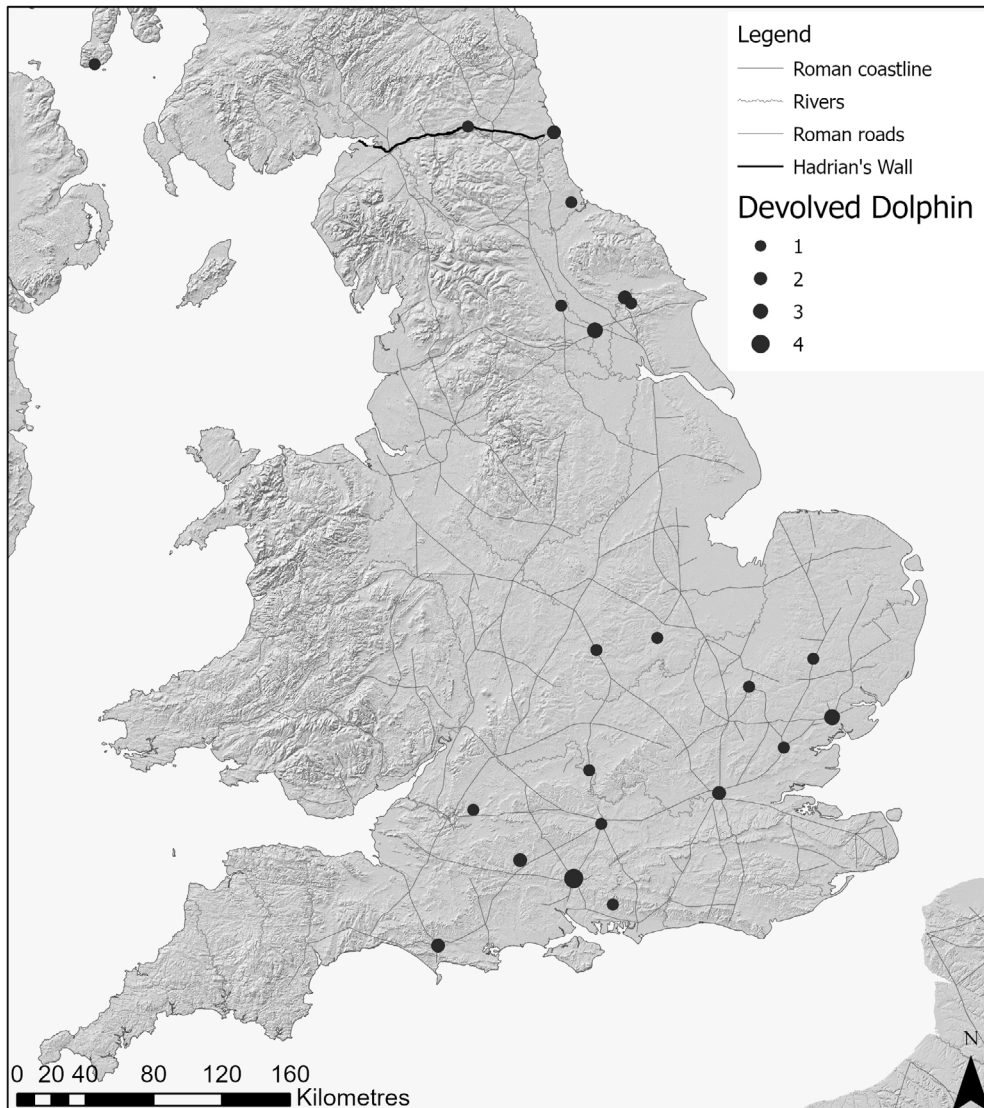


Figure 5.11. Distribution of other Devolved Dolphin combs.

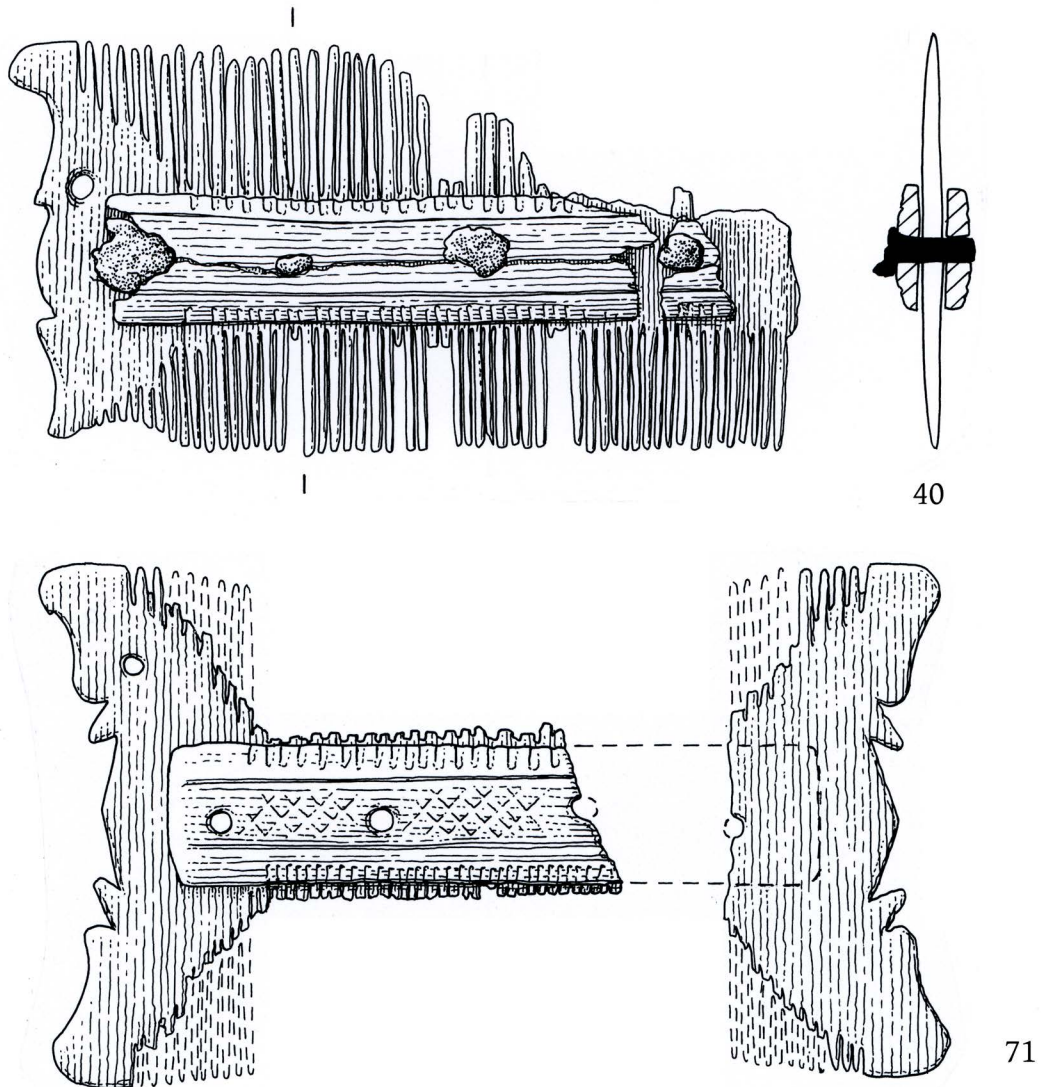


Figure 5.12. Devolved Dolphin combs: Poundbury 40, Silchester 71. Scale 1:1.

Examples of combs with end-plates that still retain the central and fluid side elements but are at one remove from the combs mentioned above are **40** from Poundbury in Dorset and **71** from Silchester in Hampshire, which show some similarity of style and have only a single hole to hint at an eye (Figure 5.12). Four combs lack even one eye, and the features of their profiles are so exaggerated that without the central element they would not show any characteristics related to dolphins: **37** from Easton Hill in Wiltshire, **44** from Poundbury, **119** from South Shields (Figure 5.13) and the unfinished **141** from Carrawburgh, Northumberland (Figure 3.2). The four are all so different that they cannot be viewed as a stylistic group, with no links even between the two from southern burials (**37** and **44**) and the two from northern forts (**119** and **141**).

Even further removed from the above are combs that could be defined as dolphins-without-ball. Figure 5.14, **53** from Colchester has end-plates that are almost straight but the fluidity of the sides and the slightly raised and notched centre allows it to be assigned to Devolved Dolphins. This is also the case with comb **131** from Bath, which is sunk in the centre but has fluid and dolphin-like sides (Cunliffe and Davenport 1985: fig. 79, 37). Another comb from Colchester is so damaged

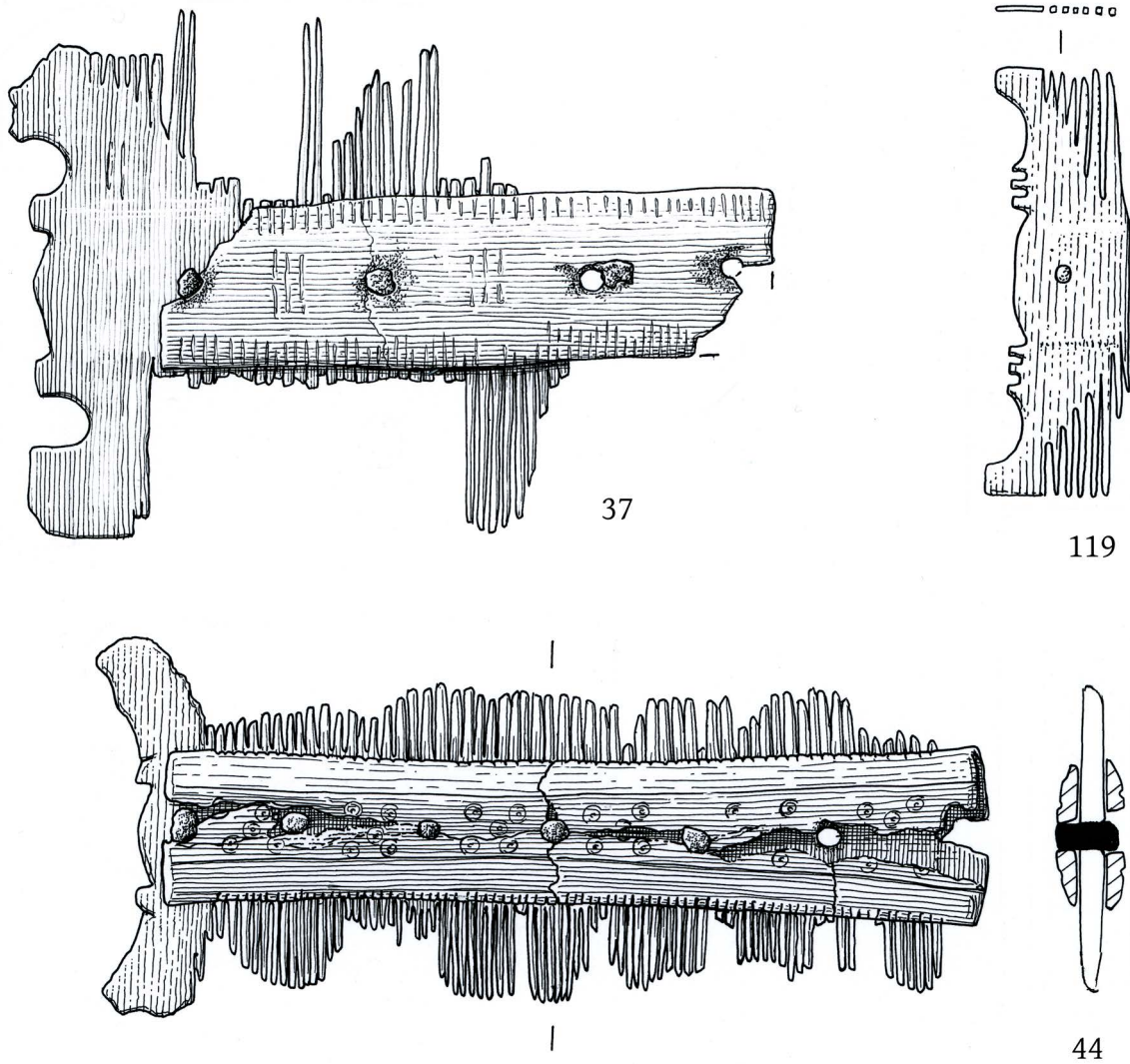


Figure 5.13. Devolved Dolphin combs: Easton Hill 37, South Shields 119, Poundbury 44. Scale 1:1.

that it is difficult to assign to a group (Figure 5.14, 55). Only one corner remains intact, and this, with its ring-and-dot eye, suggests that the end-plates probably showed confronted dolphins. Its damaged central elements are marked by three ring-and-dots set in a triangle and may have been rounded, making the design one of devolved confronted dolphins-with-ball. The alternative, that the dolphins were addorsed rather than confronted, can probably be dismissed.

Different again is 129 from Amesbury Down, Wiltshire (Wessex Archaeology, report in prep.), which has a large concave indentation at the centre flanked by smaller ones. What remains of the edge between these indentations is straight, but the corners are missing and may have either continued this line or turned up slightly.

A group of combs with a straight centre to the end-plate, and on which the connecting-plates (where they survive) run right to that point and even slightly beyond it, represents a further stage in the devolution of the dolphins-with-ball form, although they retain an element of fluidity to the sides, some of which may sometimes be decidedly dolphin-like, while others are more owl-like. They are treated below as a separate, and almost certainly late, form.

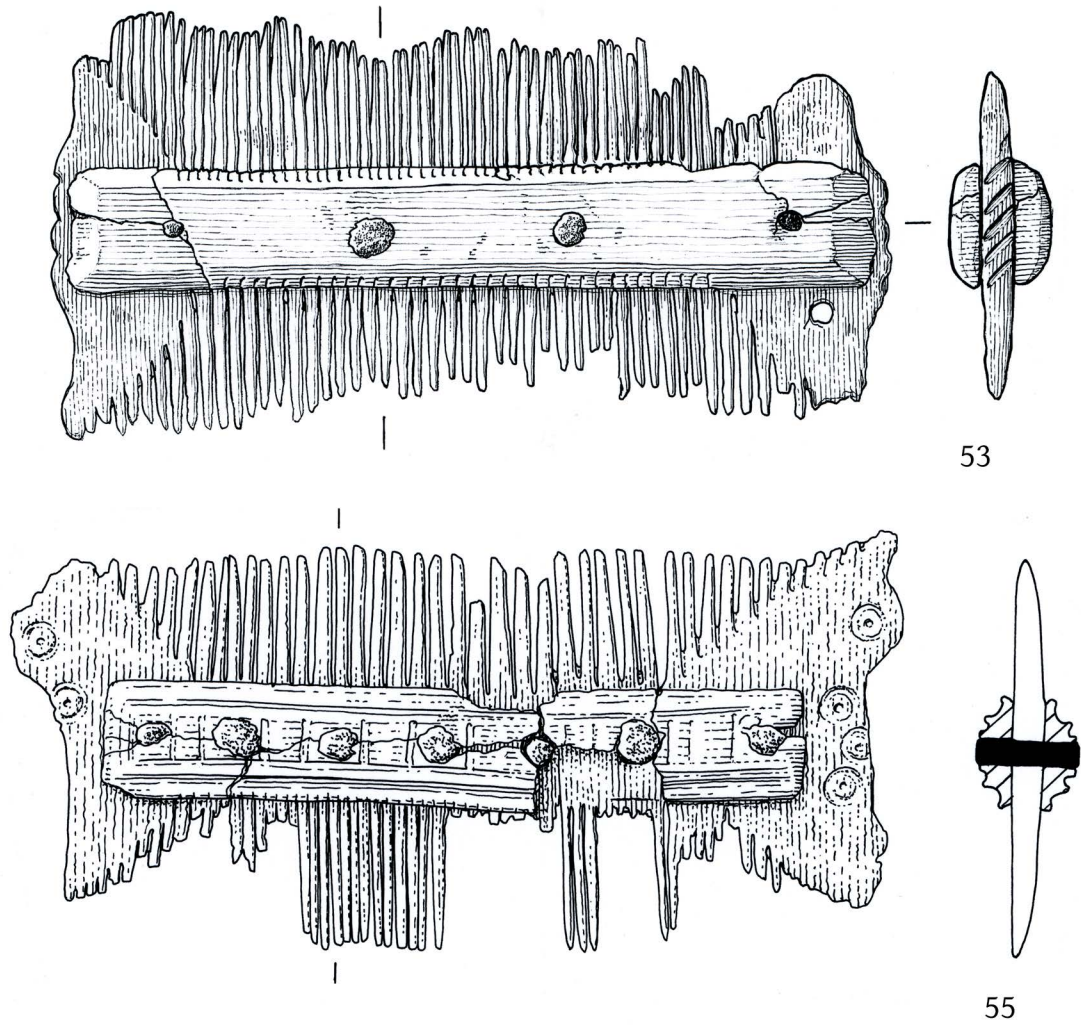


Figure 5.14. Very Devolved Dolphin combs: Colchester 53, Colchester 55.  
Scale 1:1.

### *Dolphins becoming owls*

The similarity of five Dolphin combs to those of Owl Group 1 (see below) lies chiefly in their two large perforations: **12** and **15** from Lankhills, **72** from Alchester, Oxfordshire, **96** from Orton Hall Farm, Cambridgeshire and **146** from York (Figures 5.15-5.16). All these combs retain the dolphins-with-ball elements seen on the combs in Figures 5.8 and 5.12-5.13, but the end-plates of **12** and **72** are starting to flatten out. Their large perforations give the impression of a full-face zoomorphic, arguably owl-like, mask, rather than of comparatively small-eyed dolphins viewed in profile, and comb **15**, with its low central element and swept-up corners, is the most mask-like. A British-made buckle from Cirencester demonstrates a similar route from one creature to another. On it the dolphins have been lost and the horses have been reduced to angular protrusions with eyes, giving the appearance of a full-face animal mask (Figure 5.4, 10; Hawkes and Dunning 1961: fig. 15, c). Although these combs are placed here together because most have plain connecting-plates and some are very similar, they do not form a very strong stylistic group; indeed, even the decidedly dolphin-profiled comb from Newton Bewley could be grouped here because of its two large perforations (Figure 5.8, **117**).

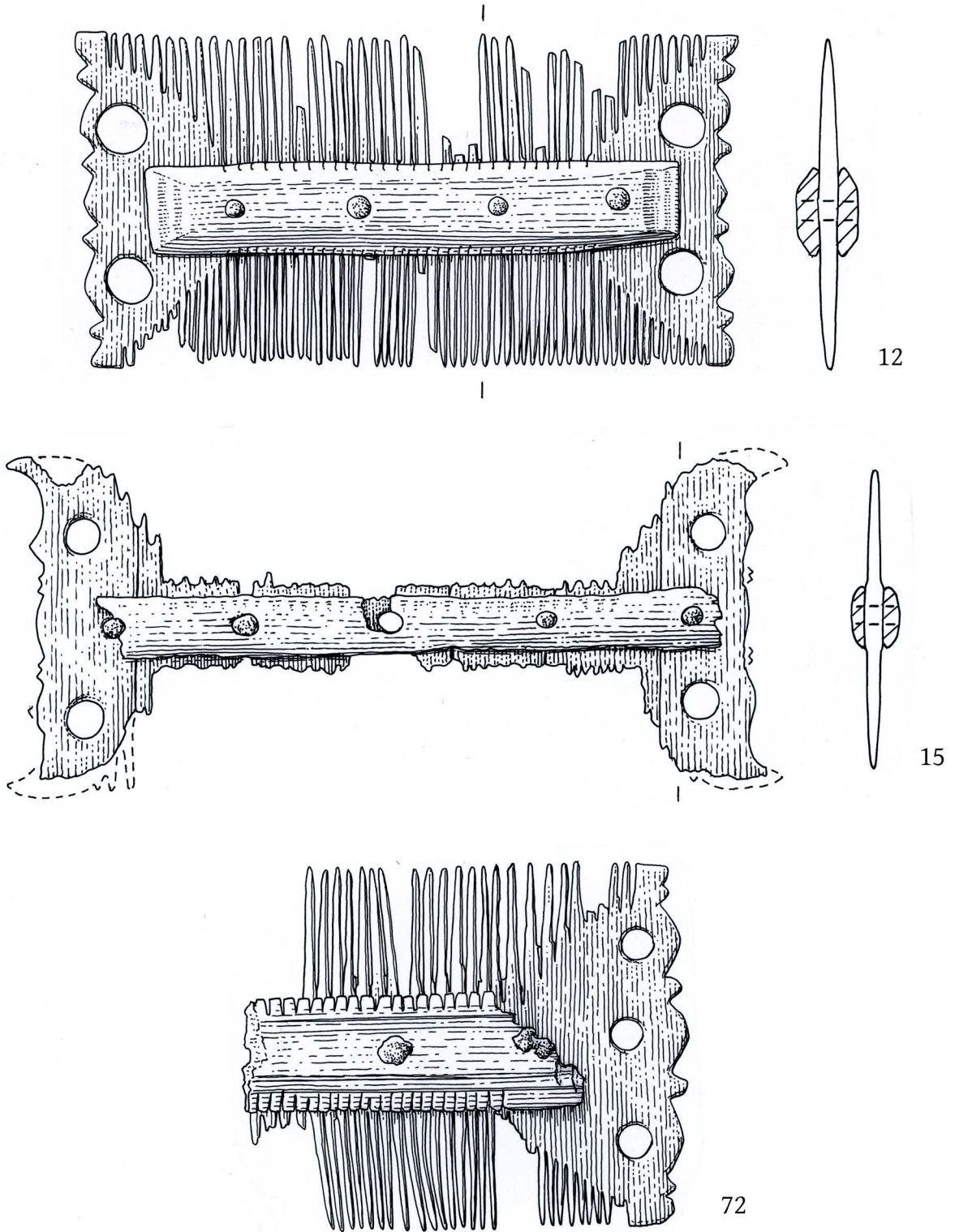


Figure 5.15. Combs showing Dolphins becoming Owls: Winchester 12, Winchester 15, Alchester 72. Scale 1:1.

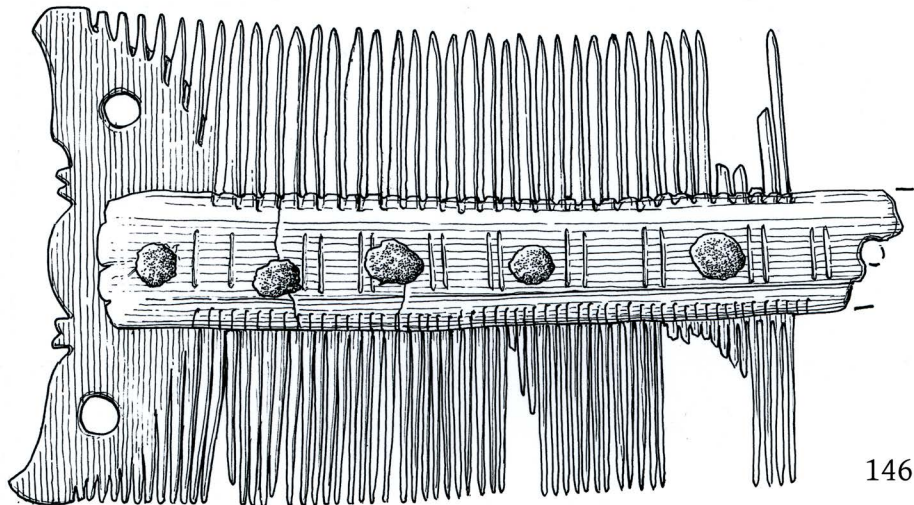
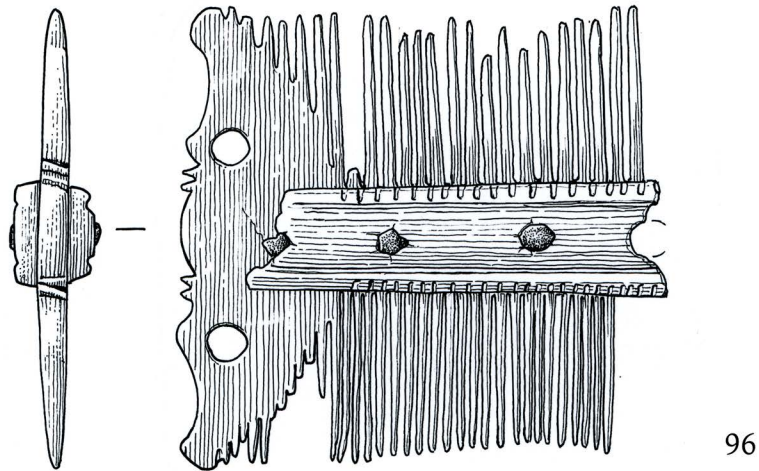


Figure 5.16. Combs showing Dolphins becoming Owls: Orton Hall Farm 96, York 146. Scale 1:1.

Two of the five are from Lankhills while the others lie about 65 (72), 140 (96) and 240 miles (112) from there (Figure 5.17), not that distance precludes their being by the same hand, as we have seen for other combs (Figure 5.6).

Comb 112 from Wellington Row, York, also belongs in this group but is slightly different in having smaller perforations and plain swept-up terminals, allying it to the Concave-ended group below; only the central mound flanked by two low peaks is directly derived from Dolphin combs (Figure 5.18). The ambiguous comb 114, also from Wellington Row, again shares features of both Dolphins and Owls and can, confusingly, be viewed in several ways (Figure 5.18). The dolphin beaks and ball have been replaced by a crescent and the eyes are large ring-and-dots, which allows the dolphins to be seen as either confronted, the crescent representing the upper part of the beak, or as addorsed, with the crescent representing the tails and the notched corners the beaks. In addition, the crescent and eyes give the impression of a full-

face animal mask, and particularly of an owl with a U-shaped centre to its facial disc (Brun *et al.* 1992: 172–177). This ambiguity can also be seen on a British-made type IIA buckle from Caerwent, Monmouthshire, on which the crests of the confronted dolphins have become ears that together form a wide crescent (Figure 5.4, 7; Hawkes and Dunning 1961: fig. 17, b).



Figure 5.17. Distribution of combs showing Dolphins becoming Owls.

STYLISTIC GROUPS

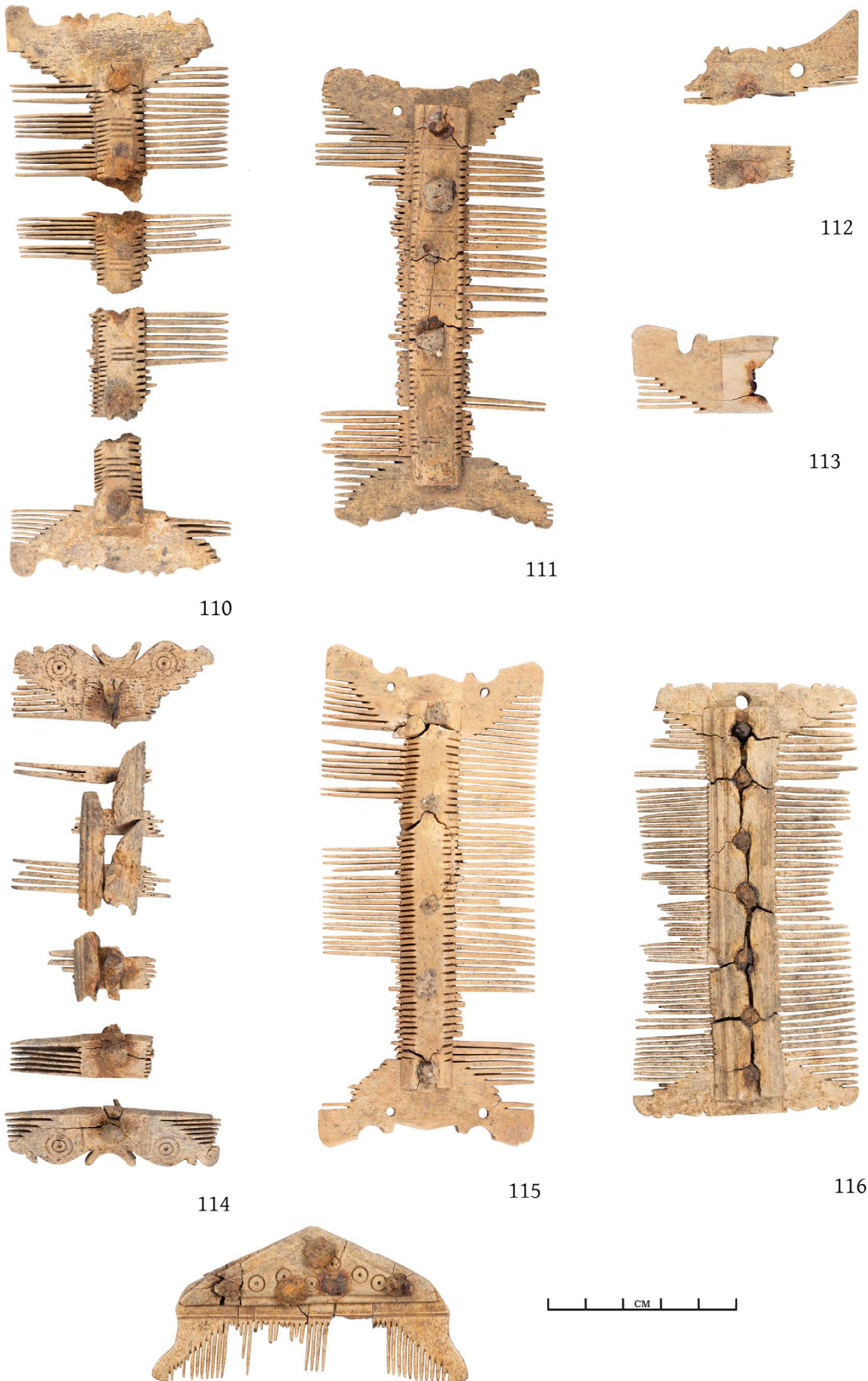


Figure 5.18. Combs from the dark earth at Wellington Row, York. The unnumbered triangular comb, bottom, is included as an example of this contemporary form (see Chapter 4). Image copyright York Archaeological Trust; photographs by Ellie Drew, arranged by Richard Henry.

## Owl combs

While some combs can be seen as Dolphins that might be Owls, two groups of Owl combs have lost nearly every feature linking them to Dolphins, whilst also differing from each other (Table 5.2). Both groups exhibit close similarities between combs from the same region, so close that they can be called formal types. Centred on Winchester, they are assumed to be the products of one or two makers or workshops based there. A third group differs more markedly from the others and is linked to Concave-ended combs (see below), but again centres on Winchester.

| Catalogue No.      | Site                 | County          | Site and context type   | Stylistic links to | Distance to in miles (approx.) |
|--------------------|----------------------|-----------------|---|--------------------|--------------------------------|
| <i>Owl Group 1</i> |                      |                 |   |                    |                                |
| 5                  | Winchester           | Hampshire       | large town / <i>civitas</i> capital / burial                      | 47<br>143          | 70<br>120                      |
| 47                 | Cirencester          | Gloucestershire | large town / <i>civitas</i> capital / provincial capital / burial | 5<br>143           | 70<br>120                      |
| 143                | Wendens Ambo         | Essex           | rural settlement / villa or farmstead                             | 5<br>47            | 120<br>120                     |
| <i>Owl Group 2</i> |                      |                 |   |                    |                                |
| 4                  | Winchester           | Hampshire       | large town / <i>civitas</i> capital / burial                      | 31<br>36           | 15<br>40                       |
| 31                 | Andover              | Hampshire       | nucleated settlement / burial                                     | 4<br>36            | 15<br>55                       |
| 36                 | Chichester           | West Sussex     | large town / <i>civitas</i> capital / burial                      | 4<br>31            | 40<br>55                       |
| <i>Owl Group 3</i> |                      |                 |   |                    |                                |
| 11                 | Winchester           | Hampshire       | large town / <i>civitas</i> capital / burial                      | 17<br>151<br>-     | -<br>40<br>50                  |
| 17                 | Winchester           | Hampshire       | large town / <i>civitas</i> capital / burial                      | 11<br>151<br>-     | -<br>40<br>50                  |
| 151                | Gussage All Saints   | Dorset          | rural settlement / burial   | 11<br>17<br>-      | 40<br>40<br>80                 |
| 153                | Dorchester-on-Thames | Oxfordshire     | small town / pit  | 11<br>17<br>151    | 50<br>50<br>80                 |

Table 5.2. Combs of Owl Groups 1, 2 and 3.

Do these end-plates really represent owls or some other creature? In a funerary context perhaps the most likely alternatives are the lion, representing the power of death over life, or the bear, associated with childbirth through Artemis Lochia (Toynbee 1973: 65–68; Crummy 2010: 74–76). Owls are rarely represented on Roman period material culture in Britain or indeed in the wider Roman world, being barely mentioned, if at all, in discussions of animals and deities (e.g. Toynbee 1973; Green 1997), even though the Little Owl (*Athene noctua*) was the companion bird of Minerva, warrior goddess of wisdom, healing and the domestic arts. An owl is shown on one of the gold votive plaques from Ashwell, Hertfordshire, on which the local goddess Senuna is represented as Minerva (Jackson and Burleigh 2018: figs 64–65), and there are at least three owl figurines from Britain, found at Verulamium in Hertfordshire, Marston St Lawrence in Northamptonshire and Chester in Cheshire (Durham 2012: 3.35.16, nos 206, 834 and 1009). While these few objects do not provide sufficient evidence for a long line of owl imagery in southern Britain, at least five of the ten combs listed above came from the burials of young women and in one grave, that of comb 31 from Andover, foetal bone was found with the adult skeleton. Speculatively, they may represent devotees of Minerva (or Minerva conflated with a local goddess), as she would be an appropriate deity for women in charge of a household, especially those who had invoked her during pregnancy or childbirth.

*Owl Group 1*

This group consists of combs from Winchester, Cirencester, and Wendens Ambo in Essex (Figure 5.19). All resemble an owl mask, with prominent ear tufts and feathering over the large holes that form the eyes, and the loss of the teeth adds to the impression of an owl's facial disc. On all three the connecting-plate has marginal grooves. The comb from Wendens Ambo, Essex, has the addition of a ring-and-dot motif set below and to the right of the eye holes as well as a line of ring-and-dots on the connecting-plates. All would have been made by the same hand and can be considered to be a true type. The pierced eyes are like those on the devolved Dolphins becoming Owls group above, and the broad central V-shaped notch can be equated with the crescentic feature on the York comb and Caerwent buckle described with that group. If the Winchester and Cirencester combs point to a workshop serving a regional market, the Wendens Ambo comb may indicate that its products were more widely traded (Table 5.2; Figure 5.20).

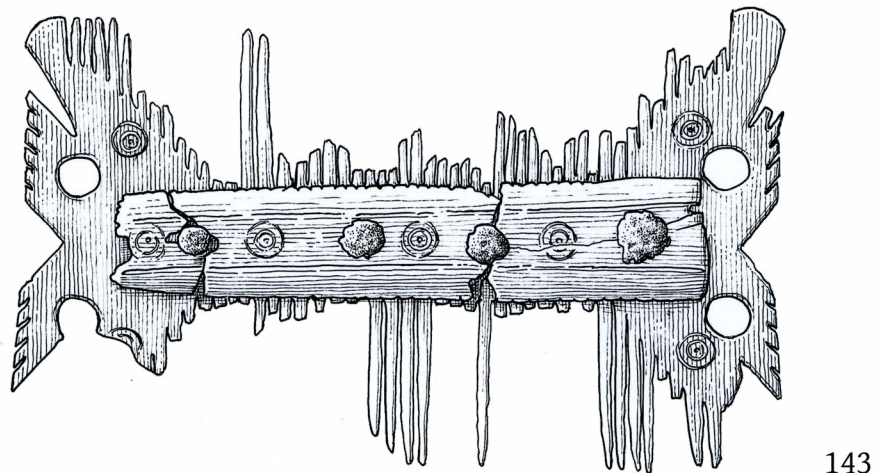
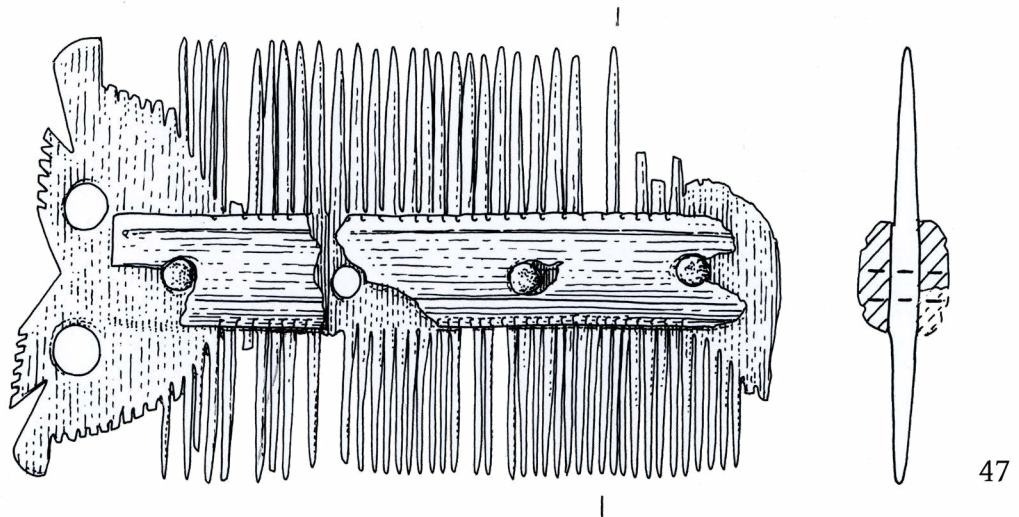
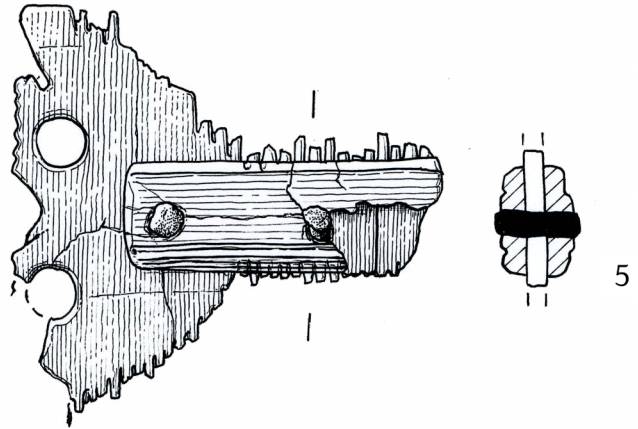


Figure 5.19. Owl Group 1 combs: Winchester 5, Cirencester 47, Wendens Ambo 143. Scale 1:1.

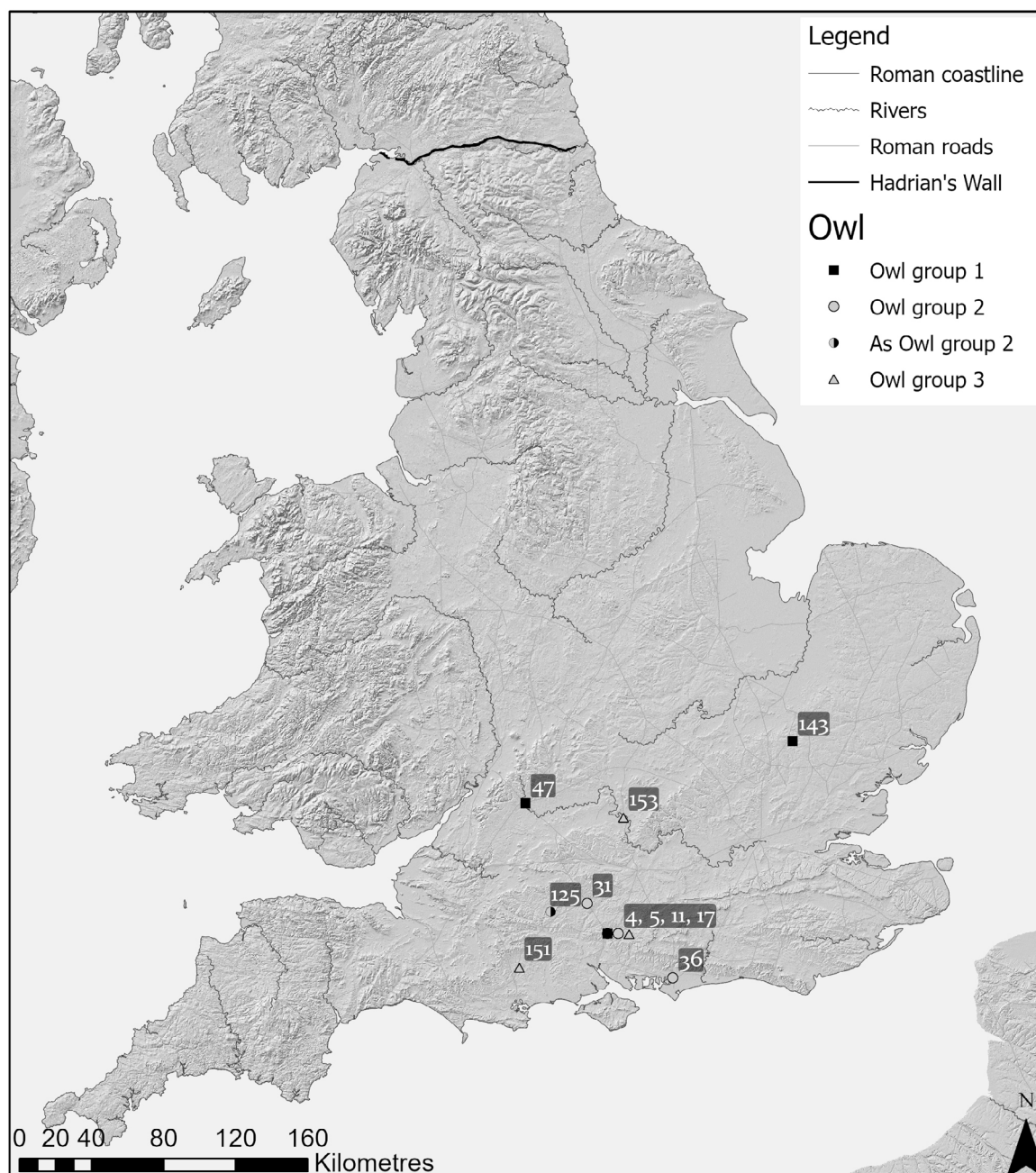


Figure 5.20. Distribution of Owl Groups 1, 2 and 3 combs.

### *Owl Group 2*

The second owl group is very different to the first, but three combs, all from the same region, are again very similar, while others from a wider area could be classed as variants. The three standard pieces are from Winchester, Andover and Chichester (Figure 5.21). They share the same end-plate profile, with a convex or flattened convex centre flanked by upswept terminals, double ring-and-dot eyes, and a line of double ring-and-dots on connecting-plates that run right up to the edge of the end-plate and are considered to be a late feature. As with Group 1, they are taken to be a true type, products of a single maker.

A comb from Amesbury Down (125) is of similar form to Owl Group 2 but lacks the eyes. Apart from having slightly convex centres to the end-plates, it could be classified with the Straight-centred Group (see below).

STYLISTIC GROUPS

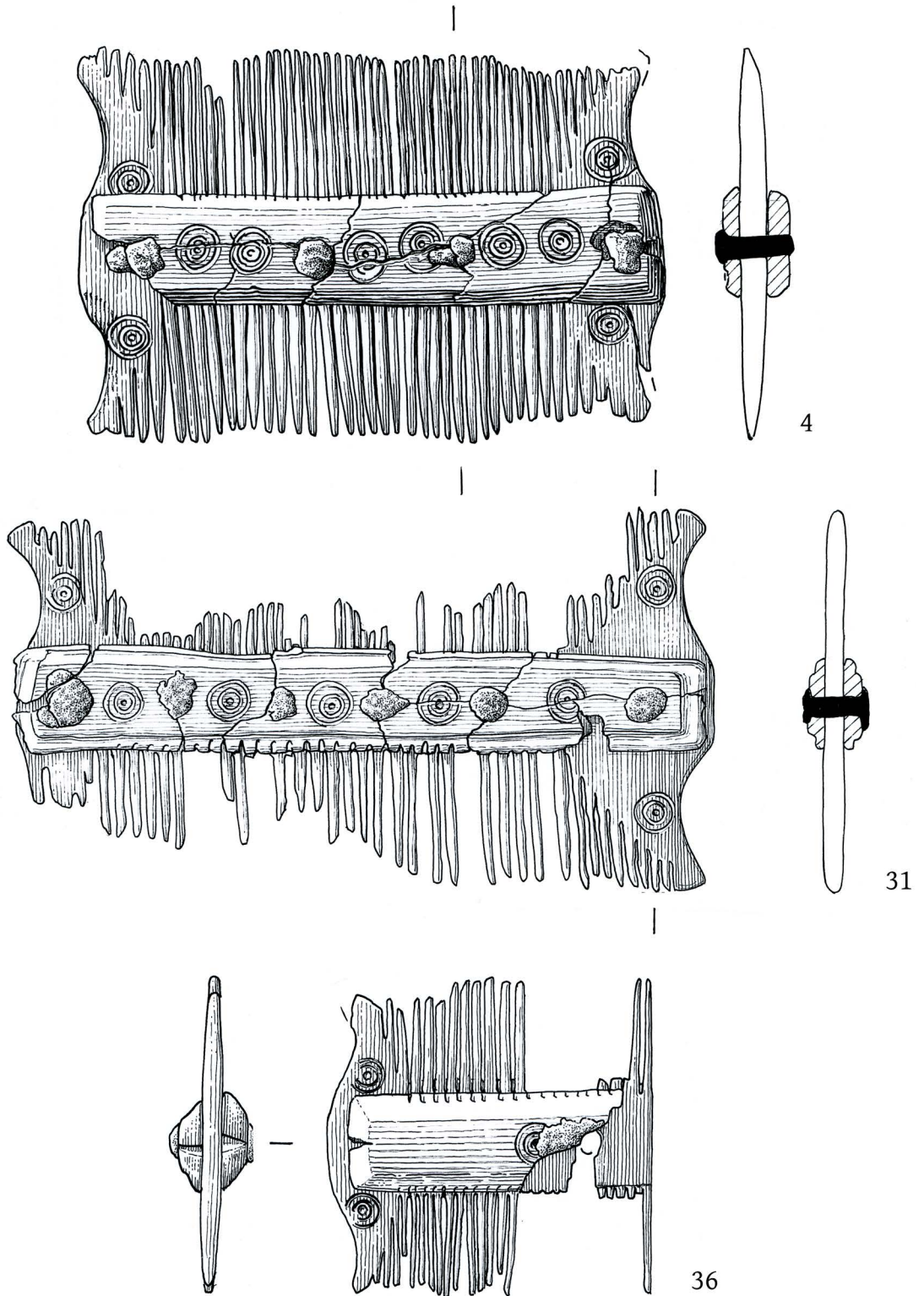


Figure 5.21. Owl Group 2 combs: Winchester 4, Andover 31, Chichester 36. Scale 1:1.

*Owl Group 3*

This group is united by having a concave end-plate with a prominent pierced central label. On combs **11** and **17** from Lankhills the label is pierced by two and three holes respectively (Figure 5.22). The end-plate of **17** is otherwise plain, but that on **11** has a small ring-and-dot in each corner, reminiscent of the eyes on horse combs, and circles filled with ring-and-dots below them and to one side; for similar filled circles on combs from Cirencester and Malton see Figure 3.4. The labels may ultimately derive from the ball seen on confronted Dolphin and Horse combs but the perforations link them to the eyes of Owl Groups 1 and 2, while the swept-up sides resemble wings, the graduated teeth giving them a feathered appearance, especially on the plainer **17**. These two combs are certainly products of the same maker, and appear to have either inspired, or been inspired by, the other two combs in this group. Both burials are dated to AD 390-410, with the other grave deposits found with **17** including two coins of Theodosius I, AD 388-395, one of Arcadius, AD 388-402, and one of the House of Theodosius AD 388-402 (Clarke 1979: table 2).

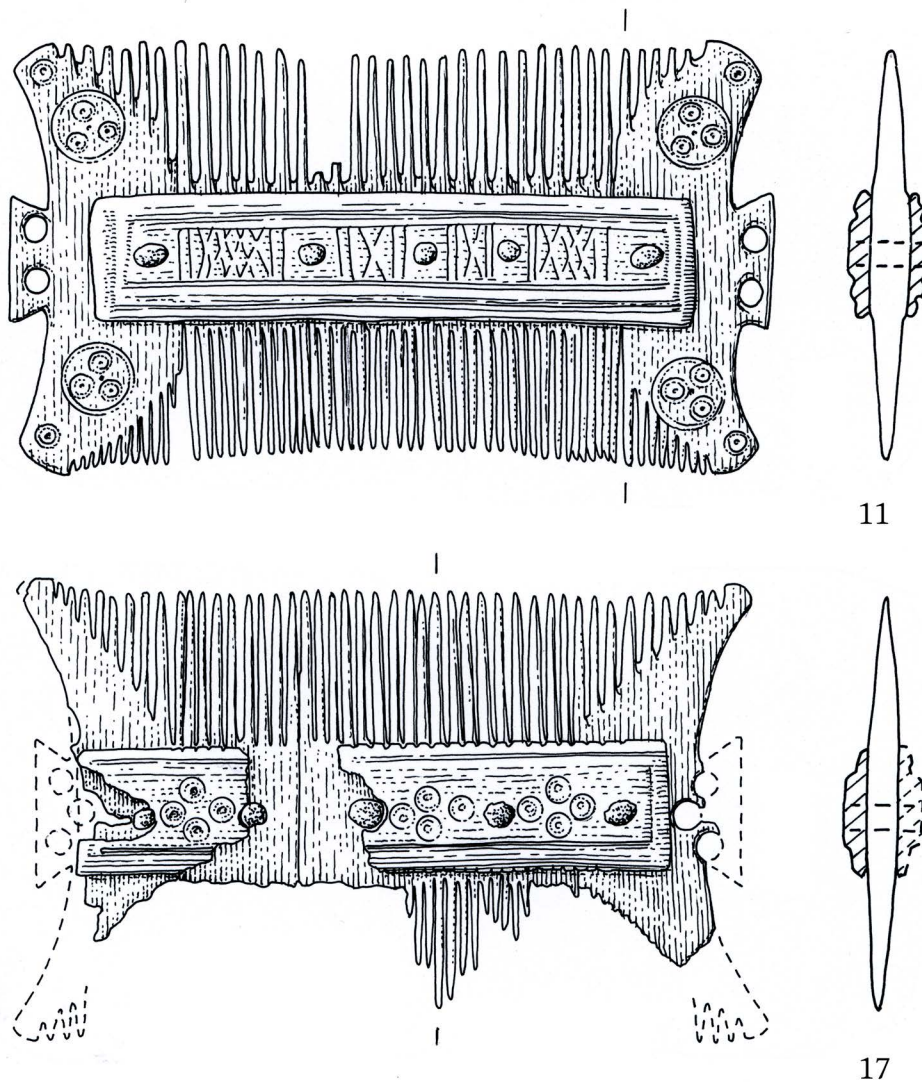


Figure 5.22. Owl Group 3 combs: Winchester 11, Winchester 17.  
Scale 1:1.

A comb from Gussage All Saints (151) has a more elaborate and therefore arguably earlier version of this design (Figure 5.23). The central label is delicately worked to form points (a vestige of the tufts on Owl Group 1?) and perforated roundels (eyes) flanking the connecting-plates, which run to the edge of the label. The perforations are partly cut into the concave edge, and on the outer arc the surrounding material has been trimmed down to a point detached from the concave edge. This lack of contact may be deliberate or caused by wear, but the gap between one point and the adjacent edge is so slight that the latter is the most probable (Fig. 5.23, top left). The stepped connecting-plates are fixed by both iron and copper-alloy rivets that perform a decorative as well as a practical purpose. There is an iron rivet close to each end and five more along the body of the comb that alternate with five copper-alloy rivets, each rivet being separated by pairs of transverse grooves. The copper-alloy rivets consisted of hollow tubes closed by flat caps, and some of the iron rivets on one face of the comb appear to be covered in flat bone caps. As the comb rested on the chest of the woman with whom it was buried, this is probably human bone that has become attached to the iron as it corroded.

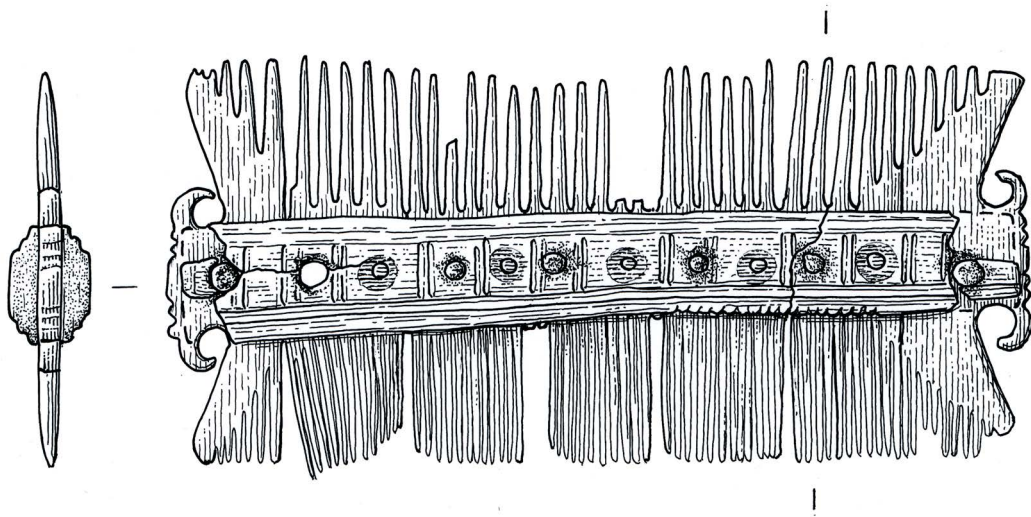


Figure 5.23. Owl Group 3 comb: Gussage All Saints 151. Scale 1:1.



Undoubtedly by the same hand as 151, a comb from Dorchester-on-Thames has a similar label but its connecting-plates do not run quite up to its edge, which instead has three central points between the roundels defining the eyes, again probably a vestige of Owl Group 1's tufts (Figure 5.24). It is also heavily decorated with both double and single ring-and-dots, which on the end-plate are reminiscent of the design on 11 and on the connecting-plate are set in quincunxes between iron rivets.

Figure 5.24. Owl Group 3 comb: Dorchester-on-Thames 153. Image copyright Oxford Archaeology; photograph by Ian Cartwright, Institute of Archaeology, Oxford. Scale 1:1.

Owl Group 3 combs can be linked to both the Straight-centred group and the Concave-ended groups described below. Although generally taken as an indication of a devolved design and a late date, here the long connecting-plate of **151** from Gussage All Saints may only have been extended to strengthen the rather delicate centre of the end-plate, as it is unlikely to be later than the less elaborate pair from Lankhills.

**Straight-centred combs with long connecting-plates: very Devolved Dolphins/Owls**

This group represents a further stage in the decline of the dolphins-with-ball design, although they all retain an element of fluidity to the sides, which may sometimes have a very dolphin-like profile or be similar to Owl Group 2. As with the Devolved Dolphins their forms are quite varied and they have a wide distribution from South Shields down to Kent and across to Dorset (Figure 5.25). They are united by having a straight centre to the end-plate and, where the connecting-plates survive, they run very close to, on, or even slightly beyond that straight edge. On **91** (Figure 5.26) and **88** (Figure 5.28) for example, this may have allowed the connecting-plates to be cut to size *after* the comb was riveted together, although it is unlikely to apply to all the combs. With its long straight centre and only minimally raised corners, the unfinished comb from Richborough in Kent can be placed in this group (Figure 3.2, **86**).

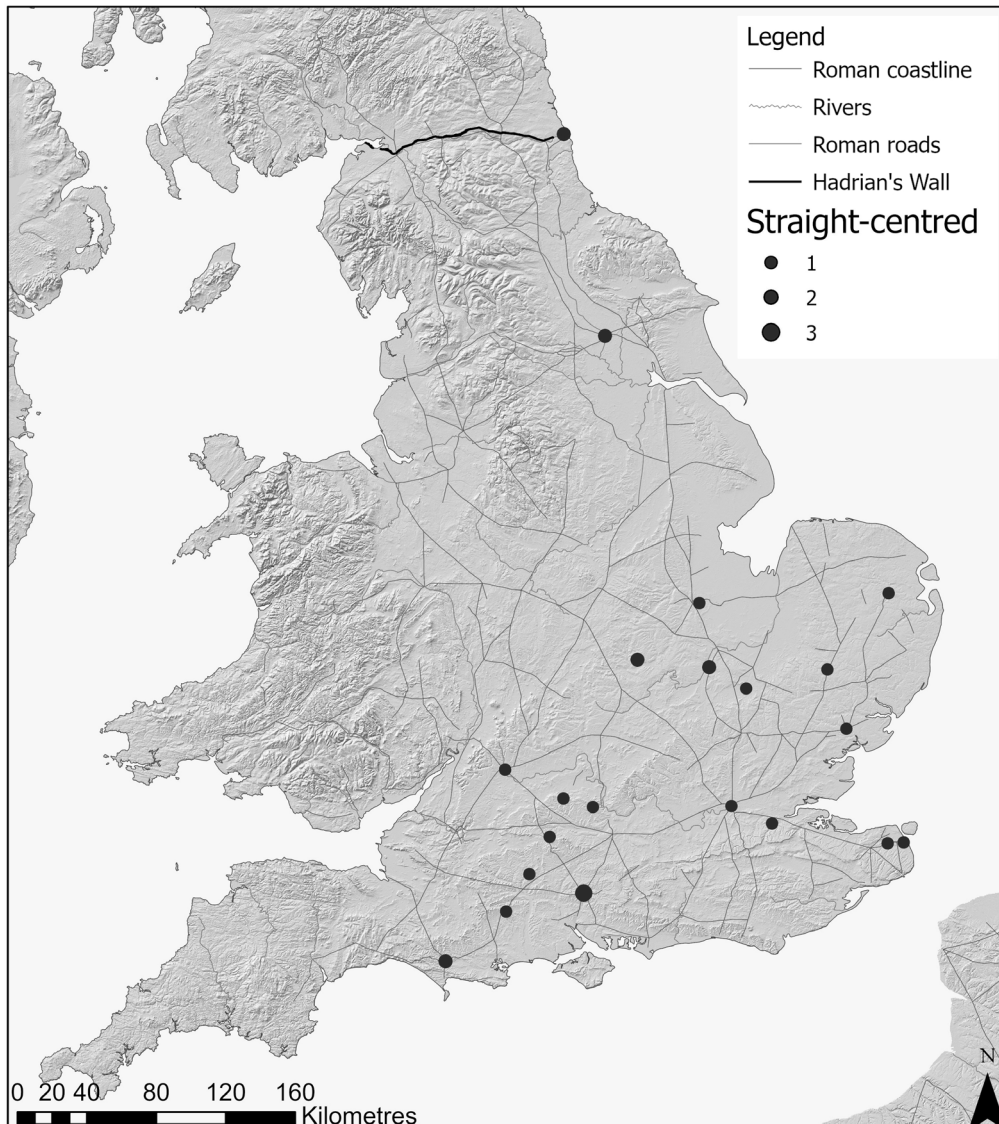


Figure 5.25. Distribution of Straight-centred combs with long connecting-plates.

*Profile much like Devolved Dolphins*

Devolved Dolphin-like straight-centred combs from Poundbury in the south to South Shields in the north are shown on Figure 5.26. Great Whelnetham **148** has an end-plate profile much like the combs on Fig. 5.26 (Figure 3.3) and although the ends of its connecting-plates are missing it almost certainly belongs here as well. Colchester comb **91** on Figure 5.26 came from the fill of a cellar in Building 154 that had fallen out of use c. AD 350 at the earliest, and more probably much later. The possible destruction debris forming the fill also contained a considerable amount of late Roman pottery, described as 'perhaps the best late group from Colchester', dating well into the 5th century (P. Crummy 1992: 333; Bidwell 1999: 497).

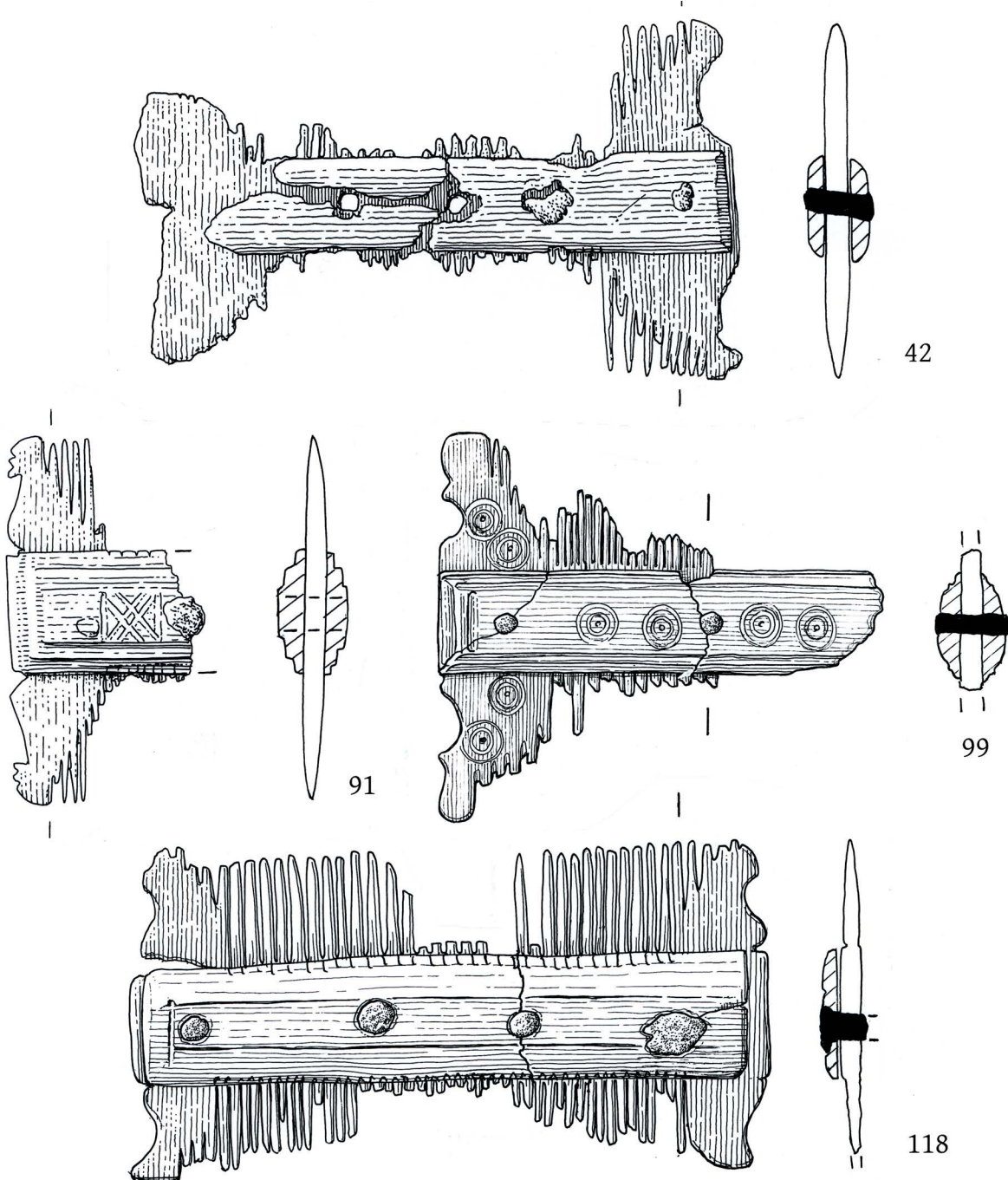
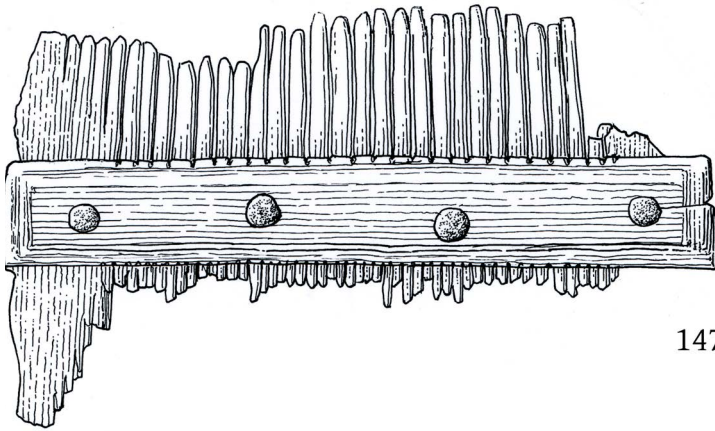


Figure 5.26. Devolved Dolphin-like straight-centred combs with long connecting-plates: Poundbury 42, Colchester 91, Thorplands 99, South Shields 118. Scale 1:1.



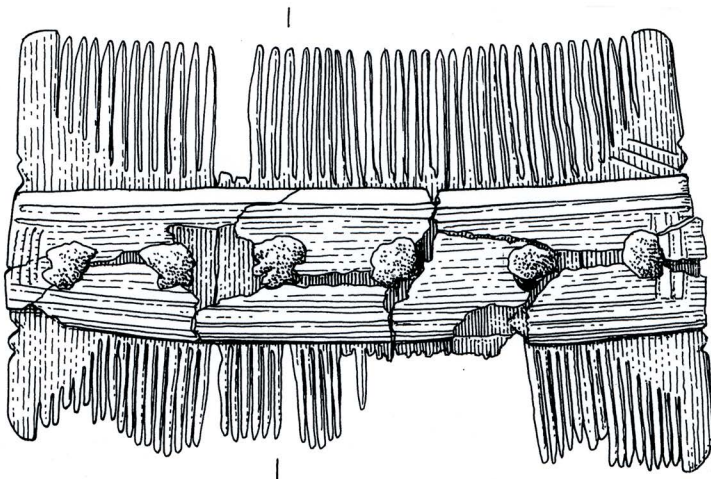
147

Figure 5.27. Devolved Dolphin-like Straight-centred comb with long connecting-plates: York 147. Scale 1:1.

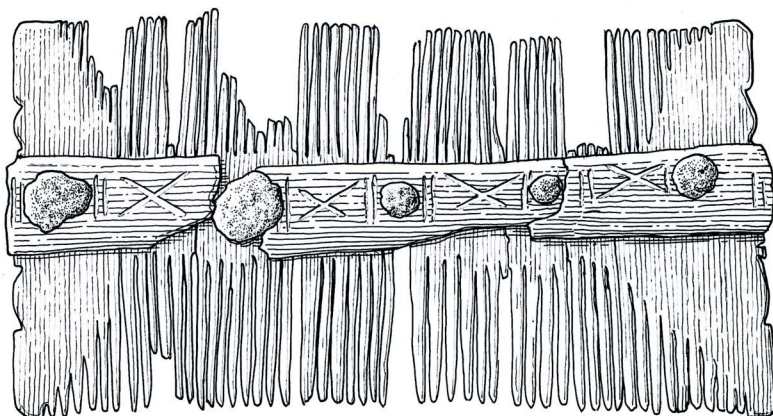
The centre of comb 147 from York is not quite straight and its connecting-plates do not reach quite as far as the edge of the end-plate, so it could arguably be placed between the Devolved Dolphin group and the Straight-centred group (Figure 5.27). It is also unusual in having copper-alloy rivets, and its teeth are quite square in section and may never have been pointed (see Chapter 3: Manufacture). A comb from Great Wheltenham in Suffolk also seems to lie between the two groups as its small central mound and points are only just exposed beyond the

connecting-plates (149; Archaeological Solutions Ltd, report in prep.). The quincunxes of ring-and-dot motifs between its rivets are poorly placed and blundered, which could be taken as evidence that they were made by a moderately unpractised craftworker working in a late and less discerning milieu, but it is only these motifs that are blundered, while the rest of the comb seems no less accomplished than the others. Poorly-placed quincunxes are also present on the connecting-plates of a comb from Foxton, Cambridgeshire (59; Price *et al.* 1997: fig. 68, 3).

The two very Straight-centred combs on Figure 5.28 are from Poundbury in Dorset and Darenth in Kent. The low mounds on the latter and points on both are the only dolphin-like traces left.



41



88

Figure 5.28. Very devolved Straight-centred combs with long connecting-plates: Poundbury 41, Darenth 88. Scale 1:1.

*Profile much like Owl Group 2*

Two very similar Owl-like profiled combs from Lankhills were presumably made by the same hand: **10** (Figure 5.29) and **23** (Booth *et al.* 2010: fig. 3.169). Comb **98** from Thorplands, Northamptonshire, appears to be another such; its connecting-plate is missing, but a rivet shows that it ran to the edge (Figure 5.29). The distinction between these poorly-preserved combs and the Devolved Dolphin-like **42** from Poundbury (Figure 5.26) lies in the sweep down from the centre, which is deeper on the latter.

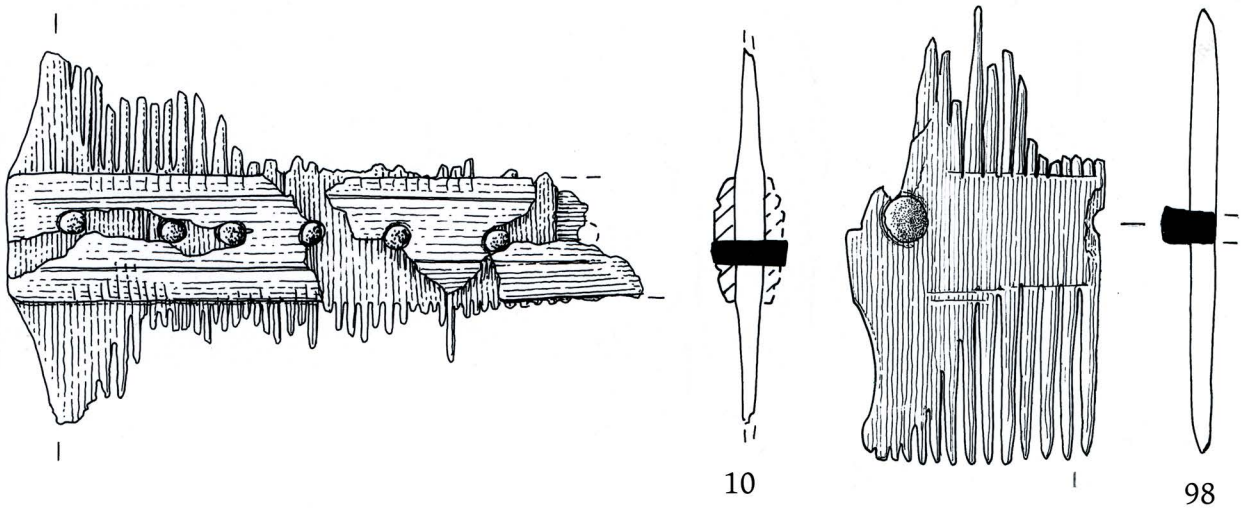


Figure 5.29. Owl-like Straight-centred combs with long connecting-plates: Winchester 10, Thorplands 98. Scale 1:1.

*Other forms*

The straight centre of the Lynch Farm, Cambridgeshire, comb is rippled (Figure 4.3, **62**), a feature that links it to **94** from Foxton, Cambridgeshire (Price *et al.* 1997: fig. 66, 18), and to some extent also to the multiple notches on the raised centre of Devolved Dolphins **32** from Snell's Corner, near Horndean in Hampshire (Knocker 1955: fig. 9, RB.5) and **53** from Colchester, Essex (Figure 5.14). Both the Cambridgeshire combs have swept-up sides and plain connecting-plates. They lie over 40 miles apart, but together with the Alwalton comb from an Anglo-Saxon burial found not far from Lynch Farm (see Chapter 4: Late Roman or Anglo-Saxon?) they represent a regional style of end-plate dating to the early 5th century.

Along with the Concave-ended group below, combs with a straight centre appear to be among the latest to be made and used within a Romano-British milieu. This depends very much upon whether or not the process of devolution running from 'dolphins-with-ball' to 'dolphins-without-ball' to 'barely recognizable dolphins-without-ball' is valid, and only comb **91** from Colchester provides good contextual data to back up stylistic observation. (The same question mark hangs over the slide from Owl Group 2 to 'barely recognizable owls'.) Nevertheless, the late 4th century date of arrival of double-sided composite combs in Britain and the continued occupation of the fort at South Shields into the early 5th century (*Notitia Dignitatum*, xl.22) goes some way to support it, as does the similarity between the well-preserved Lynch Farm and Alwalton combs, the one in an inhumation dated to the Romano-British period, the other in a cremation in an Anglo-Saxon cemetery.

**Concave-ended combs**

There are several combs with concave end-plates that are also considered to be particularly late. The end-plates vary from fairly elaborate to completely plain, with the latter perhaps later than the former. Some of these combs retain features that link them to dolphin, horse or owl combs. As with most of the other devolved groups they are very diverse, and they are also widespread, although none lies further north than Yorkshire (Figure 5.30).

Comb 111 from Wellington Row, York, has only shallow notches, all that remains of ‘dolphins-with-ball’ (Figure 5.18). A few rudimentary features on comb 13 from Lankhills link it to Dolphin or Horse combs (Figure 5.31). There is a slight groove in each corner much like the grooves or



Figure 5.30. Distribution of Concave-ended combs.

notches delineating a dolphin's tail or a horse's ear, a small hole set in from each corner in much the same place as the eyes on Horse combs, and slanting grooves above a small hole in the centre of the end-plate mark the position where the ball would be on these combs.

The poorly-preserved comb **34** from Tubney Wood, Oxfordshire, has smoothly concave end-plates (Figure 5.31). Three ring-and-dot motifs at the side of one end-plate suggest that all four corners were originally decorated in this way; its connecting-plates reach to the edge of the end-plates,

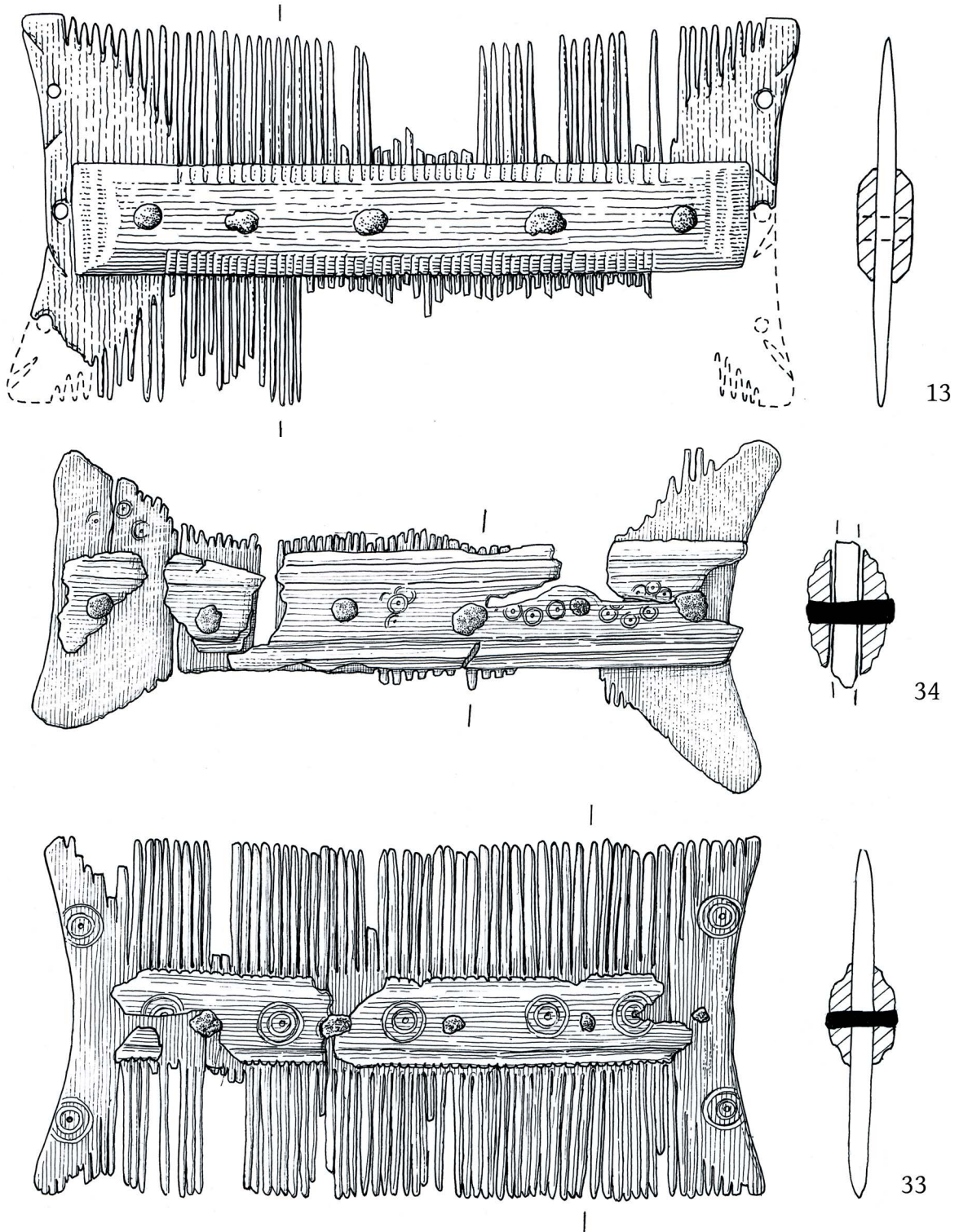


Figure 5.31. Concave-ended combs: Winchester 13, Tubney Wood 34, Queenford Farm 33. Scale 1:1.



Figure 5.32. Concave-ended comb: Glasshoughton 63.  
Image copyright Pontefract Museum. Scale 1:1.

a late feature seen on the Straight-centred group above. Some twelve miles from Tubney Wood, a burial at Queenford Farm, near Dorchester-on-Thames, contained comb 33, which, with its ring-and-dot eyes, is close to combs of Owl Group 2 (Figure 5.31). It is so similar to a comb found some 50 miles away at the Winchester Hotel, Worthy Lane, Winchester (27: Cooke 2009: 22, pl. 1), that they must be contemporary pieces by the same hand; even the connecting-plates share the same line of double ring-and-dots between iron rivets.

A comb from a burial from Glasshoughton, near Castleford, West Yorkshire, can in general terms be grouped with the Oxfordshire combs, although it has two holes flanking the ends of the connecting-plates and a line of small ring-and-dots follows the curved inner line formed by the cutting of the teeth (Figure 5.32, 63). The holes are not as large as those on Owl Group 1, but it is with them and with Owl Group 3 (concave-ended/straight-centred/with label) that its stylistic associations lie. Its connecting-plates are slightly stepped and have quincunxes of small single ring-and-dots (now very worn and almost invisible) between six iron rivets; they run close to the edge of the end-plates. Unusually, the teeth on each side of this comb are the same size. Was this deliberate, perhaps on a comb specially commissioned for burial, or just a mistake?

Completely plain concave-ended examples are scattered, coming from, for example, Winchester (Figure 5.33, 26; and 7: Rees *et al.* 2008: fig. 35, 317), Springhead in Kent (87: Penn 1957: fig. 18, 1), Aldborough in North Yorkshire (104: Bishop 1996: 38, fig. 21, 219), and Shiptonthorpe, East Yorkshire (Figure 5.33, 109). The latter has a straight centre to the end-plate and exaggerated 'wings', rather than a smooth curve; were it not for the wings, which dominate the design, it could be placed in the straight-centred group.

Stylistically, concave-ended combs may well represent the final phase of devolution from Dolphin and Horse combs. The strongest argument for the late date of this group is their appearance in what are, or are very likely to be, fifth-century burials. The Tubney Wood burial was radiocarbon-dated to AD 255-390 (95% confidence), suggesting that 34 may not be particularly late (Simmonds *et al.* 2011: table 11), but at Winchester combs 7 (not illustrated) and 13 were in graves dated to later than AD 390 (Galloway 1979: 247; Ottaway *et al.* 2012: 286), and 27 was in the last grave in a sequence of four situated in an area of the Lankhills cemetery that probably contained the latest burials (Cooke 2009: 14, 33-34, fig. 2; Clarke 1979: 116). The Glasshoughton burial cannot itself be closely dated, but a fragment of the same style as 63 came from a fifth-century cremation in the early Anglo-Saxon cemetery at Lackford, Suffolk (Faull and Moorhouse 1981: 157; Lethbridge 1951: 17, fig. 7, 49.15).

Comb 33 from Dorchester-on-Thames was the only identifiable grave deposit in the Queenford Farm cemetery, which had apparently been established in the late 4th century and used for burials into the mid 6th. The comb lay to the left side of the head of a woman aged 40+, whose burial was the central and probably primary grave in a small ditched enclosure. The enclosure was dated to

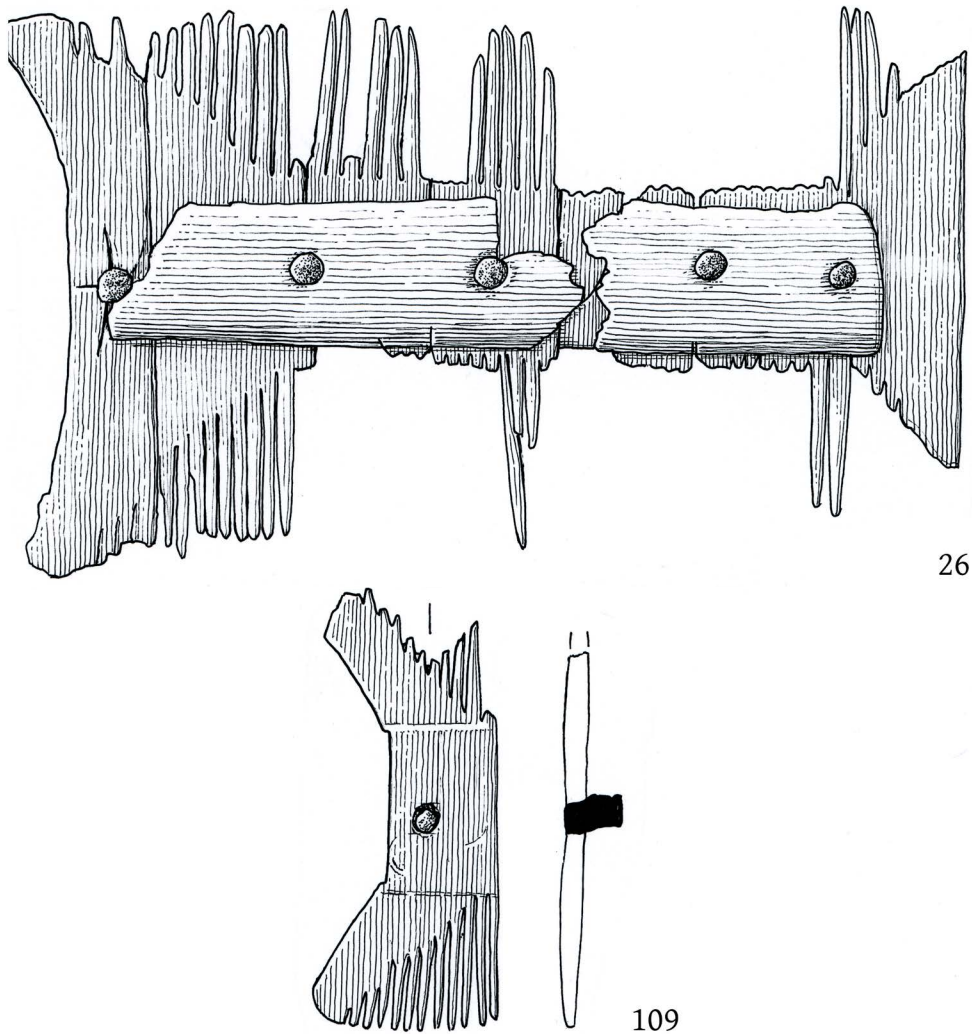


Figure 5.33. Concave-ended combs: Winchester 26, Shiptonthorpe 109. Scale 1:1.

the later 5th or 6th century as it cut the silt accumulated in the main cemetery boundary ditch (Chambers 1987: 45, 50, 67). Even without the matching piece from Winchester (27), the form, style and proportions of 33 are typical of a late Roman product. The comb is very well-preserved and unlikely to have been used for the decades implied by the supposed date of the enclosure, even had it been an heirloom or a chance find that was subsequently curated. As the date of the enclosure is based on only a few residual abraded late Roman sherds, and the date-range for the cemetery is based on a limited programme of radio-carbon dating that may have missed earlier burials, a very late Romano-British milieu and date cannot be excluded, and if the enclosure and burial had been isolated features they would no doubt have been dated to the late 4th or early 5th century, contemporary with comb burials at Winchester. (See also Riddler 2010: 214 for a comment on the dating of the Queenford Farm comb.)

### End-plate groups and connecting-plate design

Table 5.3 shows the range of connecting-plate designs present in each end-plate group, and Table 5.4 the connecting-plate designs on combs with no surviving end-plate. All the designs present are part of the common pool of motifs used in the late Roman period on other bone and antler objects and on metalwork: single and double ring-and-dots, diagonal and transverse grooves, lattice and saltires, and even the tooth-cutting marks on the connecting-plates could reference feathering and chip-carving. As on the end-plates, the tools used would range from just a knife to more specialised items such as small scribes and graters and a compass-like instrument for the ring-and-dots.

To highlight some clusters, the connecting-plate decoration is split in the tables into six groups rather than the four described at the start of this chapter: plain, a line of single ring-and-dots, a line of double ring-and-dots, more complex ring-and-dot designs, linear geometric designs, and other (idiosyncratic) designs. Stepped sides on the connecting-plates can be regarded as another form of decoration, and may be present whether or not the central panel bears any other ornamentation; here it has only been noted against plain connecting-plates. The Concave Group end-plates have been divided into plain, those with double ring-and-dots and those with single ring-and-dots, as there is some correlation with the connecting-plate decoration, or lack of it.

Table 5.3 shows that in general there is a greater variety in connecting-plate decoration in the larger end-plate groups, but small end-plate groups do not necessarily have less variety: the two examples of Horse Group 2 have different connecting-plate decoration, as do all three of the complex-ended Devolved Dolphins. Some clusters or trends may nevertheless be present, often based on distribution; they are listed below by connecting-plate design.

### ***Plain***

- On Devolved Dolphins, stepped sides on plain connecting-plates are only present in Winchester (5 combs) and sites further west (4 combs).
- There are two groups of plain Straight-centred combs with stepped sides: the first in Winchester and sites further west (5 combs), the second in York and South Shields (3 combs); stepped sides are absent from sites in Cambridgeshire and Suffolk (5 combs).
- Conversely, on Dolphins to Owls stepped sides are only present outside Winchester (2 combs).
- On Concave-ended combs with plain end-plates from Winchester (but not beyond it), the connecting-plates are also plain (3).
- On Concave-ended combs there is some correlation between the type of ring-and-dots on the end-plates and on the connecting-plates.

### ***A line of double ring-and-dots***

- This design occurs on Owl Group 1 (1 of 3) and Owl Group 2 combs (3 of 3), but is otherwise infrequent.

### ***Complex ring-and-dot motifs***

- A quincunx consisting of a double ring-and-dot framed by four single ring-and-dots occurs only at Winchester and Dorchester-on-Thames.
- Quincunxes of single ring-and-dots occur widely, but are absent from Winchester.
- Devolved Dolphins with connecting-plates in this group may be less likely to have stepped sides (1 of 4).
- Other complex ring-and-dots motifs are all on combs from southern and eastern Britain: Winchester (Hampshire), Tubney Wood (Oxfordshire), and Great Chesterford, Heybridge and Colchester (all Essex).

### ***Linear geometric designs***

- Devolved Dolphins with connecting-plates in this group may be less likely to have stepped sides (2 of 7).
- Transverse grooves/mouldings (= flutings) are present on combs in Essex: Great Dunmow (Horse 2) and Colchester (Devolved Dolphin), but also occur elsewhere.

The numbers involved in these observations are low, and new finds may either substantiate or negate them. Of them all, perhaps the only meaningful ones in terms of comb-makers are those regarding lines of double ring-and dots on combs of Owl Group 2, and the different styles of quincunxes within Winchester and outside it. The overall impression given by matching connecting-plates to end-plates is that variety was more important than consistency.

STYLISTIC GROUPS

|                                 | plain  | line of single ring-and-dots | line of double ring-and-dots  | complex ring-and-dots  | linear geometric   | other  |
|---------------------------------|--|------------------------------|---|--|--|--|
| Horse 1                         | 64 Woodhall, stepped   | -                            | -   | 1 Winchester, quincunx of one double framed by four singles, stepped   | -  | -  |
| as Horse 1                      | -  | -                            | -   | -  | -  | 2 Winchester, three longitudinal bands each containing a row of single ring-and-dots |
| Horse 2                         | -  | -                            | -   | 58 Heybridge, groups of six singles, set in 2 rows of three, stepped   | 92 Great Dunmow, transverse grooves/ mouldings, stepped  | -  |
| Devolved Dolphin, complex-ended | 81 London, stepped   | -                            | -   | 117 Newton Bewley, quincunx of singles, transverse pair of singles, longitudinal mouldings   | 80 London, lattice, stepped  | -  |
| Swimming Dolphin?               | 14 Winchester  | -                            | -   | -  | -  | -  |
| Devolved Dolphin                | 20 Winchester, stepped<br>22(?) Winchester, stepped<br>40 Poundbury, stepped<br>124 Amesbury, stepped<br>131 Bath, stepped<br>53 Colchester<br>150 Stanwick<br>115 York<br>141 Carrawburgh | -                            | 69 Colchester, two between each rivet, one at each end, longitudinal mouldings  | 44 Poundbury, quincunx of singles, stepped<br>93 Chelmsford, quincunx of singles<br>144 Great Chesterford, square and quincunx, both of singles<br>149 Great Whelnetham, quincunx of singles, longitudinal mouldings | 32 Horndean, saltires<br>37 Easton Hill, transverse grooves<br>55 Colchester transverse grooves/ mouldings, stepped<br>68 Winchester, diagonal groove<br>71 Silchester, lattice, stepped<br>110 York, transverse grooves<br>129 Amesbury, diagonal grooves | -  |
| Dolphin to owl                  | 12 Winchester<br>15 Winchester<br>72 Alchester, stepped<br>96 Orton Hall Farm, stepped   | -                            | -   | -  | 114 York, lattice<br>146 York, transverse grooves, stepped   | -  |
| Owl 1                           | 5 Winchester, stepped<br>47 Cirencester  | -                            | 143 Wendens Ambo, one between each rivet  | -  | -  | -  |
| Owl 2                           | -  | -                            | 4 Winchester, two between each rivet<br>31 Andover, one between each rivet, stepped<br>36 Chichester, number between rivets uncertain | -  | -  | -  |
| as Owl 2                        | 125 Amesbury   | -                            | -   | -  | -  | -  |
| Owl 3                           | -  | -                            | -   | 17 Winchester, lozenges of four singles, stepped<br>153 Dorchester-on-Thames, quincunx of one double framed by four singles  | 11 Winchester, transverse grooves, lattice, saltires, stepped  | 151 Gussage All Saints, copper-alloy rivets as decoration, stepped                   |

|   | plain   | line of single ring-and-dots | line of double ring-and-dots                             | complex ring-and-dots  | linear geometric  | other |
|---|---|------------------------------|--|--|---|-------|
| <b>straight-centred</b>                   | 10 Winchester, stepped<br>23 Winchester, stepped<br>41 Poundbury, stepped<br>42 Poundbury<br>45 Woodyates, stepped<br>126 Amesbury, stepped<br>89(?) Ickham<br>62 Orton Waterville<br>136 St Neot's<br>94 Foxton<br>152 Somersham<br>148 Great Whelnetham<br>116 York, stepped<br>147 York, stepped<br>118 South Shields, stepped | 9 Winchester, stepped        | 99 Thorplands, two between each rivet, stepped           | -  | 25 Winchester, saltires<br>86 Richborough, transverse grooves, saltires<br>88 Darenth, transverse grooves, saltires<br>91 Colchester, transverse grooves, saltires, stepped | -     |
| <b>Concave, plain</b>                     | 7 Winchester<br>13 Winchester<br>26 Winchester  | -                            | -  | -  | 87 Springhead, transverse grooves<br>111 York, transverse grooves   | -     |
| <b>Concave, with double ring-and-dots</b> | 27 Winchester, stepped  | -                            | 33 Dorchester-on-Thames, one between each rivet, stepped | -  | -   | -     |
| <b>Concave with single ring-and-dots</b>  | -   | -                            | -  | 34 Tubney Wood, singles, motif uncertain, varied?, stepped<br>63 Glasshoughton, quincunx of singles, stepped | -   | -     |

Table 5.3. Connecting-plate designs by end-plate group.

| plain   | line of single ring-and-dots               | line of double ring-and-dots            | complex ring-and-dots  | linear geometric  | ring-and-dot + linear geometric  | other  |
|---|--|---|--|---|--|--|
| 16 Winchester<br>18 Winchester, but with transverse pairs of rivets<br>49 Little Brickhill<br>134? Bancroft, stepped<br>51 Colchester<br>52 Colchester, stepped<br>102 Lincoln, stepped<br>106 Langton, stepped | 77 Lydney, stepped<br>103 Lincoln, stepped | 142 Richborough, two between each rivet | 8 Winchester, quincunx of one double framed by four singles, stepped<br>19 Winchester, quincunx of one double framed by four singles<br>54 Colchester, diagonal rows of four singles, stepped<br>59 Foxton, quincunx of singles, stepped<br>123 Winchester, zigzag of large doubles(?) | 6 Winchester, transverse grooves<br>90 Colchester, diagonal grooves, stepped<br>132 Bath, diagonal grooves, alternating directions between each pair of rivets, stepped | 3 Winchester, transverse grooves, diagonal grooves, lozenge of four singles, stepped | 70 Portchester, panel of chevron with small indentation, panel with six small indentations set in two rows of three, stepped |

Table 5.4. Connecting-plate designs on combs missing their end-plates.

## Chapter 6

### Distribution and context

#### Distribution and possible production centres

Given their low overall numbers, variable state of preservation and the different materials involved that make comparisons by weight close to irrelevant, quantifying small finds in any meaningful way is difficult. Some techniques are described and applied in Gardner 2007 and in various works by Hilary Cool, including her review of Gardner's approach (2002a; 2006; 2009; Cool and Baxter 2002). Linda Viner, in her analysis of the assemblages of small finds from Cirencester, also provided a valuable discussion on the use of small finds for inter-site comparisons, succinctly summarising the problems and benefits inherent in the exercise (1998: 309–312). Presence provides the surest foundation (Cooper 2007: 46–49; Crummy 2006a: 128–132; 2012; 2014; 2020), and it is on that basis that any bias towards Winchester in the Romano-British double-sided composite comb assemblage is considered below. Absence is less reliable, as it can depend on soil conditions, the number, type and size of antiquarian and modern archaeological interventions and the possible (more likely probable) selective publication of the material culture, and it can be reversed by the results of any new excavation.

Despite the importance of presence, as explained in Chapter 1 a full inventory of very late Roman composite double-sided combs is not given in this volume. The data used nevertheless show that the distribution of this type of comb stretches from Kent up to the Wall and across to the Severn estuary (Figure 6.1); the fragment from the Big Cave at Keil, at the southern end of Kintyre, forms an unusually distant outlier and is the only one from Scotland (Figure 5.8, 122). Most of the combs are from southern Britain, but there are also a number from the south Midlands and a trail up the east side of the Pennines through York to South Shields. There are distinct gaps that occur on most distribution maps due to the nature of the landscape, such the Peak District, the Lake District, much of Wales and the moorlands of Devon and Cornwall, where not only was there a comparative scarcity of late Roman occupation but less modern development has led to fewer archaeological interventions (e.g. Smith 2016: figs 3.11–3.12; Lodwick 2017: fig. 2.2; Allen 2017: fig. 3.1). A gap in the north Midlands is less easily explained and will be explored below.

Greep lists three combs from south Wales, one from Caerleon and two from Caerwent in Newport Museum (1983, 760, nos 406–408). He gives no details for the Caerleon piece; the two from Caerwent are illustrated, one is missing its end-plates and almost all of the tooth-plates so cannot be positively confirmed as late Roman, the other is a poorly-preserved end-plate that is probably a Devolved Dolphin or perhaps a Dolphin becoming an Owl (Greep 1983, fig. 235, 8, fig. 238, 34). Even if the contextual and typological details of all three, and the date of two, are obscure, they are from the very area of Wales that might be expected to have acquired late Roman composite combs from across the river Severn.

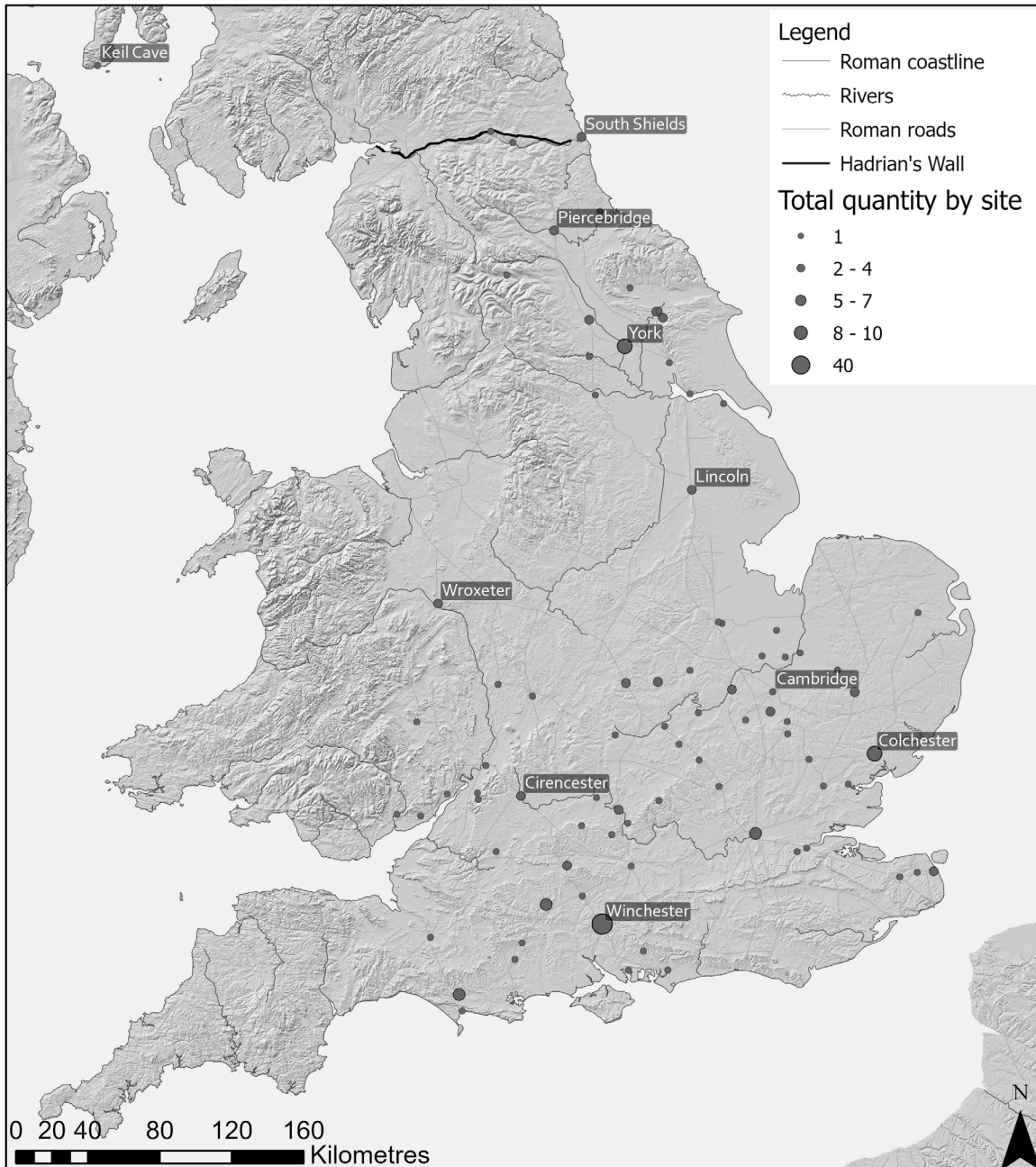


Figure 6.1. Distribution of the whole assemblage.

### ***Winchester and southern Britain***

Excavation of cemetery areas can be particularly productive where combs are concerned, and this has certainly been a factor at Winchester, where suburban development has led to many being found in burials, while at Silchester, unthreatened by development, the late Roman cemetery areas have not been excavated and there is only one comb from inside the town. Indeed, considering the possible size of Roman Britain's urban and rural populations, and the comparative durability of bone and antler combs, there are surprisingly few from non-funerary contexts, giving the impression that these were treasured élite items, an aspect of the assemblage that will be addressed in the next chapter.

From the number of double-sided composite combs recovered there, Winchester appears to have been a focal point for the deposition of combs in burials (Figure 6.1), although only a single comb,

a triangular one, has been found within the walled area of the town (Biddle 1972: pl. 48b). From the variety of their end-plates it can also be presumed to be a centre for manufacture and distribution, with either a workshop in the town or a trader using its markets being the source of many of the combs found there.

Whatever the precise locations and borders of the late Roman provinces (Jones and Mattingly 1990: 148), Winchester was well-sited to take advantage of trade routes across southern Britain, as attested by the concentration of combs around it (Figure 1.4) and by the similarity between several combs from the town and others much further afield (e.g. Chapter 5: Owl Group 1). Opinion is divided as to whether or not the town was prospering or in decline in the later 4th century, but whatever the general trend in its economic state it had good access to trade networks and to prestige goods (Clarke 1979: 345–346; Biddle 1983; Rees *et al.* 2008: 384). Coins show that the wider area was by no means impoverished, even though a number of farmsteads may have fallen into disuse (Allen 2016: figs 4.6–4.7, 4.12; Brindle 2017: fig. 6.5, 262), and we will see in Chapter 7 that both in the town and in its hinterland double-sided composite combs can be associated with female burials containing grave deposits indicative of wealth.

The 1961 study by Hawkes and Dunning of zoomorphic buckles and strap-ends collated a corpus of 113 examples that showed type IA-B buckles were concentrated in an area that corresponded more or less to the *civitates* of the Dobunni and Durotriges, equating to the south-western parts of the South and Central Belt regions used in the Roman Rural Settlement Project (Smith *et al.* 2016: fig. 1.5). A corpus of over 1,300 belt-fittings from Britain has recently been collated by Richard Henry and supports that initial conclusion, but also reveals further concentrations of type IA and IIA buckles spread more widely across southern Britain and up into North Lincolnshire and beyond, particularly along Ermine Street (2022a, 109, figs 8.107, 8.109, 8.117). An item of Romano-British metalwork that has a distribution not unlike that of the buckles is the toothed cogwheel (or crenellated) bracelet, a later fourth- and early fifth-century variant of the cogwheel found in the same areas as the buckles, but not noticeably more so in the west, and with a trail of examples up to Hadrian's Wall (Swift 2010: 247, fig. 6; see Chapter 2 for examples with double-sided composite combs). The contemporary multiple-motif armlet, another Romano-British product, occurs more widely and in far greater numbers than the toothed cogwheel, with again a few trailing up to the Wall (Swift 2010: 248, fig. 7; see also Chapter 2).

These distribution patterns show that in the late 4th century and probably into the 5th both manufacturing bases and trade networks for a variety of small objects were thriving across southern Britain, with some emphasis on the more westerly areas of the South and Central Belt Regions. This is further confirmed by the distribution of late Romano-British nail-cleaners. Examples stratified in contexts dated to the 1st century are found across southern Britain but with a strong bias to the East and eastern Central Belt regions, but in the 4th century, while the overall area in which they are found is much the same as in the 1st, the bias of distribution is to the west (Eckardt and Crummy 2008: figs 27–28). The combs therefore fall into a pattern of consumption similar to that for other personalia in late Roman Britain, enhancing the probability that many of them were made in the same southern and westerly area, while the data gathered here point specifically to manufacture in Winchester.

Local manufacture is also implied by the 31 combs from burials at Winchester, with three others probably being disturbed grave deposits. Three are included in the Catalogue, two of which were residual in graves and the third was unstratified in a cemetery area (66–68). Another fragment from a Late Saxon pit in one of Winchester's Roman cemetery areas has been omitted from the Catalogue as it may not be Romano-British (Rees *et al.* 2008: 66, no. 318). It seems unlikely that the high number of combs in the town is an accident of excavation, as far fewer combs have been found in the fourth- to early fifth century cemeteries at Poundbury (7), Cirencester (1), London (1) and

Colchester (7). Moreover, many small cemetery excavations in Winchester contained inhumations furnished with combs of this type, which can be further contrasted with the situation at Colchester, where all seven combs came from the Butt Road cemetery but none has been found during recent very extensive excavations in the other late Roman cemetery areas south of the town, suggesting that only a particular group of people there used these objects in life and as grave deposits (Crummy *et al.* 1993: 146–147; Brooks 2016; Pooley *et al.* 2011). Reasons for combs of this form only occurring in the Butt Road cemetery are explored in Chapter 7: Female status and identity.

The close phasing of burials at Winchester provides an opportunity for quantifying the possibility of any later fourth- or early fifth-century burial at Winchester containing a comb (Table 6.1). Of 37 graves excavated at the Eagle Hotel, Andover Road, 26 could be dated to the later 4th century and one contained a comb, giving an upper limit of 4% (Teague 2012: 123, 125). All 32 of the St Martin's Close, Winnall, burials were considered to be late 4th century and two were furnished with combs, giving a secure score of 6.25% (Ottaway *et al.* 2012: 189, 337, 339). The 56 burials from the Winchester Hotel site, Worthy Lane, may be among the latest burials from the Lankhills cemetery; four contained combs, giving an upper, possibly secure, limit of 7% (Cooke 2009: 11, 16, 22). A similar figure is provided at Victoria Road West by Burial Phase 3 (c. AD 390–early 5th century), where three out of 39 inhumations were furnished with a comb giving a secure 7.75% (Ottaway *et al.* 2012: 115, 117, graves 1, 52, 94). Only one other comb from Victoria Road West came from the 60 more broadly dated graves in Burial Phase 2 (c. AD 340/50–90), emphasising the increased use of combs as grave goods in the very late 4th and early 5th century. This is again evident in Clarke's excavations at Lankhills (Table 6.1, Lankhills Cl; Clarke 1979: table 2), where twelve combs came from 197 inhumations dated to AD 350 or later (6%), and seven of the twelve were from 82 burials dated to AD 390 or later (8.5%). Only 54 inhumations found during Oxford Archaeology's excavations at Lankhills were positively dated to later than c. AD 350/60, with no further refinement of date, but they give at least a 9% chance of a burial containing a comb (Table 6.1, Lankhills OA; Booth *et al.* 2010). Overall there is a 7.5% possibility of a comb being found in a late Roman inhumation in Winchester, a figure that could no doubt be improved upon were secure dates available for all the burials (see Chapter 7).

| Cemetery                                       | No. of burials | No. of combs | %    |
|--|----------------|--------------|------|
| Winchester, Victoria Road West BP3, c. AD 390+ | 39             | 3            | 7.75 |
| Winchester, Eagle Hotel                        | 26             | 1            | 4    |
| Winchester, St Martin's Close                  | 32             | 2            | 6.25 |
| Winchester, Lankhills Cl, c. AD 390+           | 82             | 7            | 8.5  |
| Winchester, Lankhills OA, c. AD 350/60+        | 54             | 5            | 9.25 |
| Winchester, Winchester Hotel (Lankhills WA)    | 56             | 4            | 7    |

Table 6.1. Winchester cemeteries: percentages of late Roman inhumations containing a double-sided composite comb. Some of the graves from the Eagle Hotel site, Winchester, were not excavated and are here omitted from the total. Abbreviations: BP3...Burial Phase 3; Cl...Clarke; OA...Oxford Archaeology. WA...Wessex Archaeology.

### *The south and east*

Few combs have been found in London and the viability of its port in the late 4th century is uncertain, so it may not have been an ideal point of entry for any imports from the continent (Milne 1985: 144). Even so, the close similarity between comb **80** from London and a comb from Pannonia has already been noted above (see Chapter 3: Marketing), and their complex end-plate style can also be seen across Britain at Dorchester-on-Thames, Newton Bewley and Keil in Kintyre, the latter almost certainly arriving there by sea (see Chapter 5: Dolphin combs). As in other towns with (almost) continuous occupation, the medieval, post-medieval and modern truncation of the late Roman levels in London may account for the paucity of combs there, and even in the suburbs

terracing or construction work may have entirely removed some burials (Barber and Bowsler 2000: 334).

Colchester may have been the location of a workshop, but if so it was short-lived, as very few combs have been found in the town and its suburbs, or in its late Roman cemetery areas, which have suffered much less from truncation than those of London (Crummy *et al.* 1993: 9; Brooks 2016; Pooley *et al.* 2011).

The combs found further to the north-west, such as those in Cambridgeshire from Love's Farm at St Neot's or the cluster around Chesterton (Durobrivae) on Ermine Street (Figure 6.1), may point to a workshop in the area, and they again highlight the importance of the road infrastructure for the movement of goods, further supported by the distribution of belt-fittings in the region (Henry 2022a, fig. 8.107). Moreover, the spread of combs around Chesterton adds to the impression provided by Winchester and York that the number of combs found in and around an urban centre, whether in a funerary or non-funerary context, are to some degree an indication of the economic success and administrative status of the place.

### ***York and the north-east***

That York, a late Roman provincial capital, was another centre of production is suggested not only by the number of combs found there but also by several having a consistent width of 58mm, implying the existence of a maker's template, while combs of the same size from Malton point to their spread across the wider region (see Chapter 3: Marketing). It is unfortunate that not all burials found in the York cemeteries in the 19th century were well recorded, as it is now impossible to tell if as many inhumations there were furnished with combs as at Winchester. A York comb in the Bateman Collection of Sheffield Museum has not been included in the Catalogue as its Roman date has not been confirmed (*RCHME York*: 80, viii; Howarth 1899: 197, J.93-640). *RCHME York* lists it as among grave goods found in 1845-46 when the southern arch for the railway station was built; the other items being a bronze lamp handle, pins, fibulae and a ring. Howarth describes it as 2 1/8 inches long (54mm) and 1 5/8 inches wide (41mm), ornamented with lines and circles, and found in cutting through the ramparts on December 24th, 1845, but no associated human bones are mentioned (1899: 197). His entries for the other objects vary very little from that in *RCHME York* but they are unlikely to be a grave group; he only lists one brooch, which from its description as 'harp-shaped' (a term particularly appropriate for second-century Headstud brooches) is unlikely to be contemporary with the comb and may be several centuries earlier (J.93-662). There are several other comb fragments from York in the Bateman collection, none necessarily Romano-British (Howarth 1899: 192, 201).

Most of the York combs catalogued here come from Wellington Row, where they were found in rubbish thrown inside a disused stone building sometime after c. AD 380; the building protected the dark earth formed within it from being frequently dug over during later agricultural activity in the area (Figure 5.18; Ottaway 1993: 113-114, fig. 71). A further seven fragments and a triangular comb from the same site are not listed in the Catalogue, although the latter is illustrated on Figure 5.18. The high number of combs from this context demonstrates the ability of a single excavation to change the pattern of distribution.

There is a distinct cluster of combs around York: from Aldborough to the north-west, Beadlam, Langton and Malton/Norton-on-Derwent to the north-east; and Shiptonthorpe to the south-east (Figure 6.1). All may be York products, but the number found around Malton might point to a secondary point of manufacture and/or sale for these goods. Further afield are the combs from Woodhall, Piercebridge and Newton Bewley, leading northwards to those from South Shields. To this more widespread group can perhaps be added a bone comb from Catterick, but no further details of this object are known (Wilson 2002: 477).

Three of the places listed above produced combs of the type with two narrow connecting-plates (see Chapter 4). All three are clear depictions of zoomorphs (dolphins at Langton, horses at Beadlam and Piercebridge) and the two horse combs are very alike, suggesting that they are the products of a local maker in *Britannia Secunda* who was familiar with horse and dolphin buckles. Hawkes and Dunning listed only one buckle from Catterick (1961: 43), while more recently 19 belt-fittings from the East Riding, 19 from North Yorkshire and three from County Durham have been recorded (Henry 2022a, fig. 8.107; 2022b).

Not all these northern combs are necessarily products of the same maker. The Newton Bewley comb may be an import as it has a complex devolved dolphin end-plate much like examples from London (see below), while the South Shields combs may have been shipped into the supply depot or made in the *vicus* or the fort, where there is evidence for antler-working in the late 4th to early 5th century (Greep 2015). Although it is some 40 miles along Hadrian's Wall from South Shields to Carrawburgh, where an unfinished comb was found (see Chapter 3: Manufacture), the movements of troops and supplies along the Wall would have provided a route for any other goods passing in either direction. Several other combs found in northern Britain seem to be strongly linked to military establishments, and while some may owe their presence to the *vicus* next to a fort rather than to the fort itself, the army's use and protection of the road system in this area would have been vital in allowing trade goods to circulate.

### ***And then there were none?***

There is a marked absence of combs in both funerary and non-funerary contexts in an area that can be defined as the North Midlands and described in various ways. It covers much of the *civitas* of the Corieltauvi, and stretches some way into the eastern zone of the Cornovii and the southern zone of the Brigantes. It is dominated by the valley of the river Trent, which swings around the southern end of the Pennines before flowing north to the Humber estuary, and it also includes the valleys of the river Witham on the east and of the Mersey on the west. It includes parts of the Central Belt, Central West and North East regions defined in Smith *et al.* 2016: fig. 1.5.

The area was not devoid of Roman settlements, nor of late Roman burials, and has seen numerous modern archaeological interventions (Jones and Mattingly 1990: map 5:12; Smith *et al.* 2016: figs 2.4-2.6, 2.8, 2.19, 2.24; 2018, figs. 6.1, 6.7), yet, usually with the exception of Lincolnshire, it is often empty, or almost empty, on other distribution maps. See, for example, those of Swift for late Roman bracelet types (2010: figs 6-7), Eckardt and Crummy for late Roman toilet instruments (2008: fig. 54), and of Jones and Mattingly for dedications to Celtic divinities and for evidence of Christianity, lead coffins and ossuaria (1990: maps 8:17, 8:28, 8:30, 8.34-8:35). This can partly be explained by the sparsely-occupied hills, woods, moorland and pastures of the Peak District National Park that lies in the centre of the area. Lying to its west and south are several major modern conurbations, such as the Potteries, the Black Country and Birmingham, while on the east modern occupation is quite dense from Derby and Nottingham north to Sheffield. Gaps in distribution do not necessarily imply complete absence, not least because to date relatively few of these combs have been found across Britain and we have mainly used quite recently published excavated material with good contextual details rather than carried out full literature and museum collection searches. Nevertheless, Stephen Greep did these searches for his 1983 corpus but also lists no combs from the North Midlands. Like York, this area may have seen a comparatively low retrieval of artefacts from damaged or destroyed Roman settlements during the urban expansion of the 19th century.

### **Distribution by end-plate group**

Once late Roman double-sided combs had been established as a useful and achievable artefact type in Britain, it is conceivable that most were produced by very few makers, and stylistic development or decline within even a small number of workshops may account for most of the

assemblage. Yet, if there were only a few makers, might they not have produced standardised forms in large numbers, making it easier to identify both types and workshops? This does not seem to be the case, and variety in end-plate form and decoration matches that seen on contemporary metalwork such as belt-fittings. Being largely dependent upon the presence of waste material, which may in any case be dumped some distance away, the *in situ* identification of workshops for small objects, whether of metal or skeletal material, is rare (Bayley and Butcher 2004: 213–214; Bacon and Crummy 2015: 256, 258; Greep 2015; Crummy 2017: 260–265). Distribution and similarity of design are thus the only tools available for identifying individual comb workshops.

The distributions of the various end-plate groups seen in Chapter 5 show that there may be a regional, even very localised, spread of certain distinct forms, a few of which could be termed formal types, but once the representation of both dolphins and horses had begun to be less clear the identification of individual makers becomes more difficult. The slide is from clear zoomorphs down through highly stylized confronted dolphins-with-ball to owls, to slightly fluid sides flanking a central straight edge, to an almost straight edge with nicks, to the absolutely straight edge of Anglo-Saxon combs, embracing all possible combinations along the way, including concave (owl-derivative?) ends. Initially consumer demand perhaps called for experimentation in form and decoration so that individual possessions could be easily identified, and some combs do appear to be special commissions, such as the boxed comb 2 from Winchester (Figure 5.2), the combs with two narrow connecting-plates flanking a procession of animals (48, 145; Figures 4.6-4.7) and the large ornate Castle Copse comb (75; Figure 4.8). If the number of comb-makers grew along with demand, this too would contribute to an increased variety of form and a decline in the clarity of the end-plate design (Figure 6.2).

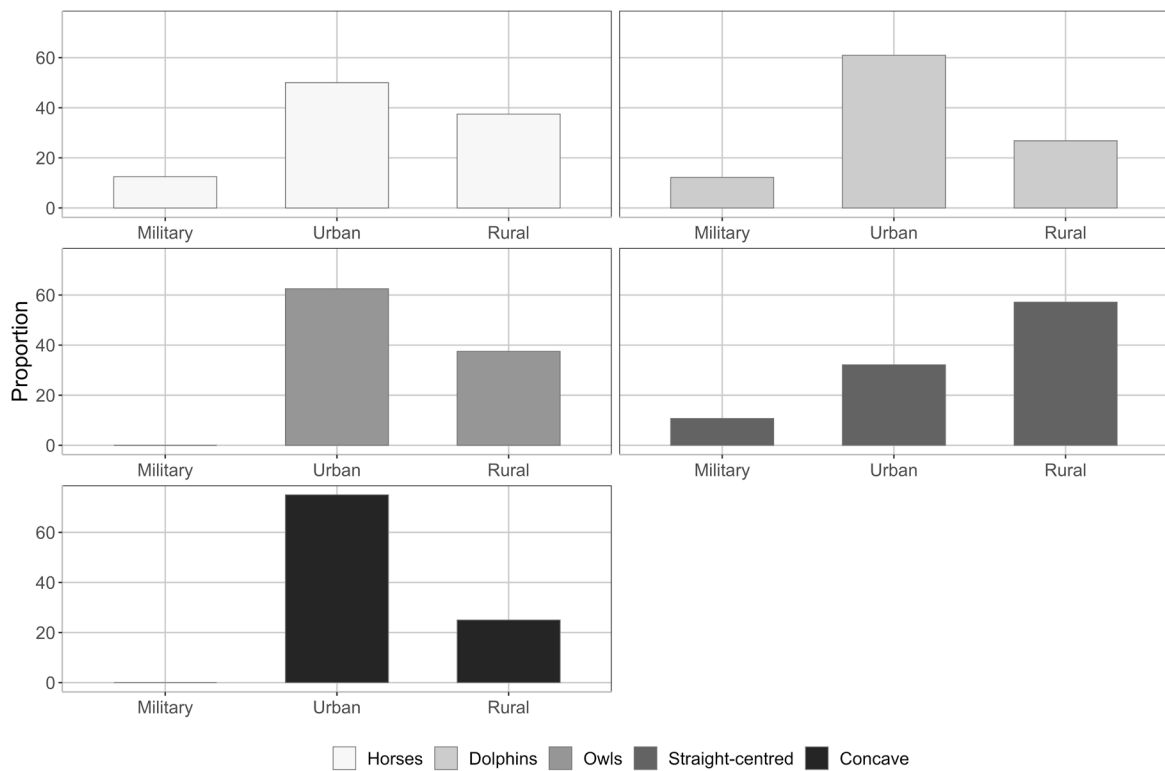


Figure 6.2. Proportions of comb by form and site type.

### Archaeological contexts: baths, votives and burials

Bath-house drains in London provide sealed contexts, with at least four combs found in the deliberate infilling of a drain that had served a small bath in Building 6 at Pudding Lane (**80-83**; Milne 1985: 141, fig. 81, d-e). A single tooth, although not necessarily from a comb of this type, came from a drain serving the baths associated with the large public building complex in the south-west of the city at Cannon Street (**84**; Perring and Roskams 1991: 30-34). Also from a bath-house drain is fragment **140** from Piercebridge, Co. Durham (Cool 2008: 252-253, fig. 11.6, 1104, table 11.15). Less well-stratified is a complete comb from Darenth, Kent (**88**), which was found in rubble in/over a demolished bath-building revealed during bulldozing an access track to a gravel pit (Philp 1973: 153, fig. 46, 451). The same association is matched by three single-sided combs from deposits in the area of the baths at *Felix Romuliana* in Moesia (Petković 1999: 353, 355-357). These pieces highlight the close relationship between bathing and grooming the hair, another example of which may be fragment **85** from dark earth above Room 6 of the baths in St Margaret's Street in Canterbury (MacGregor and Stow 1995: fig. 515, F1186). Fragments of combs were also associated with the Baths Basilica at Wroxeter, Shropshire, although they are not published in detail and may not be of the type discussed here (Greep 1983: 759, nos 384-390; Mould 2000: 139; Pretty 1997: 251). Two combs in York Museum are also said to be from the Roman baths (**146** and one uncatalogued; Greep 1983: 760, nos 402-403).

Boxwood combs may have been used as votive deposits long before composite combs reached Britain, but have only survived where the burial conditions were favourable, for example at the Sacred Spring at Bath, although Pugsley disputes their use as deliberate deposits (Henig *et al.* 1988: 24, 26; Pugsley 2003: 11-12, 149). Great Dunmow comb **92**, which was buried in a small votive pit near a shrine (see Chapter 2), can certainly be seen in the light of the long tradition of offering personal grooming equipment of many forms to the gods (Wickenden 1988: 38; Bagnall Smith 1998: 174-176; Eckardt and Crummy 2008: 102-104; Jackson 2010: 55). Fragments of double-sided composite combs have also been found on the site of the temple to Sulis Minerva in Bath (**131-132**), and Boon considered Silchester comb **71** to be a votive offering (Cunliffe and Davenport 1985: 72, 74-75, 139, fig. 79, 36-37; Boon 1974: 156). There are also comb fragments from the sanctuary sites of Uley and Lydney in Gloucestershire, but not in demonstrably votive contexts (**76-77**).

Similarly, the appearance of composite double-sided combs in late Romano-British burials does not represent the introduction of a new form of burial rite. The earlier one-piece wooden and ivory combs were used as grave goods but again, needing favourable burial conditions to survive, they are not prominent as grave finds (Audollent 1923: 287, pl. 7, 11; Galloway 1979: 246; Pugsley 2003: 10-11, 20; Bertrand 2003: 102; Asskamp *et al.* 2007: 69, Abb. 6, cat. no. 8.14; Derks and Vos 2010: 62). The more durable late Roman antler and bone combs can be taken as the proverbial tip of an iceberg of combs used as funerary deposits in Britain, with many hundreds (or thousands) more wooden ones having been burnt on pyres or decayed away in inhumations along with the wood of the coffins in which they were placed. That so many of the antler and bone composite combs listed here were not accompanied by other grave deposits shows how essential this piece of grooming equipment was considered to be in both daily life and the afterlife.

### Site type

Figures 6.3 and 6.4 show the numbers of double-sided composite combs by site type; a concordance by site type is given in Appendix 3. They have a wide social distribution, with examples coming from both large and small towns, military establishments, sanctuary sites, villas and other rural settlements, with the emphasis in the south on large towns, chiefly due to those from Winchester, and in the north on military establishments, but in much smaller numbers. Such a distribution suggests that composite double-sided combs were embedded within the economic fabric of Britain, although overall comparatively few have been found and there are large gaps in their distribution (Figure 6.1). An important question that arises here is whether or not the combs from military establishments were used by serving personnel or by females living or working there (see below).

## DISTRIBUTION AND CONTEXT

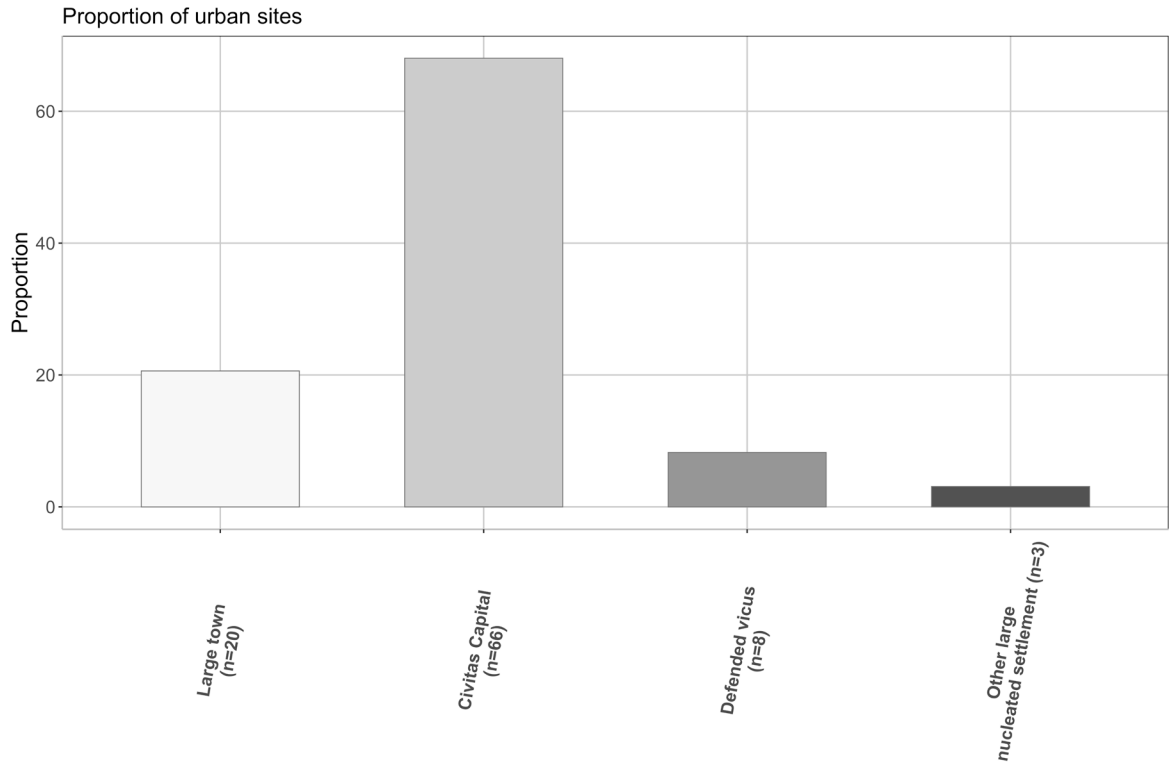


Figure 6.3. Proportions of combs from urban sites.

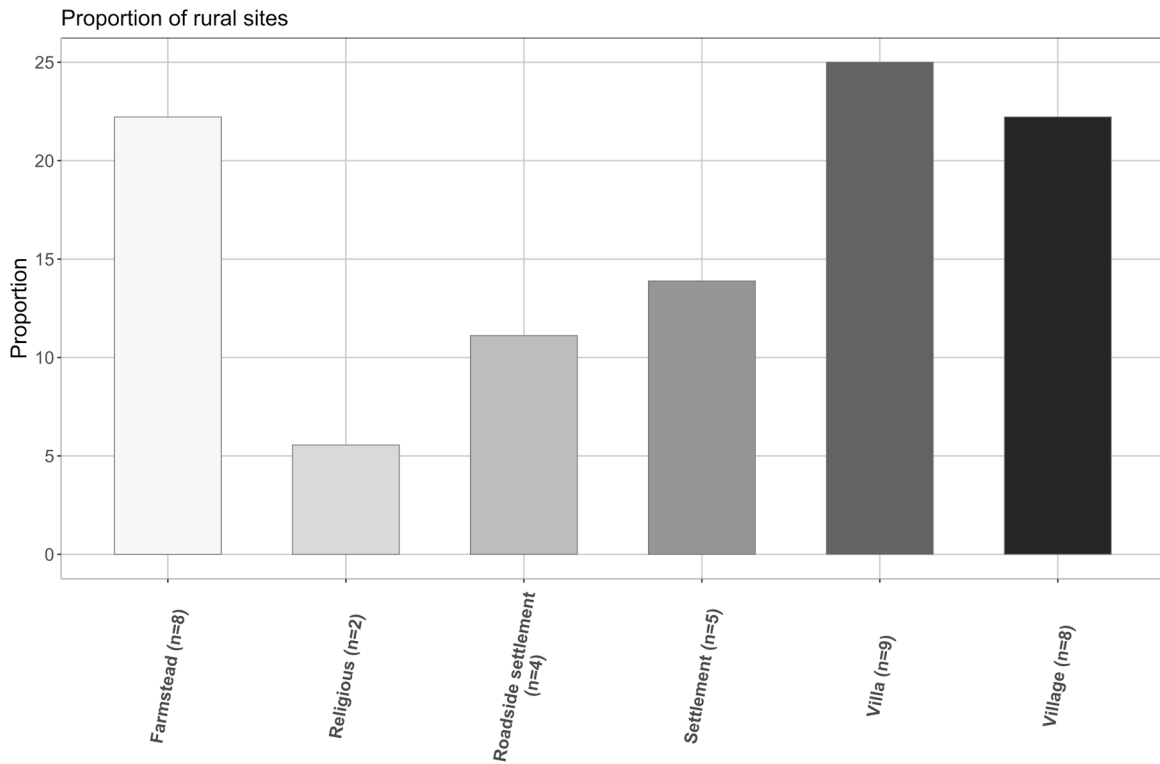


Figure 6.4. Proportions of combs from non-urban sites.

The numbers of combs from funerary and non-funerary contexts do not appear on the surface to be very different, with the exception of those from military sites (Figure 6.5). This way of presenting the data, however, masks a major trend in the assemblage, as most of the combs from southern Britain are from burials while most of those from northern Britain are from non-funerary contexts (Table 6.2). Southern sites are taken to be those below a line from the Wirral to the Wash, northern sites those above it. Precise context details are not always known for combs that are included here from some non-funerary sites, nor for some from museum collections, whereas five comb fragments from residual or unstratified contexts in southern cemeteries are omitted from the table (Winchester 66-68, Colchester 69, Amesbury Down 130). The percentages by funerary and non-funerary groups are shown in the table; the percentages of funerary to non-funerary for the whole southern group are 65.5 compared to 34.5, and for the whole northern group are 9.5 to 90.5. These figures should, of course, be viewed in the light of many other factors, not least the greater number of late Romano-British inhumations found in the south compared to the north Midlands and the north, a distinction that is well-illustrated by the data presented in Smith 2018 (especially figs 6.8, 6.15).

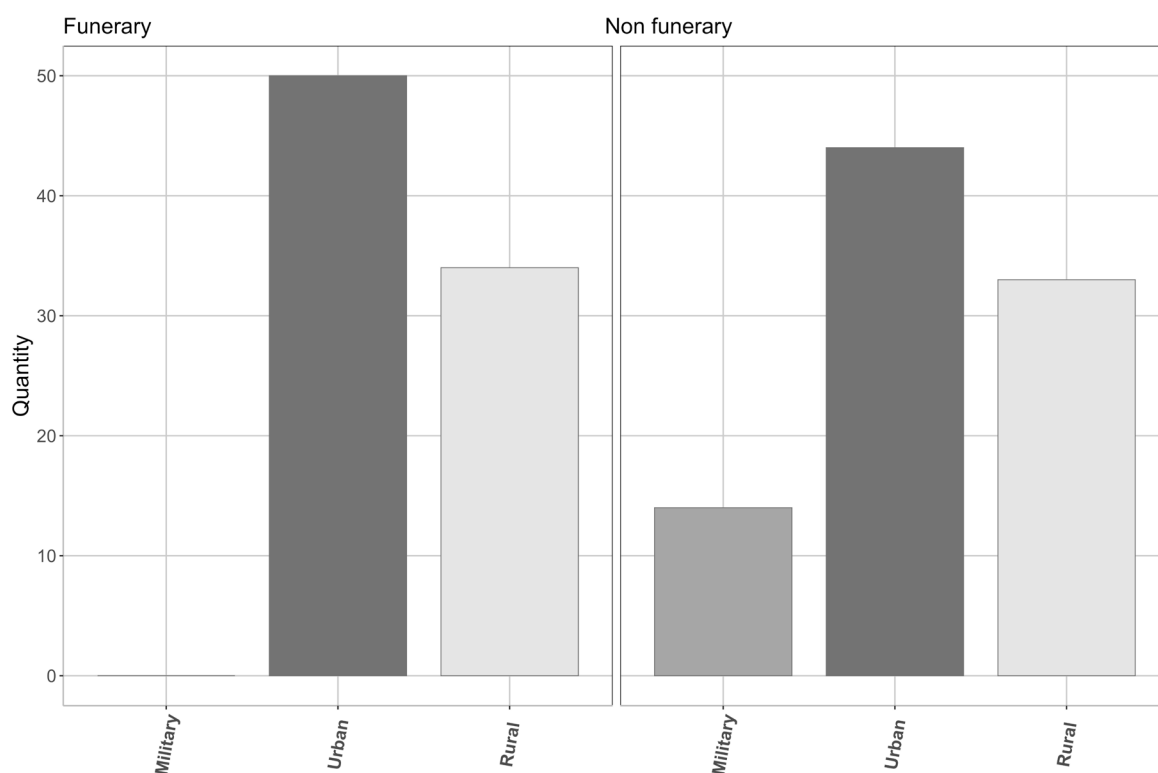


Figure 6.5. Quantities of combs from funerary and non-funerary contexts by site-type.

| Sites         | No. of combs in burials | %          | No. of combs in non-funerary contexts | %          |
|---------------|-------------------------|------------|---------------------------------------|------------|
| Southern      | 74                      | 96         | 39                                    | 58         |
| Northern      | 3                       | 4          | 28                                    | 42         |
| <b>Totals</b> | <b>77</b>               | <b>100</b> | <b>67</b>                             | <b>100</b> |

Table 6.2. The numbers of combs from funerary and non-funerary contexts on southern and northern sites.

Even when other factors are considered, Winchester nevertheless stands out from all other sites and appears to encapsulate the difference between south and north. As discussed above, the town is remarkable for the number of these combs found in burials there, a number unmatched from any other large-scale cemetery excavation: 31 plus two fragments residual in grave fill and one fragment unstratified in a cemetery, all three of which may be from disturbed graves (66-68). Another six burials contained fragments too decayed to be certain of their form and included here, and a small fragment from a Late Saxon pit in a Roman cemetery area has not been included in the Catalogue as it may not be Romano-British (Rees *et al.* 2008: 66, no. 318). In contrast only one triangular comb, not of this form and so not included here, has come from a non-funerary, intramural, context in the town (Biddle 1972: pl. 48b).

Winchester's large number of combs from funerary contexts compares to just seven each from the large cemeteries at Poundbury at Dorchester and Butt Road in Colchester. Colchester may not have produced many combs, but recent large-scale cemetery excavations there suggest that their deposition in burials was restricted to Butt Road, raising questions of identity that are addressed in Chapter 7. As the distribution of combs in southern and central Britain suggests that their manufacture spread outwards from Winchester, the same may have been the case for the practice of depositing them in burials. If so, influence decreased with distance, as combs did not become as intensively embedded in the funerary ritual in other large towns further to the east and north (Figure 6.6). The locations of other workshops and the movement of trade goods would also temper the strength of this influence. When a comb was acquired, which workshop it was acquired from and how long it was in use are all indeterminate factors, therefore it does not follow that all combs found outside Winchester in all contexts, funerary or non-funerary, are later within the date range for the form, only that they may not be among the very earliest pieces to be made.

Just as Winchester stands out among the large towns with combs from burials, York stands out among the large towns and military establishments with non-funerary finds, as it has seven combs from a dark earth context at Wellington Row (110-116), seven other uncatalogued fragments and a triangular comb from the same site, and some unprovenanced combs in York Museum (146-147). A note of caution should be struck, however, as no doubt many burials and their grave goods were destroyed during the construction of the railway at York in the 19th century, so this apparent contrast with the south and with Winchester in particular may simply be due to the circumstances of retrieval. The Wellington Row combs (Figure 5.18) are so varied in form but so concentrated in context that they appear to be trade goods that were either deliberately dumped or swept up from a workshop and disposed of as no longer relevant in whatever circumstances pertained in that part of York at the time. The absence of comb-making waste from the site makes the first alternative the more probable.

Composite double-sided combs from occupation sites in other settlements also came from dark earth deposits that began to form in the late Roman period and continued to build up over the next several hundred years or, in some cases, far longer. Such deposits were often truncated or disturbed in towns with medieval and later occupation, where in general few late Roman combs of this form are found as casual site finds. This may be the reason why at Winchester none has been found inside the city walls despite the high number of composite double-sided combs from burials in the suburbs, but, similarly, only one comb (71) has been found at Silchester, despite the very extensive antiquarian excavations within its walls (Boon 1974: 156; Fulford 2021: 1-12; Crummy 2006a: 130-131). There are also only two fragments from occupation contexts in Colchester (90-91), two from Cirencester (78-79), and two from Lincoln (102-103).

The non-funerary finds from military sites may only point out that grooming was essential for males as well as females (Pugsley 2003: 145-146; Derks and Vos 2010), but even within a fort and its environs, or a town and its fortress in the case of York, distinguishing between which gender used which comb is impossible, not least because many of these finds have no context details

attached and are effectively unstratified. The combs from the fort at Malton and its *vicus* (or a part of it) across the river Derwent at Norton serve as an example. In the late 4th to early 5th century, the time when these combs were in use, the fort was still a working military base; listed as *Derventio* in the *Notitia Dignitatum* (XL: *Dux Britanniarum*), it was garrisoned by a *numerus* raised at Brough-on-Humber (*Petuaria*). Combs **137-138** in Malton Museum may have come from the fort, but there are no context details to support this, while a small fragment of a connecting-plate (not catalogued here) was found in the *vicus* (Wenham and Heywood 1997: 148, no. 28). In 1891 comb **65** was found in Norton with (presumably one of) three skeletons, along with pots and some bone and copper-alloy bracelets (Robinson 1978: 37, no. 307). Based on the other data in this study, it seems reasonable to assume that, along with the bracelets, it came from the burial of a female from the *vicus*, but without direct evidence this cannot be confirmed.

Perhaps the combs from military sites mark the locations of one or all of the following: civilian settlements, bath-houses and regular markets. Markets may account for the presence of unfinished combs at both Richborough and Carrawburgh (**86, 141**), and for the finished but discarded group of combs from Wellington Row in York.

Distribution is a slippery tool when the dataset is small (Evison 1981), and while we can predict that reasonably large excavations of very late Romano-British cemeteries around the large and small towns in southern and southern central Britain will find at least one female burial containing a double-sided composite comb, the same cannot, or cannot yet, be said for the other regions. Can we also predict the recovery of these combs from other cemeteries beyond this region or from military sites and their *vici*, especially along the Saxon Shore and Hadrian's Wall? Not yet, and certainly not in large numbers.

## Chapter 7

### Combs from funerary contexts

#### Gender

As stated earlier, we have not discussed in this volume the evidence in the art and literature of the classical world for early comb forms and other grooming equipment, but have given references for those wishing to pursue this line of research in Chapter 1. Suffice it to say that the comb, like the mirror, was predominantly associated with women, but not exclusively so, with wooden combs almost certainly also used for the grooming and delousing of serving soldiers (Derks and Vos 2010: 63–65).

The identified sex for most of the burials with combs are of females, at least 67 out of 77 (87 per cent) when burials that also contained jewellery are taken into account, and this figure is likely to be higher had the gender of all the burials been firmly established (Appendix 1). Only four combs are thought to have been in male graves: **8**, male?, 18–24 years old; **26**, elderly male; **34**, male?, 26–35 years old?; **53** (adult) male. At least two, and possibly all four of these identifications can be regarded as questionable. The gender of the person buried with **8** is only tentative; the initial identification was a young adult of indeterminate sex, which, when re-assessed by Gowland, became male?, 18–24 years, which is used here (Clarke 1979: table 2; Gowland 2002: appendix A.1.1.5). The excavators noted for **34** that the bone of the fragmented skull was in poor condition and that no post-cranial sexually diagnostic elements survived (Simmonds *et al.* 2011: 117). The bones of the person buried with **53** were also in poor condition and some were missing, including part of the pelvis (Crummy *et al.* 1993: 146–147, tables 2.58, 2.67, microfiche p. 535), while the person buried with **26** was initially assessed as female (Teague 1999: 49, 52; 2012: 124, 127; Ottaway *et al.* 2012: 299). Combs **8**, **26**, **34** and **53** are therefore excluded from the analysis below regarding the age of people buried with combs but are used elsewhere in this chapter.

Also pertinent here is Lankhills Grave 413, buried with comb **17**: the human remains in this grave were identified in Clarke 1979 (table 2), as male, aged 20/25 years, but in Gowland 2002 (appendix A.1.1.5), as a female? aged 35–49 years, which is used here. However, she also noted a Grave 413B male aged 35–49, although a second skeleton is neither mentioned nor illustrated in Clarke 1979 (table 2, fig. 53). Another questionable assignment of sex concerns the skeletal remains in Poundbury grave 485, buried with comb **40**. From the osteology report this consisted of a female body with a male head (Farwell and Molleson 1993, 269, fig. 60). The skeleton was clearly undisturbed, complete and articulated, with no chop marks on the skull or vertebrae; it is defined here as female. That assigning a sex and age to fragmented and decayed bones is therefore not yet an exact science is further stressed by clashes between genetic and osteological sex classification for burials from Somersham, Cambridgeshire (Wiseman *et al.* 2021: 138, note 44).

Where evidence for sex is missing or indeterminate, it can sometimes be supplied by gendered grave goods, particularly armlets and other personal ornaments, but we cannot assume that the presence of a comb or other items generally associated with women and girls is a wholly reliable indication of a female burial. This is typified by the fourth-century Catterick *gallus*, a young adult male who was interred wearing a complex jet necklace, jet bracelets and copper-alloy anklet, with the two stones found in his mouth reliably identifying him as one of the (self-) castrated devotees of Cybele, who always wore female clothing after they had performed this act (Cool 2002a: 41–42).

### The importance of age

While most combs were found with females, there is a gap in the age range of the deceased from the ages of about eight to 17 (Figure 7.1; Appendix 1). Of the remainder, at least eight came from the inhumations of older women, three (perhaps four) in the graves of female children under eight years old, and the majority with women aged 17 to 40 years. The gap may not be a genuine characteristic of the assemblage, as **6** was found with an ungendered adolescent and the age and gender of several burials have not been established. Williams' study of early Anglo-Saxon cremation burials found that combs were the second most frequently deposited object and that, with only comparatively slight variations, they were placed with all ages and both sexes, although they were placed less frequently in inhumations of the same period (2003: 105–114). Older children and adolescents aged eight to 17 would undoubtedly have used combs, and there is no substantive reason to suppose that their liminal position, poised between childhood and maturity, might in some way have excluded them from the investment of a comb as a grave deposit. As with the younger children, they had died before their time and would have needed their status to be evident in the afterlife (Ter Vrugt-Lenz 1960: 62–63; Martin-Kilcher 2000: 63; Crummy 2010: 79).

Similarly, too much emphasis should perhaps not be placed on the number present in the subdivisions by adult age, which probably reflect the overall female mortality rate as much as that of women buried with combs. Those aged 17 to 40 represent the chief child-bearing years, and the emphasis on adulthood in the funerary assemblage might therefore reflect both the married status of women older than 17 and the dangers of parturition. Two combs came from burials of women that also contained foetal bone: **31** from Andover (young adult) and **62** from Orton Waterville (25–40 years). How many of the other women buried with combs might have died in childbirth is unknown, as the foetuses might not have been buried with them or, if they had been, their bones may not have survived in adverse soil conditions.

### Female status and identity

Another aspect of female adulthood is the household role of *materfamilias*. If an assessment of status were attempted using NAT scores (number of artefact types present), as in, for example, Haselgrove 1982, Eckardt and Crummy 2008, (84, 87) and Williams 2003 (111, fig. 11), then it would appear that combs were buried with both low and high status individuals. Yet, as grave goods are scarce in late Roman burials in general, it could alternatively be argued that the presence of a comb, a personal possession used on a daily basis, was in itself a strong statement of a particular status and a particular identity.

Several of the females were buried with jewellery and other objects, some of which attest to their high, or at least comparatively high, status (Table 7.1). There were two items made of silver with comb **52**, two with **61** and three with **57**, earrings of both gold and silver plus gold with **61**, and a gold bracelet with **46**. Beads of cornelian were with **10** and of coral with **43**, and bone or ivory bracelets with **10**, **11**, **31**, **43**, **51**, **60** and **62**. Some of the bracelets described as bone in early excavation reports may also be of ivory, but bone bracelets are in themselves sufficiently rare to be

COMBS FROM FUNERARY CONTEXTS

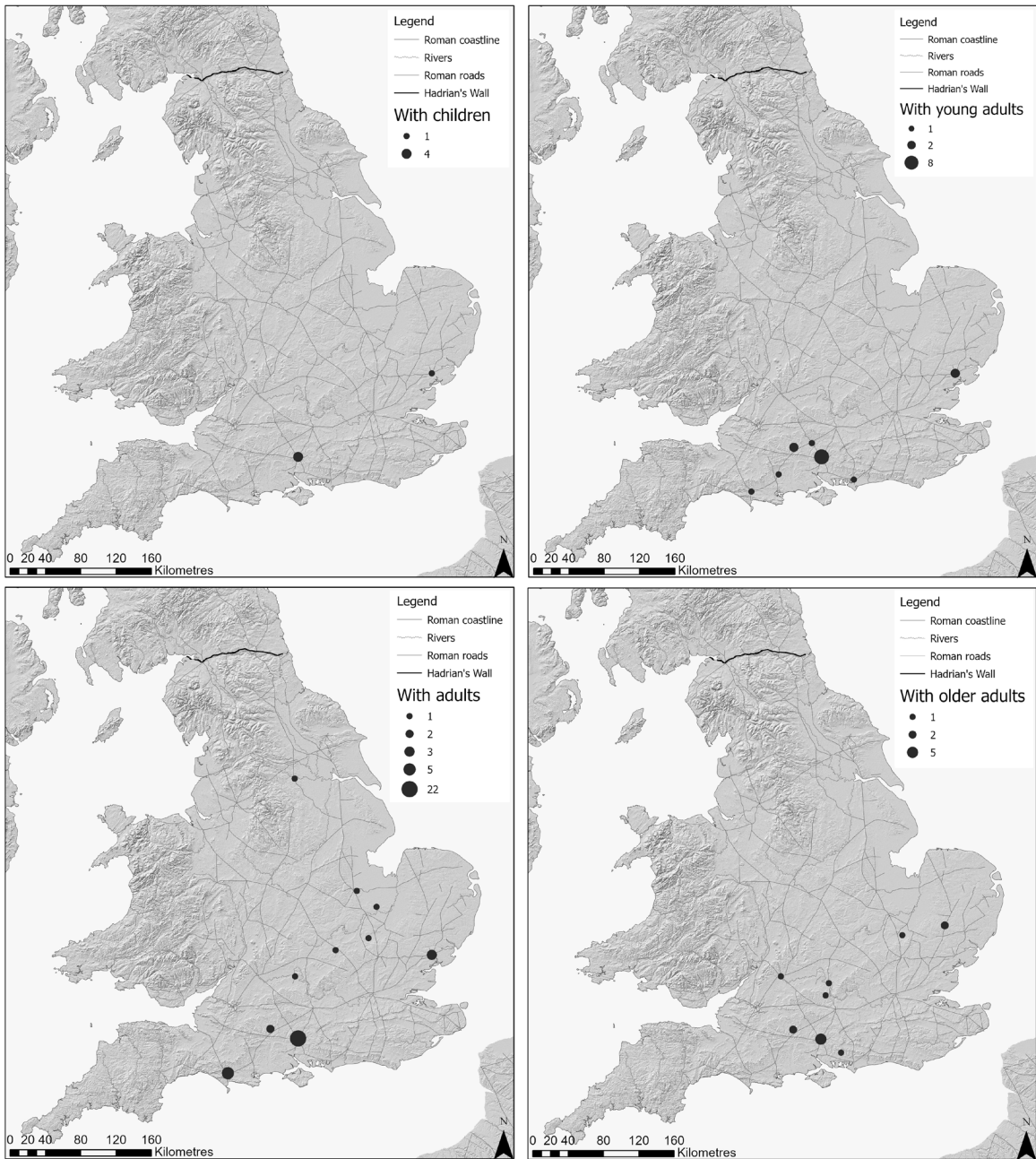


Figure 7.1. Combs from female burials by age.

classed as indicators of wealth and rank. The shale spindlewhorls found with **61** and **151** may be a sign of domestic responsibility and status (Cool 2010: 276). Vessels of pottery or glass containing a drink of some kind were found with **8**, **10**, **11**, **13**, **52** and **61**, pottery and glass beakers for drinking were found with **10**, **11** and **35**, and bowls, presumably containing food, with **126** and **128**; at least some of the glass vessels would have commanded a high price. The woman buried with **3** wore clothes embroidered with gold thread. Comb **2** was stored inside a unique purpose-made wooden box veneered with bone plaques echoing the decoration on the comb and clearly made by the same artisan (Figure 5.2); that the comb was a treasured possession is emphasised by its having been repaired. A piece of bone veneer very like elements of the Winchester box was found near **106** from Langton in Yorkshire, but the comb was not in a burial and the two may have no direct association (Corder and Kirk 1932: 73, fig. 19, 13). Three children are presumed to be female as they were buried with jewellery, which in one case was deposited in a box along with the comb (**11**, **51**,

56). Suites of jewellery in several materials, even if not of precious metal, also indicates a degree of wealth (10, 11, 43, 46, 52, 56, 57, 61), and a combination of materials may have been selected for the protection they offered in the afterlife, particularly where iron and black mineral items were present (Crummy 2010: 66–67; 31, 44, 51, 52, 56, 57, 61, 151).

Three Lankhills burials with combs should also be mentioned here, although the combs have not been catalogued as they were too fragmentary to identify their form: Grave 369, adult female with four copper-alloy bracelets, one pottery and one glass beaker; Grave 396, adult female with one bone and one copper-alloy bracelet, an iron ?needle, a shale spindlewhorl and a glass beaker; and Grave 438, adult female with three copper-alloy, one iron, one bone and eleven(?) ivory bracelets, three silver, three copper-alloy and two shale finger-rings, an iron pin or needle, and a necklace of glass and coral beads, with one surviving bead of pearl (Clarke 1979: table 2; Guido 1979).

Considering how few of the combs belong to the Horse and Owl groups, it may be pertinent that both, Owls in particular, are represented among the burials listed in Table 7.1, and there are others in the dataset that are not listed in the table because the comb is the only grave deposit, such as 1, 4 and 5 from Winchester, 36 from Chichester, 47 from Cirencester, 58 from Heybridge and 64 from Woodhall, while only coins were found with 17 from Winchester. Unfortunately, many of the end-plates from the burials are missing or unclassifiable, so no accurate idea can be formed regarding whether or not these zoomorphs were deliberately selected for inclusion in the grave because of their imagery. Whether Horse combs represented the animal companion of Epona and had multiple layers of meaning for women in both life and the afterlife is impossible to determine here, but a hint that the choice of an owl may be pertinent is provided by the Owl Group 2 comb 31 from Andover, one of the young adult women buried with foetal bone, as the owl is the bird of Minerva, who had a healing aspect (Green 1997: 154–155). Two other Owl combs appear in Table 7.1, one with a female child (11) and one with another young adult female (151). Minerva may again be pertinent to the former, as the warrior goddess may have been chosen as the child's protector in the afterlife. A late Roman use of imagery and materials pertinent to the protection of deceased children is evident at Colchester, including in the cemetery around the Christian church at Butt Road and including Minerva as warrior goddess (Crummy *et al.* 1993: 164–201; Crummy 2010, esp. 60, fig. 13, 5). Her roles as goddess of wisdom, healing and the domestic arts may also be relevant to all the women buried with an Owl comb; even though the Empire at this time was nominally Christian, the use of other deities as guardians of those who had died continued (Crummy 2010).

As noted in Chapter 6, it is only at Butt Road that combs have been found in Colchester burials, despite recent extensive excavations in other cemetery areas. The number of combs recovered is small, only seven found in 669 graves dated to Period 2, c. AD 320/40–early 5th century, and even if all burials post-dating c. AD 360 could be identified, this proportion of 1% would be only slightly increased and still well below the figures for Winchester (see Chapter 6: Winchester and southern Britain). While the sandy soils at Butt Road were not kind to skeletal material, it is unlikely that other combs were completely lost to decay. The soil conditions are no worse in the other excavated cemetery areas, so the section of the town's population buried at Butt Road may have differed in some way to the rest. The most probable explanation is that this burial area was reserved for particular families who were at least affiliated with Christianity, and, given the religion's Empire-wide official status, included representatives of governmental and other recognised authorities within the community. A possible connection between combs in burials and Christianity was raised by Dorothy Watts some decades ago (1991: 194–5), but the iconography employed to decorate them does not invite such a direct link, nor does any other aspect of the burials in the rest of the Romano-British assemblage.

We might, though, wonder if in Colchester combs were only recovered from burials in the Butt Road Period 2 cemetery because in some way they reflect the strictures imposed on women by the early Christian church? Saint Paul wrote that every woman should cover her head during worship (*I Corinthians* II.5), a point extended by writers in the late 2nd to 3rd century for the head always to be

## COMBS FROM FUNERARY CONTEXTS

| Catalogue No.; end-plate Form | Age (years)                  | Location              | Brooch           | Hairpin          | Earrings | Bead(s)                                   | Finger-ring(s)   | Bracelet(s)  | Anklet | Box                               | Spindlewhorl | Glass vessel(s) | Pottery vessel(s) | Other                     |
|-------------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------|------------------|------------------|----------|---|------------------|--|--------|-----------------------------------|--------------|-----------------|-------------------|---------------------------|
| 2; Horse Group 1              | 17-25                        | Winchester            | -                | -                | -        | -   | -                | -  | -      | box containing comb               | -            | -               | -                 | -                         |
| 3;-                           | 25-35                        | Winchester            | -                | -                | -        | -   | -                | -  | -      | wooden furniture (boxes?)         | -            | -               | -                 | gold thread from textile  |
| 8;-                           | young adult                  | Winchester            | -                | -                | -        | -   | -                | -  | -      | -                                 | -            | -               | flagon            | -                         |
| 10; Straight-centred          | adult                        | Winchester            | -                | -                | -        | 9 x cornelian, found near neck            | -                | 1 x bone   | -      | -                                 | -            | beaker          | flagon            | -                         |
| 11; Owl Group 3               | child, 3.5                   | Winchester            | -                | -                | -        | necklace, 135 max. x glass                | -                | 2 x copper alloy<br>1 x ivory                      | -      | -                                 | -            | jug             | beaker            | -                         |
| 13; Concave                   | 25+                          | Winchester            | -                | -                | -        | -   | -                | -  | -      | -                                 | -            | -               | jug               | -                         |
| 31; Owl Group 2               | young adult with foetal bone | Andover               | -                | -                | -        | -   | -                | 2 x bone   | -      | -                                 | -            | -               | -                 | iron knife                |
| 35; Straight-centred?         | 50+                          | Roden Down, Compton   | -                | -                | -        | -   | -                | -  | -      | -                                 | -            | -               | beaker            | box leaves, see Table 7.2 |
| 41; Straight-centred          | 35                           | Poundbury, Dorchester | -                | -                | -        | -   | 1 x copper-alloy | -  | -      | -                                 | -            | -               | -                 | -                         |
| 43;-                          | 25                           | Poundbury, Dorchester | -                | -                | -        | necklace(s), >100 x glass and 84 x coral  | -                | 7 x copper alloy<br>1 x bone                       | -      | -                                 | -            | -               | -                 | -                         |
| 44; Devolved Dolphin          | 36-45                        | Poundbury, Dorchester | -                | -                | -        | -   | -                | -  | -      | -                                 | -            | -               | -                 | iron pin                  |
| 46;-                          | -                            | Northover, Ilchester  | 1 x copper alloy | -                | -        | -   | -                | 1 x gold<br>1? x copper-alloy                      | -      | -                                 | -            | -               | -                 | -                         |
| 51;-                          | child, 4-5                   | Colchester            | -                | -                | -        | -   | -                | 2 x copper alloy<br>1 x iron<br>1 x bone           | -      | -                                 | -            | -               | -                 | -                         |
| 52;-                          | adult                        | Colchester            | -                | 1 x silver       | -        | necklace, 29 x glass and 9 x copper alloy | 1 x silver       | 1 x copper alloy<br>1 x shale                      | -      | -                                 | -            | bottle          | -                 | -                         |
| 56;-                          | child, 7                     | Colchester            | -                | 2 x copper alloy | -        | -   | -                | 5 x copper alloy<br>1 x iron<br>1 x shale (in box) | -      | box containing bracelets and comb | -            | -               | -                 | -                         |
| 57;-                          | (young) adult                | Colchester            | 1 x silver       | -                | -        | -   | 2 x silver       | 7 x copper alloy<br>1 x iron                       | -      | -                                 | -            | -               | -                 | -                         |

| Catalogue No.; end-plate Form | Age (years)              | Location                     | Brooch     | Hairpin | Earrings                       | Bead(s)    | Finger-ring(s) | Bracelet(s)                  | Anklet                   | Box | Spindlewhorl | Glass vessel(s) | Pottery vessel(s)                | Other |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------------|------------|---------|--------------------------------|------------|----------------|------------------------------|--------------------------|-----|--------------|-----------------|----------------------------------|-------|
| 59; -                         | 45+                      | Foxton                       | -          | -       | -                              | -          | -              | -                            | 1 x copper alloy (gilt?) | -   | -            | -               | -                                | -     |
| 60; -                         | adult                    | Guilden Morden, Cambridge    | -          | -       | -                              | -          | -              | 4 x copper alloy<br>2 x bone | -                        | -   | -            | -               | -                                | -     |
| 61; -                         | 25-30                    | Castor, Chesterton           | 1 x silver | -       | 1 pair, gold with silver beads | 1 x silver | -              | 2 x copper alloy             | 1 x copper alloy         | -   | 1 x shale    | -               | flagon                           | -     |
| 62; Straight-centred          | 25-40 (with foetal bone) | Orton Waterville, Chesterton | -          | -       | -                              | 1 x bone?  | -              | 1 x bone                     | -                        | -   | -            | -               | -                                | -     |
| 126; Straight-centred         | 35+                      | Amesbury Down                | -          | -       | -                              | -          | -              | -                            | -                        | -   | -            | -               | bowl, miniature jar/bowl<br>bowl | -     |
| 128; -                        | 45+                      | Amesbury Down                | -          | -       | -                              | -          | -              | -                            | -                        | -   | -            | -               | -                                | -     |
| 151; Owl Group 3              | young adult              | Gussage All Saints           | -          | -       | -                              | -          | -              | -                            | -                        | -   | 1 x shale    | -               | -                                | -     |

Table 7.1. Female and probable female burials containing items indicative of status, along with their other grave goods (excluding hobnails and coins). Max...maximum.

covered outside, and even inside, the home (Clement, *Paedagogus* II.2; Anon., *Didascalia Apostolorum* III; Adams 2013: 81). A well-carved comb might then be the only means for a woman to signal her status, but even then she might be accused of shamelessness, as ‘elaborate braidings, and infinite modes of dressing the hair’ were also discouraged (Clement, *Paedagogus* I.2). Each of these texts is from the eastern Mediterranean and may have had little direct effect on the grooming and behaviour of well-born Romano-British Christian women. Although on the late fourth-century Stilicho diptych his wife Serena appears to have her hair wrapped in striped cloth (Croom 2002: 105), the women depicted on the contemporary Italian-made Projecta casket have elaborate coiffures and were clearly not veiled (BM 1866,1229.1). The personal religious practice of the women buried with combs at Butt Road therefore remains enigmatic, even if the location of their graves implies that they were Christian.

The locations of female burials containing high-status grave goods is concentrated in Winchester and the surrounding area, with a few in the eastern region, the furthest north being at Castor, near Chesterton (*Durobrivae*). This range can be extended north to Glasshoughton in West Yorkshire when the evidence for status from the graves themselves is considered (Figures 7.2-7.3; Table 7.2). Comb **3** from Winchester was in a gypsum-filled lead coffin within an ash coffin, and was one of two burials beneath a chalk mound; the burial containing **123** from Winchester was also capped by a chalk mound. Comb **33** from Queenford Farm was the central and probably primary grave in a small enclosure (Chambers 1987: 67). At Glasshoughton **63** was with a gypsum-filled stone coffin, and at Poundbury **38** and **41** were with gypsum-filled stone coffins within a mausoleum; the graves containing **39** from Poundbury and **61** from Castor were also in mausolea. At Winchester the boxed comb **2** was in a wooden coffin filled with fragments of limestone and ceramic roof tiles, probably grave packing that had fallen onto the body when the coffin lid collapsed. The male? burial at Tubney Wood should also be mentioned here, as the grave pit was lined with limestone slabs (comb **34**). At Roden Down **35** was in a lead coffin with box leaves scattered over the floor (Hood and Walton 1948: 21, 39, fig. 11, 8). At Heybridge **58** was in a lead coffin, or a lead-lined wooden coffin, in a small cemetery that also contained four stone coffins; the latter are very unusual in Essex, where there is no suitable local stone (Wickenden 1986: 55; Drury and Wickenden 1982: 30).

Macdonald, discussing the Lankhills combs, suggested that combs were placed in burials to show that the deceased’s hair, symbolic of vitality, had been groomed to make it an acceptable offering to a god of the underworld and to show that the dead had reached the end of their natural span on earth (1979: 413–414). This, however, conflicts with the Roman concept of *mors immatura*, the unnatural early death of infants, children and juveniles, women who had died in childbirth, accident and murder victims, criminals who were unjustly executed, soldiers and suicides (Ter Vrught-Lenz 1960: 62–63, 66, note 3, 67–78). This would apply to all the pre-adults buried with a comb, to the women at Andover and Orton Waterville with foetal bone in their graves (**31**, **62**), and probably to several more of the women whose combs are listed in the Catalogue, not least the four who had been decapitated, two or three of whom had other wounds (**59**, **148-149**, **152**; see below). The inclusion of a comb in a grave should thus be seen instead as a reference to the importance of well-groomed hair and the ownership of a well-made comb as visible signs of status in life and death (Derks and Vos 2010: 65).

That a comb in a burial might itself be evidence of a particular status and identity is therefore borne out by many of these graves. Combs, as culturally expressive objects, marked out the adult females with whom they were buried as distinguished from others in the same community or in the same family, often apparently by wealth but perhaps also by rank and authority and possibly religion, whether their own as providers of heirs and/or as heads of households, or those of their male partners who held positions of responsibility within their communities. It is no coincidence that many of the well-furnished burials listed in Table 7.1 were found in or close to urban centres associated with administration, wealth and status – Winchester, Dorchester, Ilchester, Colchester and Chesterton – while the more rural burials have fewer grave goods – Andover, Roden Down, Foxton, Guilden Morden, Amesbury Down, Gussage All Saints.

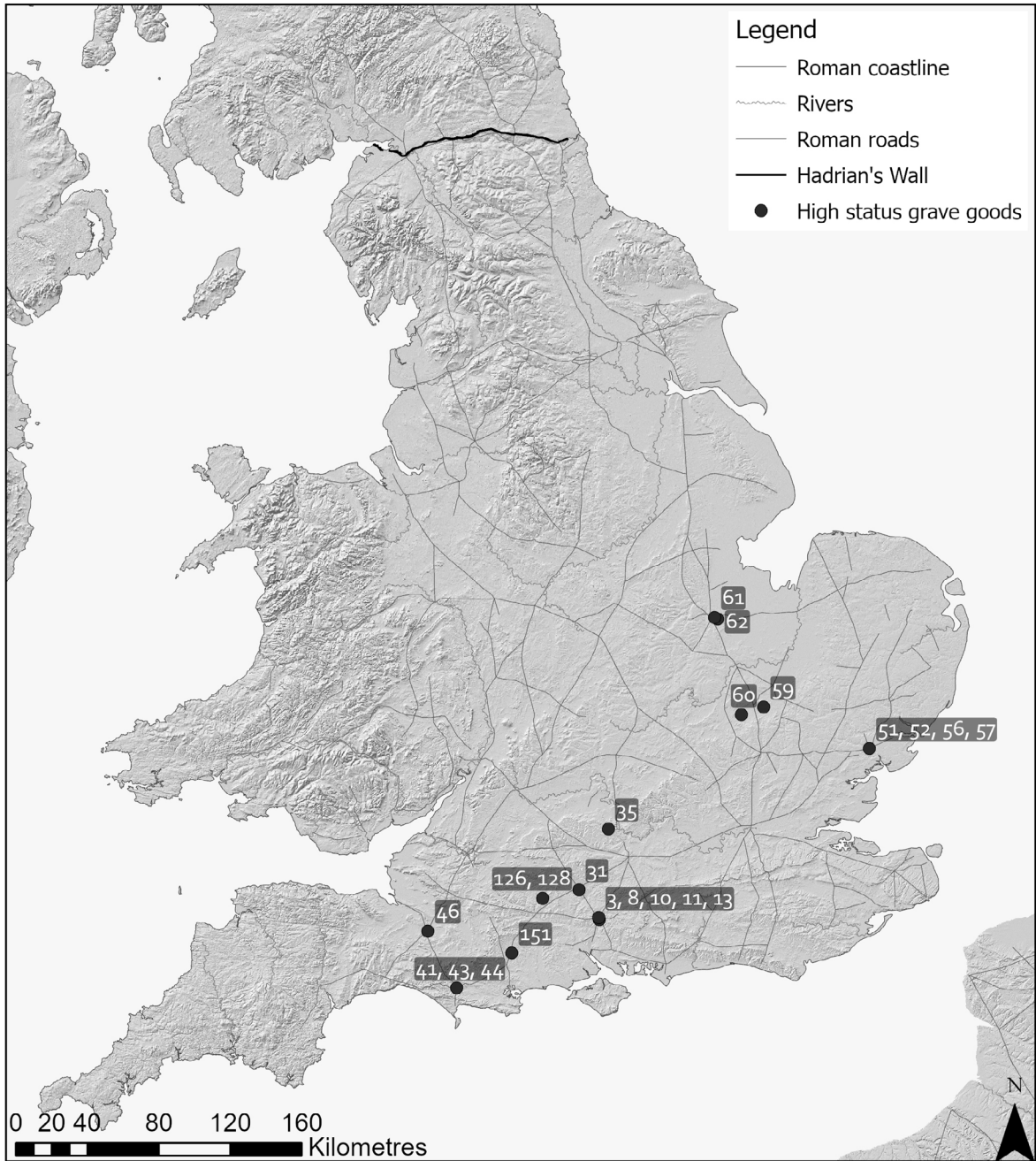


Figure 7.2. Locations of female burials with high-status grave goods.

| Catalogue No. | Site                                 | County         | Grave characteristics   |
|---------------|--------------------------------------|----------------|---|
| 2             | Winchester                           | Hampshire      | limestone and tile grave packing  |
| 3             | Winchester                           | Hampshire      | gypsum-filled lead coffin within an ash coffin; one of two burials covered by a mound of chalk within a masonry mausoleum or walled enclosure |
| 123           | Winchester                           | Hampshire      | grave pit capped by chalk mound   |
| 33            | Queenford Farm, Dorchester-on-Thames | Oxfordshire    | central and probably primary grave in an enclosure  |
| 35            | Roden Down, Compton                  | Berkshire      | lead coffin with box leaves on the floor, inside a lidless? wooden coffin   |
| 38            | Poundbury, Dorchester                | Dorset         | gypsum-filled stone coffin in mausoleum   |
| 39            | Poundbury, Dorchester                | Dorset         | in mausoleum  |
| 41            | Poundbury, Dorchester                | Dorset         | gypsum-filled stone coffin in mausoleum   |
| 58            | Heybridge                            | Essex          | lead coffin, inside a wooden coffin?  |
| 61            | Castor, Chesterton                   | Cambridgeshire | in mausoleum  |
| 63            | Glasshoughton, Castleford            | West Yorkshire | gypsum-filled stone coffin  |

Table 7.2. Female burials with high-status grave characteristics.



Figure 7.3. Locations of female graves with high-status characteristics.

### Comb position

A boxwood comb is said to have fixed a tress of hair to the head of a small child buried at Les-Martres-de-Veyre, Puy-de-Dôme (Audollent 1923: 287, 290, pl. 7, 11; Liversidge 1973: 134; Derks and Vos 2010: 62), but this is the only example of such a practice and, coming from an early excavation, may not be wholly reliable. It has occasionally been suggested that composite combs were also worn in the hair as they may be found beneath or very close to the skull (Watts 1991: 195; Cooke in Cooke and Crummy 2000: 3), but there is no substantive evidence to support this. Checking the location in these cases shows that the comb either lay among a pile of jewellery placed next to the head or that the skull fell sideways onto it as the flesh decayed or the bones were broken by the collapse of the coffin. For example, the skull of a woman in London's eastern cemetery fell sideways onto a triangular comb placed immediately to the right of her head (Barber and

Bowsher 2000: 183–184). Moreover, in studying the various forms of composite combs from the eastern provinces Tica noted that they were of an inappropriate size, shape and weight to be worn in the hair (2018: 405).

In our sample, in 31 out of 57 burials where the position of the comb is known it lay in the immediate vicinity of the head, including comb 2 in its purpose-made box (Table 7.3). A few were found tucked beneath the head, including the Childrey Warren fragment 145, which is best seen as a token deposit, while 124 from Amesbury Down lay against the neck of an elderly female buried on her right side. A further sixteen were on, beneath or in front of the upper body, depending upon whether they were in supine, prone, or right side burials. In total 47 (84 per cent) of the combs were placed on or near the upper body. Nine (16 per cent) were found on or near the lower body, including 56, which was in a box containing jewellery placed by the left hand, and two with decapitated burials, 148, which was by the lower leg, and 149, which was on the pelvis. The only clear regional distinction in comb position is that only in the east were any found by the pelvis, while the greatest variation was at Winchester, the location of most of the burials (Figure 7.4).

| Position               | Catalogue No.  | Total | % of those with known position | Totals by upper / lower body | % by upper / lower body |
|------------------------|--|-------|--------------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------|
| by head                | 1, 2 (boxed), 4, 5, 8 (male?), 11, 14, 17, 19, 20, 33, 38, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 51, 52, 53 (male), 54, 57, 126 (right side burial), 127, 129 (left side burial) | 25    | 44                             | 47                           | 84                      |
| on or under head/ neck | 16, 34 (male?), 48, 63, 124 (right side burial), 145   | 6     | 10.5                           |                              |                         |
| on shoulder            | 9, 22  | 2     | 3.50                           |                              |                         |
| beneath shoulder       | 12 (prone burial), 15 (prone burial)   | 2     | 3.50                           |                              |                         |
| in front of chest      | 125 (right side burial)  | 1     | 1.75                           |                              |                         |
| on chest               | 18, 21, 24, 27, 32, 35, 39, 45, 47, 151  | 10    | 17.5                           |                              |                         |
| beneath chest          | 26 (burial on right side; male?)   | 1     | 1.75                           |                              |                         |
| on pelvis              | 149 (decapitated burial?)  | 1     | 1.75                           | 9                            | 16                      |
| by hip                 | 62   | 1     | 1.75                           |                              |                         |
| by thigh               | 23, 56 (boxed)   | 2     | 3.5                            |                              |                         |
| by knee                | 13   | 1     | 1.75                           |                              |                         |
| by lower leg           | 148 (decapitated burial)   | 1     | 1.75                           |                              |                         |
| by ankle/foot          | 10, 25, 55   | 3     | 5.25                           | -                            | -                       |
| scattered              | 152 (prone decapitated burial; most comb fragments near skull on back of left knee)  | 1     | 1.75                           | -                            | -                       |
| unknown or uncertain   | 3, 6, 7, 28, 29, 30, 31, 36, 37, 46, 49, 50, 58, 59 (decapitated burial), 60, 61, 64, 65, 123, 128   | 20    | -                              | -                            | -                       |

Table 7.3. Comb position relative to body.

The most remarkable placement of a comb is that of 152, from Knobb’s Farm, Somersham, Cambridgeshire. It was in the grave of a decapitated adult female who had been buried prone, with the head placed on the back of the left knee; she had also received other wounds either immediately before or after death (Wiseman *et al.* 2021: 144, F.1097). Fragments of the comb were scattered throughout the grave, but were mainly found near the head, mimicking the tendency to deposit a comb near the head at the same time as mirroring the mutilation of the body.

### Body position

The bodies of most of the individuals buried with a comb were intact and had been placed in a supine position, but the adult women buried with 12 and 15 were buried prone, those with 59 and 148 had been decapitated, 149 was also probably decapitated, and, as we have seen above, the woman with 152 was both decapitated and buried prone (Table 7.4; Figure 7.4). Three women

COMBS FROM FUNERARY CONTEXTS

| Catalogue No. | Location                | County         | Age/sex           | Body position                       |
|---------------|-------------------------|----------------|-------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 12            | Winchester, Lankhills   | Hampshire      | adult female      | prone                               |
| 15            | Winchester, Lankhills   | Hampshire      | 25-35 yrs, female | prone                               |
| 59            | Foxton                  | Cambridgeshire | >45 yrs, female   | supine, decapitated, another wound? |
| 148           | Great Whelnetham        | Suffolk        | 45-50 yrs, female | supine, decapitated, another wound  |
| 149           | Great Whelnetham        | Suffolk        | 45-50 yrs, female | supine, decapitated?                |
| 152           | Knobb's Farm, Somersham | Cambridgeshire | adult female      | prone, decapitated, other wounds    |
| 26            | Winchester, Eagle Hotel | Hampshire      | elderly male      | right side                          |
| 124           | Amesbury Down           | Wiltshire      | >55 yrs, female   | right side                          |
| 125           | Amesbury Down           | Wiltshire      | 16-18 yrs, female | right side                          |
| 126           | Amesbury Down           | Wiltshire      | >35 yrs, female   | right side                          |
| 129           | Amesbury Down           | Wiltshire      | 18-21 yrs, female | left side                           |

Table 7.4. Prone, decapitated, and right or left side burials.

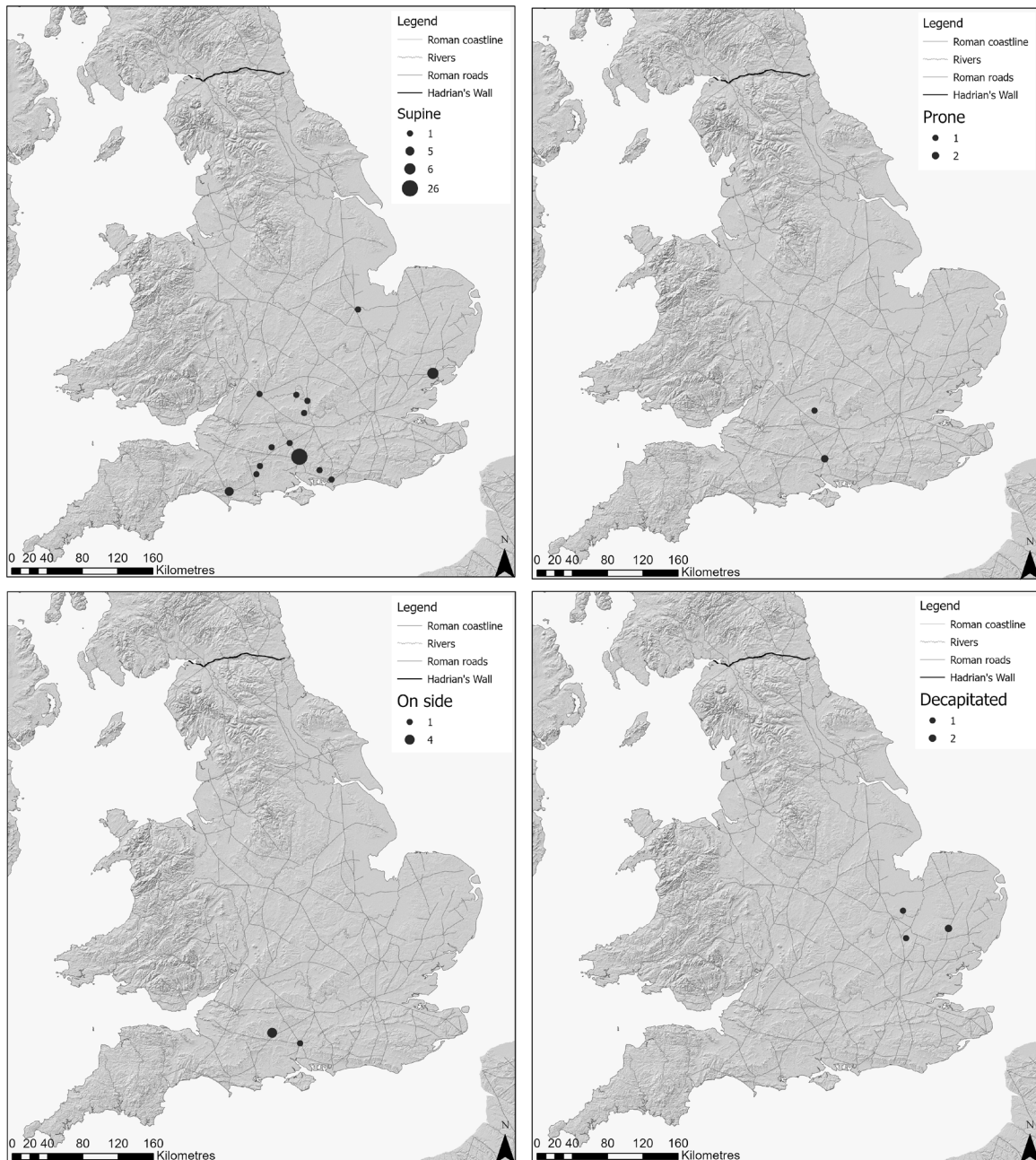


Figure 7.4. Locations of burials by the position of the skeleton.

and one ?male had been buried lying on the right side (26, 124-126) and one woman on her left side (129). All these burials are from southern Britain, with the greatest variation again being at Winchester, and the only four decapitated burials being in the east.

At least three of the decapitated women were over 45 years old, possibly all four. Two, perhaps three, had suffered other wounds (148, 152, 59). Three had been buried in the supine position, whereas the fourth had been buried prone and her comb (152) broken and scattered (see above). Decapitation seems to have been practised more in eastern Britain than in other regions, and, while the reasons for this are not clear, it is generally associated with execution (Wiseman *et al.* 2021: 155-158). Cummings and Hedges 2010 (417-419) noted for Lankhills that prone and decapitated burials were depleted in carbon and, while acknowledging that decapitated burials are not well understood, suggested that these individuals may be of lower socio-economic status, appearing to have had reduced access to animal protein, particularly marine fish.

Burial lying on the side is chiefly evident at Amesbury Down, where it may have been a family or community custom; the only other example is from Winchester. All the Amesbury Down burials were of women, two young, one middle-aged and one elderly, a range that supports the idea of local practice. The Winchester burial may be that of an elderly male, but was initially assessed as an adult female. If there is a specific meaning behind the choice of left and right side then it may refer to the late Roman perception of left (*sinister*) as the most vulnerable to malign attack after death (Crummy 2010: 69). People buried facing right may therefore have been perceived as more able to resist such an attack, but the young woman with comb 129 was buried facing left and so perhaps perceived as already having succumbed.

The burial at Castor, Chesterton, should also be mentioned here (comb 61). Very few bones remained in its stone sarcophagus but those that did were in unusual positions relative to each other. Rodent skeletons found within the sarcophagus may account for some of this disturbance, and removing the bones for cleaning before being photographed resulted in some being misplaced when they were returned, but even so it may be that the body slumped within the sarcophagus as it was lowered into the grave (S. Upex, pers. comm.) This raises the possibility that the positions of some of the other bodies, and therefore also of the combs, are not necessarily the same as those in which they were placed within the coffin before it was buried.

### Ethnicity

Interpretations of the ethnic and social identities attached to composite combs are varied and sometimes conflicting. For example, early studies of Pannonian combs suggested that they should be identified as evidence for Germanic settlers, but they are now regarded as provincial Roman pieces (Bíró 2002: 56, 59-60; Tica 2018: 403). Triangular combs are accepted as Germanic, and in Moesia Superior examples with addorsed horse heads have been associated with Roman auxiliary cavalry units recruited from the *foederati*, while in the more westerly provinces they are generally found with high-status burials and in large towns (Thomas 1960; Petković 1999; 2006; Bíró 2002). The recovery of a triangular comb together with double-cone *tutulus* brooches in a female burial in London's eastern cemetery was said to mark the woman out as an immigrant buried in Germanic costume (Barber and Bowsler 2000: 183-184, 306, 318).

There is no substantive evidence that any individual buried with a composite double-sided comb in late Roman Britain was a Germanic immigrant. On the contrary, highly Romanised funerary rites are evident for all those buried in mausolea and in lead or stone coffins with or without gypsum packing, and for the woman buried at Roden Down in a coffin lined with box leaves (35). The suites of jewellery found in several of the graves are typical of many Romano-British female burials, and in some instances (43, 57, 60) they contain jewellery of specifically Romano-

British type that Swift has demonstrated can be used to identify migrant Romano-Britons in continental cemeteries (2010: 247–253, 271). Most pertinently, isotope analysis of the teeth of a child and three adults buried with composite double-sided combs at Lankhills showed that all were British and only one was unlikely to be local (Eckardt *et al.* 2009: 2821–2822; Cool 2010: 273; Chenery *et al.* 2010: 423–427). The scientific analysis supports the evidence gathered here that the wide distribution and varied social contexts of these combs within Britain are evidence that they were in use by several elements of late Romano-British society, while in a broader sense they belong to the material culture used across the northern provinces that was influenced by the *barbaricum*.

## Chapter 8

### Conclusion

The appearance of antler or bone composite double-sided combs in Britain in the AD 360s sets them among the artefacts that define late 4th and early 5th century finds assemblages and in general terms they are an expression of the increasing influence of northern European material culture on Romano-British artefacts. That they may have been introduced by units of the Roman army is suggested by a number from several military establishments, but their appearance in the burials of women, many of high-status, points rather to their initial arrival through civilian channels, such as trade or inter-provincial migration. They are found in a variety of social contexts, pointing to adoption of the form by both urban and rural populations.

Combs, belt-fittings and other contemporary artefacts all made use of a pool of decorative motifs that stretches across the northern provinces, such as ring-and-dot, lattice work and linear grooving (Hawkes and Dunning 1961: figs 13, 15, 17-19; Simpson 1976: figs 1-2, 4-5; Swift 2000: e.g. figs 48, 173, 179-184, 192, 201, 204; Eckardt and Crummy 2008: 93-96, 126-127). We have seen how the strong stylistic, social and cultural links between composite double-sided combs from Britain and zoomorphic buckles of Hawkes and Dunning types IA-B and IIA-B are strengthened by the appearance of both in the archaeological record within the same comparatively short historical period. Like many of the buckles, most of the combs would have been made in Britain, and this is particularly evident where similar combs occur within the same region. The buckles belong within the milieu of the military and civilian administration (Hawkes and Dunning 1961: 28; Jones 1964: 566; Hawkes 1974: 390-393; Clarke 1979: 288-291) and combs from large towns, villas and military establishments seem chiefly to represent women associated through familial ties to the same group. A difference between the two artefact types is that the belt-fittings were dress accessories worn to be seen by a limited and specific group of individuals or families in late Romano-British society, while combs were probably only seen in public at the baths and it was the end result of their use that was chiefly on show.

#### **Concentrations and gaps**

The combs are found across much of eastern and southern Britain, with Winchester at the centre of their spread in the south and west, Chesterton in the eastern region and York in the north-east, three places with thriving local economies that were also situated at the heart of local road networks and on good long-distance trade routes that enabled their products to be spread out into the surrounding area. The Hadrian's Wall forts could perhaps be classed along with them as a single unit, with several combs coming from the supply depot at South Shields and an unfinished one from Carrawburgh. If these places represent manufacture and trade, then another unfinished

comb from Richborough should be added, although there is no evidence to date for a cluster in that area.

Although no comb-making debris beyond the two unfinished items has been found, a model that best fits all the available evidence is that a workshop for composite double-sided combs was established in Winchester in the 360s, or that a workshop already producing bone and antler artefacts obtained an early imported example, copied it, added similar combs to its repertoire and experimented with the end-plate form. Other workshops may have been established at much the same time at York and Chesterton. The spread of their products to other workshops, other towns and smaller settlements may have triggered less accomplished copying; certainly over time the lively zoomorphs on the end-plates of early examples declined to meaningless forms.

Combs of this type are, though, apparently absent across much of western Britain and also in the Trent Valley, as is also the case with other material culture. This need not imply that the late fourth- and early fifth-century inhabitants of these areas did not comb their hair, rather that their combs have not been found, or may have been made from an organic material that has not survived in the archaeological record, such as horn or the wood of locally-grown trees. Moreover, the discovery of several composite bone or antler combs from the dark earth on a single site in York has shown how one excavation can substantially alter a distribution pattern, and leads to some concern about how many combs may have been lost during nineteenth-century development in York's cemetery areas. The same may yet prove true in other areas of Britain, particularly those towns and cities of Roman origin in the Midlands and north-west that expanded rapidly during the Industrial Revolution and Victorian periods.

An intriguing dissonance within the dataset is that the majority of the combs from burials are from the south and those from non-funerary contexts from the north. The three most northerly examples from burials are from West and North Yorkshire, and again the paucity of clear information for combs in burials at York forms a lacuna here.

### **Burial data and typology**

The majority of double-sided composite combs came from the burials of adult women, generally of child-bearing age. Other grave goods in some of the burials are of valuable materials, including gold and silver, and some women were buried in a stone or lead coffin, sometimes also inside a mausoleum or beneath a small tumulus. A few of the women in the eastern region had been decapitated and two also bore wounds from around the time of death yet had still been formally buried, with a degree of ceremony even evident in the prone burial of a decapitated (and wounded) female from Somersham, Cambridgeshire, whose comb had also been broken and placed in different locations in the grave. The choice of a comb to accompany all these burials, even those with no other grave goods, and even those of children, stresses the role of grooming in declaring status both in life and the afterlife.

There is some doubt over the identification of four of the burials as male. As combs are found on military sites these cannot be absolutely dismissed as errors due to poor bone preservation, yet to date no distinctively Romano-British inhumation containing a well-preserved male skeleton, male-gendered grave goods and a comb of this type has been found. Such a burial may yet be found as the early 5th century was a period of transition and combs do occur in male as well as female graves in early Anglo-Saxon cremations in England (Williams 2003: 105–114).

Very few of the combs can be assigned to a formal type, with the majority being part of a gradual devolution of a design based on dolphins flanking a ball that ultimately became a more or less straight edge marked only by a few small notches. There are stylistic links between these and both horse and owl combs. The distributions of the various groups shown in Table 8.1 and on Figures

| County                              | Horse and allied forms | Dolphin | Complex-ended Dolphin | Swimming Dolphin? | Devolved Dolphin | Dolphin to Owl | Owl and allied form | Straight-centred | Concave | Totals |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------|---------|-----------------------|-------------------|------------------|----------------|---------------------|------------------|---------|--------|
| Hampshire                           | 2                      | -       | -                     | 1                 | 5                | 3              | 5                   | 4                | 4       | 24     |
| Other southern and western counties | -                      | -       | -                     | -                 | 6                | -              | 3                   | 6                | -       | 15     |
| Oxfordshire and Berkshire           | -                      | -       | 1                     | -                 | -                | 1              | 1                   | 2                | 2       | 7      |
| West Sussex and Kent                | -                      | -       | -                     | -                 | -                | -              | 1                   | 3                | 1       | 5      |
| London                              | -                      | -       | 2                     | -                 | -                | -              | -                   | 1                | -       | 3      |
| Essex                               | 2                      | -       | -                     | -                 | 5                | -              | 1                   | 1                | -       | 9      |
| Suffolk and Norfolk                 | -                      | -       | -                     | -                 | 1                | -              | -                   | 2                | 1       | 4      |
| Cambridgeshire and Northamptonshire | 1                      | -       | -                     | -                 | 1                | 1              | -                   | 7                | -       | 10     |
| East and West Yorkshire             | -                      | -       | -                     | -                 | -                | -              | -                   | -                | 2       | 2      |
| North Yorkshire                     | 2                      | 1       | -                     | -                 | 3                | -              | -                   | -                | 1       | 7      |
| York                                | -                      | -       | -                     | -                 | 3                | 3              | -                   | 2                | 1       | 9      |
| Other northern counties             | 1                      | -       | 1                     | -                 | 3                | -              | -                   | 2                | -       | 7      |
| Argyll and Bute                     | -                      | -       | 1                     | -                 | -                | -              | -                   | -                | -       | 1      |
| Totals                              | 8                      | 1       | 5                     | 1                 | 27               | 8              | 11                  | 30               | 12      | 103    |

Table 8.1. Distribution of end-plate forms by county or county groups. Counties are listed in the order used in the Catalogue, starting with Hampshire and radiating outwards, working more or less from west to east, south to north. The county groups are: other southern and western counties ... Somerset, Gloucestershire, Wiltshire, Dorset; other northern counties (below or on Hadrian's Wall) ... Co. Durham, Tyne and Wear, Northumberland.

5.6, 5.9, 5.11, 5.17, 5.20, 5.25 and 5.30 point to some clustering of the zoomorphic forms, but on the whole end-plate forms are found in both the south and the north. This is particularly the case with the Devolved Dolphins, the Straight-centred combs with long connecting-plates and the Concave-ended forms, the first of which arguably represent the move away from Horse and Dolphin combs, the last two, especially the Concave-ended, the very latest forms.

The variety of the combs found at Wellington Row in York seems to point to a recognition that individuals preferred to own a distinctive item, while the fragments from bathhouses provide a context within which there would be a practical advantage in being easily able to identify one's own comb (see Chapter 6: Archaeological contexts). An instantly recognisable special commission is the elaborate comb 2 from Winchester, which was found in a box made specifically for it.

Comb 2 had been repaired, so could not have been made as a grave gift, but some combs may have been made solely as burial deposits. Candidates for an overtly funerary interpretation include the two or three combs from southern Britain with an openwork parade of zoomorphs between two narrow connecting-plates (35, 48, 145), and perhaps some of the combs with owl and horse end-plates (Tables 5.1-5.2).

### Valued objects, further research

That these composite double-sided combs were regarded as not only functionally useful but also valuable is clear from the funerary data and from the recovery of examples from, for example, bathhouses, large towns and villas. The technology used in their manufacture was introduced via the *barbaricum*, as was the choice of strong and durable antler as the preferred material. Their deposition in Romano-British graves, several of which were the burials of demonstrably elite women, shows that they not only conferred status on their owners and testified to that status

## CONCLUSION

within the family and the community, but they also marked the settlements where such burials were concentrated as economically successful.

The types of materials used in the manufacture of one-piece combs and the use of cremation as the burial rite has obscured how often combs were selected as grave goods in Roman Britain before the later 4th century, but the funerary deposition of antler composite combs ran seamlessly from the latest Roman inhumations to the inhumations and cremations of the early Anglo-Saxon period. This continuum has only lightly been touched upon here, and further research examining the end-plates of combs from Migration Period cemeteries might prove fruitful in characterising the integration, or subsuming, of the late Roman populations of eastern and southern Britain by the new populations from Scandinavia and the European mainland.

## Catalogue

Unless stated otherwise, the form of the comb is composite, double-sided, and with a single pair of connecting-plates. All measurements are in millimetres.

Abbreviations: e-p...end-plate(s), c-p...connecting plate(s), t-p...tooth-plate(s). Measurements are in millimetres. Lankhills Cl refers to Clarke's excavations of the 1960s and 1970s (Clarke 1979), Lankhills OA to those of Oxford Archaeology South in 2000-2005 (Booth *et al.* 2010). Gowland's revised age/sex data for the Lankhills Cl excavations is generally used here, as summarised in Cool 2010 (273), although the age assessment for young children from Clarke 1979 (table 2) is preferred over Gowland's 'infants', and jewellery and spindlewhorls are accepted as evidence that a burial is of a female, as in Lankhills Cl graves 369 and 396. Summaries of the data for the Lankhills Cl burials are given in Clarke 1979 (table 2).

The catalogue is divided into four sections. The first three are: combs from inhumation burials, other combs from cemeteries that are probably disturbed grave goods, and combs from non-funerary contexts. Within those sections the combs are listed by county, radiating outwards from Hampshire and working more or less west to east and south to north. Burials are supine unless described as otherwise. The fourth section is a list of other sites with combs that are not catalogued here for various reasons but were used for the main distribution map (Figure 6.1).

### Combs from inhumation burials

#### Hampshire

Figure 5.5, 1. Winchester, Hants. Hyde Street, grave 5, mid 4th to early 5th century; female, 25-35 years; comb by left shoulder near head. SF HYS 17, complete. Horse Group 1: e-p of profiled horse heads; c-p with stepped margins and quincunxes of a double ring-and-dot within a frame of four single ring-and-dots; five iron rivets. L 114, W 63, W c-p 20. Crummy 2001: table 1, fig. 3, a; Rees *et al.* 2008: 64-65, fig. 33, 312; Ottaway *et al.* 2012: 293-294.

Figure 5.2, 2. Winchester, Hants. St Martin's Close, Winnall, grave 36, limestone and ceramic roof tile fragments within the coffin were presumably originally placed on the lid and then when it collapsed they fell on top of the body (P. Ottaway, pers. comm.; cf. Ottaway *et al.* 2012: pl. 45 for a grave of this type from the same cemetery); c. AD 370 to 5th century; female, 17-25 years; comb in bone veneered wooden

box by head. SF SMCW 331, complete. As Horse Group 1: e-p of complex profiled horse heads; c-p with low convex profile, marginal grooves, divided by two longitudinal grooves into three narrow bands each with rows of single ring-and-dots, eight in the outer rows, seven in the central one; iron rivets including a repair at one end. L 127, W 64, W c-p 23. Associated deposits: bone veneered wooden box. Morris 1986; Philpott 1991: table A36; Crummy 2001: table 1, fig. 3, b; Rees *et al.* 2008: 66, fig. 35, 315; Ottaway *et al.* 2012: 337, pl. 146.

3. Winchester, Hants. St Martin's Close, Winnall, grave F57, gypsum-filled lead coffin within ash coffin, one of two burials covered by a mound of chalk within a masonry structure (mausoleum or walled enclosure), c. AD 370 to 5th century; female, 25-35 years; poorly-preserved comb inside lead coffin, position uncertain. SF SMCW 116, fragment. E-p missing; largest c-p fragment has stepped profile with flat top divided into two zones by transverse groove (one zone has four small single ring-and-

dots set in an elongated lozenge, the other a pair of diagonal grooves); iron rivets. L -, W -, W c-p 21. Associated deposits: gold thread from embroidery, wooden furniture (?boxes). Philpott 1991: table A36; Rees *et al.* 2008: 66, fig. 34, 314; Ottaway *et al.* 2012: 190–193, 339.

Figures 1.1, and 5.21, **4**. Winchester, Hants. Victoria Road, grave 57b, c. AD 340/350–390; female, 17–25 years; comb by head. SF VR 705, complete. Owl Group 2: e-p with straight-centre, upswept sides, double ring-and-dot ‘eyes’; c-p flat with bevelled sides and row of double ring-and-dots set as pairs between four iron rivets. L 89, W 60, W c-p 17. Rees *et al.* 2008: 64, fig. 33, 311; Ottaway *et al.* 2012: 279, fig. 110.

Figure 5.19, **5**. Winchester, Hants. Victoria Road, grave 1, c. AD 390–early 5th century; female, age 17–23 years; comb by head. SF VR 1, fragment. Owl Group 1: e-p with notched centre, feathering over large holes (‘eyes’), ear tufts at sides; c-p stepped and plain; iron rivets. L >56, W 54, W c-p 15. Crummy 2001: table 1; Rees *et al.* 2008: 65–6, fig. 34, 313; Ottaway *et al.* 2012: 271.

**6**. Winchester, Hants. Victoria Road, grave 52, c. AD 390–early 5th century; adolescent, 15–17 years, sex uncertain; poorly-preserved comb, position not recorded. SF VR 495, incomplete. E-p form uncertain; c-p with bevelled long sides and four groups of transverse grooves between five iron rivets. L >117, W (?>47, W c-p 15. Rees *et al.* 2008: 66, fig. 35, 316; Ottaway *et al.* 2012: 277.

**7**. Winchester, Hants. Victoria Road, grave 94, c. AD 390–early 5th century; mixed adult female and adolescent bones found after section collapse; comb position unknown. SF VR 776/941, incomplete. Concave Group: e-p plain; c-p plain with bevelled long sides; three iron rivets. L 101, W 50, W c-p 14. Crummy 2001: table 1; Rees *et al.* 2008: 66, fig. 35, 317; Ottaway *et al.* 2012: 286.

**8**. Winchester, Hants. Lankhills Cl, grave 5, AD 310–350; young adult, sex indeterminate in Clarke 1979, table 2, but ?male, 18–24 years in Gowland 2002, appendix 1.1.1.5; poorly-preserved comb near head. Object 9, fragment. E-p missing; c-p stepped and decorated with six motifs of a large double ring-and-dot within frame of small single ring-and-dots; seven iron rivets. L >104, W >21, W c-p 15. Associated deposits: pottery flagon to left of skull; hobnails near feet. Galloway 1979: 247, fig. 31, 9; Cool 2010: table 4.17.

**9**. Winchester, Hants. Lankhills Cl, grave 17, AD 365–390; female, 30/35 years; poorly-preserved comb on right shoulder. Object 19, fragment. Straight-

centred Group: e-p has a straight centre flanked by convexities above a perforation and a group of four single ring-and-dots; c-p stepped and decorated with two single ring-and-dots between iron rivets. L >50, W >46, W c-p 12. Galloway 1979: 247, fig. 31, 19; Cool 2010: table 4.17.

Figure 5.29, **10**. Winchester, Hants. Lankhills Cl, grave 63, AD 370–380; adult female; isotope analysis, British, probably local; comb to right of right ankle. Object 64, fragment. Straight-centred Group: e-p has plain flat centre and swept down sides, much like Owl Group 2; c-p stepped and plain; iron rivets. L >83, W >49, W c-p 17. Associated deposits: pottery flagon, glass beaker, bone bracelet, bead necklace. Galloway 1979: 247, fig. 31, 64; Evans *et al.* 2006: 271 (where 66 is a typographical error for 63); Cool 2010: 273, table 4.17.

Figure 5.22, **11**. Winchester, Hants. Lankhills Cl, grave 333, AD 390–410; child of 3.5 years, sex indeterminate but female from grave deposits; isotope analysis, British, probably local; comb against left side of head. Object 316, complete. Owl Group 3: e-p with a straight-centred central label with two large perforations and swept-up corners with single ring-and-dot, in the field are circular motifs with three ring-and-dots (see comb **78** from Cirencester and **137** from Malton for other examples of this design); c-p stepped and decorated with four panels of geometric designs between five iron rivets (lattice within pairs of transverse grooves in the end panels, saltires between pairs of transverse grooves in the centre panels). L 97, W 56, W c-p 17. Associated deposits: glass jug, pottery beaker, two copper-alloy and one ivory bracelet, bead necklace. Galloway 1979: 247, fig. 31, 316; Evans *et al.* 2006: 271; Cool 2010: 273, table 4.17.

Figure 5.15, **12**. Winchester, Hants. Lankhills Cl, grave 297, AD 390–410; adult female; comb beneath left shoulder (prone burial). Object 323, complete. Dolphin to Owl Group: e-p with alternating mounds and points and two large perforations; c-p plain with bevelled long sides and stepped short sides; four iron rivets, L 104, W 55, W c-p 15. Galloway 1979: 247, fig. 31, 323; Cool 2010: 273.

Figure 5.31, **13**. Winchester, Hants. Lankhills Cl, grave 288, AD 390–410; female, 25+ years; comb by right knee. Object 471, incomplete. Concave Group: e-p concave with slight grooves defining the central area and the corners and three small perforations set close to the edge (one in the centre and one towards each corner); c-p plain with bevelled long sides and stepped short sides; five iron rivets. L 123, W 62, W c-p 19. Associated deposit: pottery jug to left of head. Galloway 1979: 247, fig. 31, 471; Crummy 2001: table 1; Cool 2010: table 4.17.

Figure 5.10, **14**. Winchester, Hants. Lankhills Cl, grave 365, AD 370-390; female, 30/35 years; comb beneath(?) head. Object 473, incomplete. Swimming Dolphin?: e-p with rippled centre formed by short peaks flanked by a mound before a grooved corner, one corner at each end has a small perforation ('eye?') below the mound; with the perforated corner as a dolphin's head the other could be the tail; c-p plain apart from longitudinal marginal grooves, bevelled long sides and stepped short sides; five iron rivets. L 103, W 57, W c-p 19. Associated deposits: two coins, Constans AD 335-337, Valens AD 364-378, deposition date assessed at c. AD 370-380. Galloway 1979: 247, fig. 31, 473; Cool 2010: table 4.17.

Figure 5.15, **15**. Winchester, Hants. Lankhills Cl, grave 381, AD 390-410; female, 25-35 years; poorly-preserved comb beneath left shoulder (prone burial). Object 479, incomplete. Dolphin to Owl Group: e-p with worn profile devolved from dolphins but with swept-up corners, and with two large perforations; c-p convex and plain, edges missing; five iron rivets. L 122, W 55, W c-p >9 (probably 14). Associated deposit: coin, House of Valentinian AD 364-378, deposition date assessed at c. AD 375-385. Galloway 1979: 247, fig. 31, 479; Cool 2010: table 4.17.

**16**. Winchester, Hants. Lankhills Cl, grave 402, AD 390-410; female, 25/30 years; poorly-preserved comb on or under neck. Object 482, fragment. E-p missing; c-p apparently plain and convex; nine iron rivets. L >118, W >25, W c-p >12. Galloway 1979: 247, fig. 31, 482; Cool 2010: 273.

Figure 5.22, **17**. Winchester, Hants. Lankhills Cl, grave 413, AD 390-410; identified as male, aged 20/25 years in Clarke (1979: table 2), but in Gowland (2002: Appendix 1.1.1.5) as female?, aged 35-49, which is used here; comb to left of head. Object 521, incomplete. Owl Group 3: e-p much like comb **11** but concave and with three perforations instead of two in the label, and no incised decoration; c-p stepped with four single ring-and-dots set in a lozenge between five iron rivets. L 94, W 60, W c-p 17. Associated deposits: five coins, Theodosius I AD 388-395 (two), House of Theodosius AD 388-402, Arcadius AD 388-402, illegible 4th century. Galloway 1979: 247, fig. 31, 521; Cool 2010: 273.

**18**. Winchester, Hants. Lankhills Cl, grave 436, AD 380-410; mature adult female; poorly-preserved comb on chest. Object 585, fragment. E-p missing; c-p plain but, unusually, with transverse pairs of iron rivets. L >29, W >24, W c-p 19. Galloway 1979: 247, fig. 31, 585; Cool 2010: table 4.17.

**19**. Winchester, Hants. Lankhills Cl, grave 422, AD 390-410; adult, sex indeterminate; poorly-preserved

comb to right of head. Object 601, fragment. E-p missing; c-p with bevelled sides and motifs of a large double ring-and-dot framed by four small single ring-and-dots; iron rivets. L 34, W 24, W c-p 15. Galloway 1979: 247, fig. 31, 601; Cool 2010: table 4.17.

**20**. Winchester, Hants. Lankhills Cl, grave 446, AD 370-410; older adult female; poorly-preserved comb to right of head. Object 610, fragment. Devolved Dolphin Group: e-p poorly preserved, but with central mound over perforation, flanked by points and fluid sides; c-p stepped, plain; rivets missing. L >75, W >37, W c-p >14. Galloway 1979: 247, fig. 31, 610; Cool 2010: table 4.17.

A further six burials at Lankhills Cl contained composite combs, but they were too fragmentary for the form to be positive identified (Galloway 1979: 248; Cool 2010: table 4.17).

Grave 254, AD 365-390, older adult, sex indeterminate. Object 225.

Grave 290, AD 390-410, aged 4 years. Object 309.

Grave 369, AD 370-410, adult female. Object 557. Associated deposits: four copper-alloy bracelets (one a toothed cogwheel), pottery beaker, glass beaker.

Grave 396, AD 370-390, adult female. Object 531. Associated deposits: one bone and one copper-alloy bracelet, iron ?needle, glass beaker, shale spindlewhorl.

Grave 423, AD 370-390, adult, 25/30 years, sex indeterminate. Object 595.

Grave 438, AD 360-370/80, adult female. Object 584. Associated deposits: sixteen(?) bracelets (three copper-alloy (one a toothed cogwheel), one iron, one bone, eleven(?) ivory), eight finger-rings (three silver, three copper-alloy, two shale), coral and glass bead necklace(s), iron pin or needle.

**21**. Winchester, Hants. Lankhills OA, grave 530, later than AD 360; female, 45+ years; isotope analysis, British, probably local; poorly-preserved comb on chest. No. 530.1, fragments. E-p form uncertain; c-p has bevelled long sides, otherwise uncertain; iron rivets. L -, W >38, W c-p 15? Booth *et al.* 2010, 91, fig. 3.55; Cool 2010: table 4.17; Eckardt *et al.* 2009: 2821, sample AY21-0435; Chenery *et al.* 2010: 426, table 5.60.

**22**. Winchester, Hants. Lankhills OA, grave 810, later than AD 360; adult, sex undetermined; poorly-preserved comb on left shoulder. No. 810.1, fragments. Devolved Dolphin Group: e-p with a small central mound flanked by indented points and long fluid sides; c-p stepped, plain?; iron rivets. L -, W > 42, W c-p 15?. Booth *et al.* 2010: 121-3; Cool 2010: table 4.17.

**23.** Winchester, Hants. Lankhills OA, grave 1270, later than AD 360; female, 60+ years; isotope analysis, British, possibly not local but from western or northern Britain; poorly-preserved comb by right thigh. No. 1270.1, fragments. Straight-centred Group: e-p plain, straight-centred with swept-up sides, much like Owl Group 2, very similar to comb **10**; c-p stepped, plain, runs to the edge of the end-plate; iron rivets. L -, W >35, W c-p 14. Booth *et al.* 2010: 167-8; Cool 2010: table 4.17; Eckardt *et al.* 2009: 2822, sample AY21-1197; Chenerey *et al.* 2010: 426, table 5.60.

**24.** Winchester, Hants. Lankhills OA, grave 1280, later than AD 360; adult ?female; isotope analysis, British, probably local; poorly-preserved comb on chest (inside left arm). No. 1280.1, fragments. E-p missing; c-p missing; four iron and six copper-alloy rivets survive; the shanks of the latter are tubular. L -, W -, W c-p -. Booth *et al.* 2010: 168-9; Cool 2010: table 4.17; Eckardt *et al.* 2009: 2821, sample AY21-1207; Chenerey *et al.* 2010: 426, table 5.60.

**25.** Winchester, Hants. Lankhills OA, grave 1355, late 4th century; child; isotope analysis, British, probably local; comb by left foot. No. 1355.1, fragments. Straight-centred Group: e-p profile at the better preserved end probably as comb **9**, but e-p otherwise plain apart from at least one perforation, two larger perforations at the more decayed end; c-p convex with longitudinal marginal grooves, traces of incised saltires; iron rivets. L -, W >43, W c-p >13. Associated deposits: silver buckle pin, iron pin. Booth *et al.* 2010: 180-181; Cool 2010: table 4.17; Chenerey *et al.* 2010: 426, table 5.60.

Figure 5.33, **26.** Winchester, Hants. Eagle Hotel, Andover Road, grave 311 (flint packing), late 4th to early 5th century; elderly male (initially assessed as adult female); body lay on right side, the comb beneath the chest. SF 44, fragments. Concave Group: as comb **7**, e-p concave and plain; c-p plain convex; six iron rivets. L 126 approx., W 66, W c-p 19. Associated deposits: coin of Magnus Maximus, AD 387-8; hobnails from worn leather footwear. Teague 1999: 49, 52; 2012: 124, 127; Ottaway *et al.* 2012: 299.

**27.** Winchester, Hants. Winchester Hotel, Worthy Lane, grave 1039; female, 30-40 years; poorly-preserved comb on chest. Object 240, incomplete. Concave Group: e-p concave with large triple ring-and-dots; c-p stepped with plain flat top; iron rivets. L -, W 68, W c-p -. Cooke 2009: 22, pl. 1; Winchester City Museum AY 332.

**28.** Winchester, Hants. Winchester Hotel, Worthy Lane, grave 2022; female, c. 35-45 years; position of comb uncertain. Object 856, fragment. Dolphin to Owl Group(?): e-p with two large perforations as

comb **12**; c-p missing; iron rivets. L -, W 57, W c-p -. Cooke 2009: 22; Winchester City Museum AY 332.

**29.** Winchester, Hants. Winchester Hotel, Worthy Lane, grave 2045; female, c. 20-30 years; position of comb uncertain. Object 873, very poorly-preserved fragments, ?double-sided. E-p missing; c-p missing; iron rivets. L -, W -, W c-p -. Associated deposit: coin of Valens, AD 366. Cooke 2009: 22; Winchester City Museum AY 332.

**30.** Winchester, Hants. Winchester Hotel, Worthy Lane, grave 2056; female, c. 18-23 years; position of comb uncertain. Object 855, very poorly-preserved fragments. E-p missing; c-p missing; iron rivets. L -, W -, W c-p -. Associated deposit: iron needle. Cooke 2009: 22-3; Winchester City Museum AY 332.

**123.** Winchester, Hants. SCATS depot, Hyde Church Lane; adult female, grave pit capped by a chalk tumulus; comb by head, catalogued from a sketch made on site by S. Ward-Evans. E-p missing; c-p decorated with zigzag of large (double?) ring-and-dots; iron rivets. L -, W-, W c-p -. Comb identified at British Museum in 1929 as 6th-century Saxon, but grave in area of northern cemetery in use from c. AD 350 to the early 5th century and with no recorded post-Roman burials. Zigzag pattern of ring-and-dots on c-p unusual for late Roman period, so acceptance of this comb as Roman is qualified. Taylor and Collingwood 1929: 206; Clarke 1979: 6-7, no. 18; Philpott 1991: table A36; Ottaway *et al.* 2012: 246, no. 18, second frontispiece.

Figure 5.21, **31.** Andover, Hants. Winchester Street, grave 8, AD 375-400+; probably young adult female (with foetal bone); comb complete, but position not recorded (machine excavation). Owl Group 2: e-p as comb **4**; c-p stepped with decoration of five double ring-and-dots alternating with six iron rivets. L 107, W 59, W c-p 16. Associated grave deposits: two bone bracelets, iron knife. Jennings 2000: 121, 126-7, fig. 13.

**32.** Snell's Corner, Clanfield, near Horndean, Hants. Inhumation grave RB5, 4th century; older adult female; comb on left side of chest. Devolved Dolphin Group, e-p with straight rippled centre flanked on each side by a mound above a small hole, a concave notch, two points and a rounded corner; c-p flat?, with saltires of paired incised grooves between seven iron rivets. The connecting-plate edges are not shown as notched in the published illustration (Knocker 1955: fig. 9, RB.5), but the drawing is very rudimentary and such small details may have been considered insignificant. L 133, W 67, W c-p 19. Knocker 1955: 125, 145, fig. 9, RB.5; Philpott 1991: table A36.

**Oxfordshire**

Figure 5.31, **33**. Dorchester-on-Thames, Oxon. Queenford Farm, grave F11, excavator's date for grave late 5th to 6th century, stylistically comb is early 5th; female, >40 years; comb to left of head. Complete. Concave Group: e-p concave with a double ring-and-dot on each side; c-p stepped, flat top has five large double ring-and-dots between six iron rivets. L 118, W 60, W c-p 16. Rankov 1982: 367; Chambers 1987: 50, 58; Philpott 1991: table A36.

Figure 5.31, **34**. Tubney Wood, Oxon. Grave 1661, lined with limestone slabs, late Roman, C14 dated to AD 255-390 (95% confidence); male?, 26-35 years?, but the excavators noted that 'this should be treated with some caution as no post-cranial sexually diagnostic elements survived, and the skull was fragmented and rather eroded, resulting in some ambiguity in the attribution of sex'; comb found behind the skull. Incomplete. Concave Group: e-p concave, one has a group of three single ring-and-dots on one side; c-p stepped, with (varying) groups of single ring-and-dots between six iron rivets. L 118, W 53, W c-p 20. Associated deposits: House of Valentinian coin (AD 364-378), hobnails from area of feet. Grant and Scott 2011; Simmonds et al. 2011: 117, 133-134, 172, tables 9 and 11.

Figure 4.7, **145**. Childrey Warren, near Letcombe Bassett, Oxfordshire. Grave 2043, Sk 2044, prime adult female (25-35 years); only a well-preserved fragment of this comb was deposited, tucked beneath the head. RA no 32, (2045), fragment. Form with two narrow connecting-plates. Straight-centred Group: e-p straight-centred, slightly fluid sides, three ring-and-dots set in a triangle; c-p run to the edge of the e-p, plain apart from fine marginal grooves; openwork area between c-p had a line of animals; iron rivets (three present). L >28, W 65; W c-p 5. Crummy 2023; Guarino and Barclay 2023, 48-9, 72-3, 171.

**Berkshire**

**35**. Roden Down, Compton, Berks. Inhumation grave 5, lead coffin in ?lidless wooden coffin, late 4th century; female, 50+ years; very poorly-preserved comb on right side of chest. As reconstructed in Hood and Walton 1948, the comb is the type with two pairs of narrow c-ps and openwork centre, all fragments too decayed for details of decoration to be certain but e-p and c-p form appear as **48** from London; iron rivets. L >63, W 41 approx., W c-p >4. Associated deposits: two coins of Valens, AD 364-378, in purse or box with comb on chest, colour-coat beaker, box leaves scattered on floor of lead coffin. Hood and Walton 1948: 21, 39, fig. 11, 8; Toller 1977: 30, 63, no. 1; Philpott 1991: table A36.

**West Sussex**

Figure 5.21, **36**. Chichester, W. Sussex. Westgate cemetery, grave 21, late Roman; female, 17-25 years; comb position not given. Fragment. Owl Group 2: e-p with double ring-and-dot eyes; c-p has bevelled long sides, flat top decorated with large double ring-and-dots between iron rivets, incomplete and number between each rivet uncertain. L >50, W 48, W c-p 15. Down and Magilton 1993: fig. 28.6, 2.

**Wiltshire**

Figure 5.13, **37**. Easton Hill, Wilts. Inhumation grave, no further details; position not given. Incomplete. Devolved Dolphin Group: e-p has pointed convex centre flanked, in succession, by a blunt point, a deep rounded hollow and a raised corner (damaged on both sides); c-p profile uncertain, decorated with three transverse grooves between iron rivets. L >88, W 63, W c-p 20. Associated deposit: iron knife with wooden handle. *Devizes Museum Catalogue* 1934: 239, no. 5, pl. 81.

**124**. Amesbury Down, Amesbury, Wilts. Grave 1094, late Roman; elderly adult female (>55 years) lying on right side (burial 1096); comb on neck below chin. C14 analysis of the comb and the skeletal bone gave an *earliest* date for both of the second half of the 4th century. ON 6155, fragment. Devolved Dolphin Group, with complex edge: e-p has straight central section divided into two by a notch, small perforations below each half, flanked, in succession, by a rounded convexity with small central perforation, a plain convexity and a swept-up corner; c-p stepped, plain, iron rivets. L >58, W 60, W c-p 21. Information kindly provided by N. Cooke and R. Seager Smith, Wessex Archaeology.

**125**. Amesbury Down, Amesbury, Wilts. Grave 1296, late Roman; adolescent female, 16-18 years approx., lying on right side (burial 1313); comb in front of chest near right arm. Isotope analysis of this individual pointed to a childhood spent on chalklands and so to an almost certainly local origin, and C14 analysis of the skeletal bone gave an *earliest* date for the burial of the second half of the 4th century. ON 6194, incomplete. As Owl Group 2: e-p plain, usually with low convex centre and swept down sides but one end is straight-centred (see Straight-Centred Group with Owl 2 profile); c-p plain with bevelled edges, runs to the edge, six iron rivets. L 82, W 50, W c-p 12. Information kindly provided by N. Cooke and R. Seager Smith, Wessex Archaeology.

**126**. Amesbury Down, Amesbury, Wilts. Grave 5059, late Roman; skeletal material poorly-preserved, adult female(?), (>35 years), lying on right side (burial 5060);

comb immediately behind head. ON 6831, incomplete. Straight-centred Group: e-p very slightly concave, straight central section flanked by slight grooves matching grooves on the edge of the c-p; c-p stepped, plain, runs to the edge of the e-p; iron rivets. L 92, W 50, W c-p 16. Associated deposits: three coins (?in mouth), two House of Valentinian AD 364-378, one Theodosius I (rev. *Victoria Avggg*) AD 388-395; late 3rd- or 4th-century flanged New Forest red slipped ware bowl (Fulford 1975, type 63); miniature greyware jar/bowl, AD 330-400 (as Fulford 1975, type 57, c. AD 330-400). Information kindly provided by N. Cooke and R. Seager Smith, Wessex Archaeology.

**127.** Amesbury Down, Amesbury, Wilts. Grave 12564, late Roman; adult female (40-45 years approx.), (burial 12566); comb found near skull. ON 11847, fragments. E-p missing; c-p fragments only; iron rivets. Information kindly provided by N. Cooke and R. Seager Smith, Wessex Archaeology.

**128.** Amesbury Down, Amesbury, Wilts. Grave 12463, adult female (>45 years), (burial 12464). ON 11846, fragments. E-p missing; c-p fragments only; iron rivets. Associated deposits: nailed footwear (not worn); Oxfordshire red colour-coated ware necked bowl (Young 1977, 164, type C75, c. AD 325-400). Information kindly provided by N. Cooke and R. Seager Smith, Wessex Archaeology.

**129.** Amesbury Down, Amesbury, Wilts. Grave 12478, late Roman; adult female(?), 18-21 years approx., lying on left side (burial 1287); comb at head end of coffin, beyond top of head. ON11074: fragment. Devolved Dolphin Group (no ball): e-p has large concave indentation at centre, flanked by shallower indentations, corners missing; c-p has diagonal grooves between rivets. L >30, W >34, W c-p >6. Information kindly provided by N. Cooke and R. Seager Smith, Wessex Archaeology.

### Dorset

**38.** Poundbury, Dorset. Grave 8, a gypsum burial in a stone coffin in mausoleum R2, late Roman; age and sex uncertain; very poorly-preserved comb near head. BO 1, fragments. E-p profile uncertain, has double ring-and dot decoration; c-p missing; iron rivets. L -, W -, W c-p -. Galloway 1993: 108, 110; Farwell and Molleson 1993: fig. 35.

**39.** Poundbury, Dorset. Grave 173 in mausoleum R8, late Roman; female, >25 years; very poorly-preserved comb on chest. BO 65, fragments. E-p missing; c-p missing; iron rivets. L -, W -, W c-p -. Galloway 1993: 108, 110; Farwell and Molleson 1993: fig. 41.

Figure 5.12, **40.** Poundbury, Dorset. Grave 485, late Roman; female, 36-45 years; comb to left of head.

BO 28, incomplete. Devolved Dolphin Group: e-p with convex centre flanked by points and swept-up corners, single small perforation on one side; c-p stepped and plain; four iron rivets. L >101, W 54, W c-p 15. Galloway 1993: 108, 110, fig. 78, 1; Farwell and Molleson 1993: fig. 60; Crummy 2001: table 1.

Figure 5.28, **41.** Poundbury, Dorset. Grave 517, gypsum burial in a stone coffin in mausoleum R10, late Roman; female, 35 years; comb near head. BO 39, incomplete. Straight-centred Group: e-p profiling minimal, small points and straight sides flank a straight/very slightly convex centre, three angled grooves at one side on one end; c-p stepped and plain; six iron rivets. L 91, W 58, W c-p 19. Other grave deposits: copper-alloy finger-ring. Galloway 1993: 108, 110, fig. 78, 2; Farwell and Molleson 1993: fig. 43.

Figure 5.26, **42.** Poundbury, Dorset. Grave 611, late Roman; female, 25 years; poorly-preserved comb to left of head. BO 47, incomplete. Straight-centred Group: e-p has straight centre flanked by deep hollows; c-p plain with bevelled sides; five iron rivets. L >90, W 54, W c-p 15. Galloway 1993: 108, 110, fig. 78, 3; Farwell and Molleson 1993: fig. 60.

**43.** Poundbury, Dorset. Grave 1122, late Roman; female, 25 years; comb to left of head. BO 61, very decayed, perhaps not double-sided: e-p missing; c-p missing; iron rivets. L -, W -, W c-p -. Associated deposits to right of head: seven copper-alloy bracelets (including two of multiple-motif type), bone bracelet, glass and coral bead necklace. Galloway 1993: 108, 110; Farwell and Molleson 1993: fig. 59.

Figure 5.13, **44.** Poundbury, Dorset. Grave 1194, late Roman; female, 36-45 years; comb near head. SF 110, incomplete. Devolved Dolphin Group: e-p with convex centre flanked by points and swept-up corners; c-p stepped and decorated with six quincunxes of single ring-and-dots set between seven iron rivets. L >116, W 50, W c-p 18. Associated deposits: iron pin. Galloway 1993: 110, fig. 78, 4. Davies and Grieve 1987: fig. 9; Crummy 2001: table 1.

**45.** Woodyates, Dorset. Inhumation grave, c. AD 350-400; age/sex uncertain; comb on chest. Incomplete. Straight-centred Group: e-p has straight centre flanked by small hollows and swept out sides; c-p stepped and plain; iron rivets, but possibly also copper-alloy rivets: '*It appears to have been held originally by bronze rivets, but was afterwards repaired by iron ones*' (Ward 1911: 264). L >86, W >51, W c-p approx 14. Associated deposits: flagon ('pitcher'). Pitt-Rivers 1892, 15, 132, 211, pl. 182, 2, pl 194, fig. 10; Ward 1911: 264, fig. 63, E; Greep 1983: fig. 237, 22; Philpott 1991: table A36.

A second comb from Woodyates is listed in Greep 1983: 756, no. 313 (Pitt Rivers 1892: pl. 182, 3).

Figure 5.23, **151**. Gussage All Saints, Dorset. Burial 1, late 4th century; female, young adult; comb on chest. SF 1, complete. Owl Group 3: e-p concave, with a central label with two points and a large perforation (framed 'eye') on each side; the perforation partly cuts into the concave edge, with the material around the hole trimmed to resemble a tapering arch; at the base these arches are not attached to the concave edge of the e-p but probably did so originally, as on **153** from Dorchester-on-Thames; c-p runs to the edge of the e-p, it is stepped, with pairs of transverse grooves between each rivet, and is only slightly marked by tooth-cutting; there is an iron rivet at each end of the comb and five more along the body of the comb, alternating with five copper-alloy rivets which appear to be purely decorative as only those of iron were essential in fixing the elements of the comb together; on one face some of the iron rivets appear to be covered in flat antler or bone caps, which, considering where the comb lay, is probably human bone attached by iron corrosion products; one copper-alloy rivet shows that they were hollow tubes with flat caps. Associated deposits: shale spindle-whorl. L 113, W 54, W c-p 13. Excavated by Martin Green in 2003.

### Somerset

**46**. Northover, Ilchester, Somerset. Inhumation grave, 4th century; found c. 1840, no further details. Only two t-p fragments remain. L >33, W >58, W c-p 16 (from scars on t-p). Associated deposits: gold bracelet, copper-alloy brooch and ?bracelet. Leach 1980: 357; Leach 1982: 262, fig. 128, 57–58; Philpott 1991: table A36. Taunton Museum Collection.

### Gloucestershire

Figure 5.19, **47**. Cirencester, Glos. Bath Gate, inhumation grave 175, late 4th to 5th century; female, 50–60 years; comb on chest. Incomplete. Owl Group 1: e-p with broad central notch flanked by feathered flat sections over large perforations, then deep angled notches to delineate corners (ears); c-p convex with marginal grooves on long sides; four iron rivets. L >97 (estimated 109), W 57, W c-p 14. McWhirr *et al.* 1982: 129, fig. 80, 175; Philpott 1991: table A36.

### London

Figure 4.6, **48**. London. Giltspur Street, western cemetery, inhumation grave [426], 4th century; no age/sex information; comb below head. WES89 <46>, incomplete. Form with two narrow connecting-

plates. Straight-centred Group: e-p centre straight, sides slightly concave; c-p plain, long sides bevelled; exposed areas of e-p and t-p cut into zoomorphic and geometric shapes; iron rivets. L 112, W 55, W c-p 6. Museum of London Archaeological Archive.

### Buckinghamshire

**49**. Dropshort Farm (*Magiovinium*), Fenny Stratford, Bucks. Area 17, Burial 1519, late 4th to early 5th century; female, 25–35 years, supine; position of comb not known. AML 7711281; 17-L1511, fragments. E-p poorly-preserved and its form when complete is uncertain, a slightly concave centre is flanked by mounds, at least one of which lies above a large perforation, corners missing; c-p fragments have pairs of parallel grooves on the long sides; four iron rivets/rivet holes remain. L >55, W >23, W c-p 18. Neal 1987: 22, 50, fig. 27, 98; Philpott 1991: table A36.

**50**. Bledlow-cum-Saunderton, Bucks. Rye Close Field, Lodge Hill Farm, grave 2, disturbed inhumation; comb fragments only, possibly intrusive. Collard and Parkhouse 1993: 72.

### Essex

**51**. Colchester, Essex. Butt Road, grave 109, AD 380+; (female) child, 4–5 years; poorly-preserved comb in pile of jewellery to right of head. SF BUC 325, fragment. E-p missing; c-p convex and plain; iron rivets. L >70, W -, W c-p 13. Associated deposits: bone bracelet, iron bracelet, two copper-alloy bracelets. Crummy 1983: 56, fig. 58, 1853; Philpott 1991: table A36; Crummy *et al.* 1993: 146–147, tables 2.58, 2.67.

**52**. Colchester, Essex. Butt Road, grave 174, AD 365+; adult female; poorly-preserved comb in pile of jewellery to left of head. SF BUC 399, fragment. E-p very decayed, form uncertain; c-p decayed, stepped, but probably otherwise plain; iron rivets. L >69, W 60 approx., W c-p 19. Associated deposits: silver hairpin, shale bracelet, copper-alloy bracelet, bead necklace, silver finger-ring, glass Frontinus bottle. Crummy 1983: 56, fig. 58, 1854; Philpott 1991: table A36; Crummy *et al.* 1993: 146–147, tables 2.58, 2.67; Cool and Price 1995: 204.

Figure 5.14, **53**. Colchester, Essex. Butt Road, grave 258, AD 365+; (adult) male; comb to right of head. SF BUC 487, incomplete. Devolved Dolphin Group: e-p with notched centre flanked by gentle concave curves and slightly upswept corners, diagonal grooves across the edge of the plate made by filing the notches; c-p plain, flat top, rounded sides; four iron rivets. L 109, W 55, W c-p 15. Crummy 1983: 56, fig. 58, 1855; Philpott 1991: table A36; Crummy *et al.* 1993: 146–147, tables 2.58, 2.67.

54. Colchester, Essex. Butt Road, grave 377, AD 365+; young adult female; poorly-preserved comb near right shoulder. SF BUC 586, fragment. E-p missing; c-p stepped and decorated with diagonal rows of four small single ring-and-dots between iron rivets. L >44, W 53 approx., W c-p 17. Crummy 1983: 56–57, fig. 58, 1856; Philpott 1991: table A36; Crummy *et al.* 1993: 146–147, tables 2.58, 2.67.

Figure 5.14, 55. Colchester, Essex. Butt Road, grave 487, AD 365+; middle-aged adult, sex uncertain; comb beneath right foot. SF BUC 1529, incomplete. Devolved Dolphin Group: e-p with straight centre above a triangle of single ring-and-dots, rising to convex sides with a single ring-and-dot and ‘beaked’ corners; c-p stepped with transverse grooves/mouldings between seven iron rivets. L 118, W 54, W c-p 15. Crummy 1983: 57, fig. 59, 1857; Philpott 1991: table A36; Crummy *et al.* 1993: 146–147, tables 2.58, 2.67.

56. Colchester, Essex. Butt Road, grave 519, AD 365+; seven-year-old (female) child; poorly-preserved comb in box with bracelets, near left hand. SF BUC 1562, fragments. E-p very decayed; c-p ?stepped; iron rivets, the top of one is coated with copper alloy, which does not appear to be a result of contact with another object. L >80, W 54 approx, W c-p -. Associated deposits: two copper-alloy hairpins, jewellery box containing shale bracelet, iron bracelet, five copper-alloy bracelets, and comb. Crummy 1983: microfiche, no. 1858; Philpott 1991: table A36; Crummy *et al.* 1993: 146–147, tables 2.58, 2.67.

57. Colchester, Essex. Butt Road, grave 647, AD 367+, coin of Valens AD 367–375 residual in grave fill; (young) adult (female); small pieces of comb in pile of jewellery near head. SF BUC 1680, fragments. E-p missing; c-p stepped, perhaps with grooved decoration; iron rivets. L -, W -, W c-p -. Associated deposits: silver penannular brooch, seven copper-alloy bracelets (includes six toothed cogwheels), iron bracelet, two silver finger-rings. Crummy 1983: microfiche, no. 1859; Philpott 1991: table A36; Crummy *et al.* 1993: 146–147, tables 2.58, 2.67.

Figure 5.7, 58. Heybridge, Essex. Barn Field, grave b (found in 1873–1874), lead coffin that was probably inside a wooden one, late Roman; no skeletal details; comb position not given. Incomplete. Horse Group 2: e-p with confronted horse’s heads with no ears, single ring-and dot eyes and jaws defined by cut-outs, heads are linked by supporting struts to an almost lyre-shaped central section that has a convex centre between two square projections and is pierced by one large and two small perforations set in a triangle; c-p stepped and decorated with groups of six single ring-and-dots, set in rows of three

between iron rivets. L > 50 (L as shown in Wickenden 1986: fig. 29 is erroneous), W 58, W c-p 15. *VCH Essex* 3 (1963): 146–147; Toller 1977: 33, no. 68; Drury and Wickenden 1982: 30; Philpott 1991: table A36; Wickenden 1986: 55–57.

### Suffolk

Figure 3.3, 148. Great Whelnetham, Suffolk. Grave F2263, 4th to 5th century; decapitated adult female with at least one other wound, 45–50 years; comb by tibia of left leg. Object 96, complete. Straight-centred Group: e-p straight-centred with flanking points and swept-up sides, one with a small depression/perforation in the centre (compare with the more pronounced perforated labels on combs 11 and 17 from Lankhills); c-p has marginal grooves on the long side, otherwise plain, edges not notched from tooth-cutting; five iron rivets. L 101, W 70, W c-p 76. Associated deposits: None. Excavated by Archaeological Solutions Ltd, 2019.

149. Great Whelnetham, Suffolk, grave F2023, 4th to 5th century; adult female, 45–50 years (potentially decapitated, as a disarticulated cranium and mandible lay with a second complete skeleton in this double burial); comb on upper pelvis with the arms bent inwards and hands touching directly below the comb. Object 58, incomplete. Devolved Dolphin Group: e-p with a small mound flanked by two points (or notched points) in the centre, on each side a small perforation lies close to the c-p; c-p runs very close to the edge of the e-p, it has longitudinal mouldings (as on 69 and 117), and is decorated with a quincunx of ring-and-dots (some poorly executed) between each rivet; five iron rivets. L 120, W 65, W c-p 20. Associated deposits: None. Excavated by Archaeological Solutions Ltd, 2019.

### Cambridgeshire

59. Foxton, Cambs. Inhumation grave 3444, late 4th to early 5th century; adult female, >45 years; supine, decapitated, the skull was missing but the burial had not been disturbed, the left arm appeared to have been severed; position of comb not given. Bone 93, fragment. E-p missing; c-p stepped and decorated with four poorly-placed quincunxes of single ring-and-dots between five iron rivets. L >93, W >47, W c-p 20. Associated deposits: copper-alloy torc-twisted ankle (or armband) with ?gilt areas, Cool 1983: Group IVB. Price *et al.* 1997: 34, 125, fig. 68, 3.

60. Guilden Morden, Cambs. Found by T. C. Lethbridge in 1938: inhumation grave 38/3; (adult) female; comb position not given. Cambridge Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Z 11459 A-C; no details, but comb is of this form: e-p missing;

c-p missing; iron rivets. L 114 approx., W -, W c-p -. Associated deposits: two bone bracelets and four copper-alloy bracelets (one is a toothed cogwheel). Liversidge 1977: 35; Philpott 1991: table A36.

**61.** Castor, Chesterton (*Durobrivae*), Cambs. Normangate Field, inhumation grave 'a' in mausoleum, 4th century; female, 25-30 years; the very few bones that remained were in unusual positions relative to each other (see Chapter 7); position of comb uncertain. Fragments. E-p missing; c-p missing. Associated deposits: pair of gold earrings with silver beads, silver brooch, silver bead, two copper-alloy two-strand cable bracelets (one with mineral-preserved textile attached), copper-alloy two-strand cable anklet, shale spindlewhorl, Lower Nene Valley colour-coat flagon. Stephen Upex, pers. comm; Wilson 1969: 219; Clarke 1979: 365-366; Philpott 1991: table A36.

Figure 4.3, **62.** Orton Waterville, Cambs. Lynch Farm, grave 24, late Roman farmstead, the latest in a sequence of six graves buried at intervals in a large pit; a hoard of coins with a closing date of 388-402+ is evidence for late occupation on the site; female, 25-40 (with foetus of about 30 weeks maturity); comb near hip. Complete. Straight-centred Group, e-p with straight centre with small ripples (c-p run to ends, also rippled), sides slightly concave; c-p with bevelled long sides, plain apart from rippled ends and a transverse 'scar' at one end and two at the other; four iron rivets. L 101, W 43, W c-p 19. Associated deposits: bone bracelet, possibly also a bone bead. Jones 1975: 105, 109, 113, fig. 14, 36; Philpott 1991: table A36.

**152.** Somersham, Cambs. Knobb's Farm, cemetery 3, grave F.1097, late Roman farmstead; adult female, prone, decapitated, with other wounds made immediately prior to or after death; comb in fragments and scattered throughout the grave, but chiefly found near the skull, which lay on the back of the left knee. Straight-centred Group, e-p with straight-centre and plain swept-up sides, profile similar to Owl Group 2; c-p plain, incomplete, but marks on the e-p and the position of the rivet holes show that it ran to the edge of the e-p; iron rivets, all missing. L 98-100; W 60; W c-p 14. Wiseman *et al.* 2021: 144; Riddler 2021.

### **West Yorkshire and North Yorkshire**

Figure 5.32, **63.** Glasshoughton, Castleford, West Yorks. Inhumation grave, gypsum burial in stone coffin, late 4th to early 5th century; adult, sex uncertain; comb beneath head (no plan). Fragments. Concave Group: e-p concave, with line of small single ring-and-dots on inner edge close to teeth, two small

perforations next to corners of c-p; c-p stepped, top has quincunxes of small single ring-and-dots between six iron rivets. Teeth the same size on each side. L 130, W 60, W c-p 22. Radley 1967: 3; Faull and Moorhouse 1981: 157; Philpott 1991: table A36.

Figure 5.5, **64.** Woodhall, Askrigg, North Yorks. Grave found in 1876 during railway construction work, late 4th to early 5th century; no age/sex data; comb position not given. Fragments. Horse Group 1: e-p devolved horse with three low convex 'balls' in the centre instead of one, keyhole-shaped cut-outs near each corner defining the jaw, and three central perforations; c-p stepped and plain; five iron rivets; L 135 approx, W 63, W c-p 19. Manby 1966: 343, fig. 2, 7; Philpott 1991: table A36.

**65.** Norton-on-Derwent, North Yorks. St Peter's Church, three skeletons with pots, bone and bronze bracelets and part of a comb found in 1891. No other details. Robinson 1978: 37, no. 307; Philpott 1991: table A36. Malton Museum acc. no. R.39.2.

**Not catalogued.** York. Comb teeth from Trentholme Drive may be disturbed grave deposits (Wenham 1968, 51). A comb fragment found in 1845 in the Railway Cemetery at York has been described as a grave deposit, but no associated human bones were mentioned (*RCHME York* 1962: 80, viii; Howarth 1899: 197, J.93-640; see also probable non-funerary finds from York below, and Chapter 6).

### **Other combs from cemeteries (disturbed grave goods?)**

#### **Hampshire**

**66.** Winchester, Hants. Eagle Hotel, Andover Road, residual in fill of late 4th-century grave 334 (male, >45 years). SF 53, fragments. One small c-p fragment and one small t-p fragment only. L -, W -, W c-p -. Teague 1999: 38; Ottaway *et al.* 2012: 304; Winchester City Museum AR 98.

**67.** Winchester, Hants. Victoria Road, unstratified. SF VR 703: featureless fragments. Rees *et al.* 2008: 66, no. 319.

**68.** Winchester, Hants. Lankhills 2008/9, residual in fill of grave 136 (child, 5-7 years), AD 360+. Fragments. Devolved Dolphin Group: e-p more or less straight and notched; c-p with marginal grooves on long sides and a diagonal groove between each iron rivet. L -, W 45, W c-p 13. Booth *et al.* 2010: 73, fig. 3.27.

#### **Wiltshire**

**130.** Amesbury Down, Amesbury, Wilts. Residual in Grave 12812, late Roman. C-p fragment only; iron

rivet. Information kindly provided by N. Cooke and R. Seager Smith, Wessex Archaeology.

**Essex**

**69.** Colchester, Essex. Butt Road, residual in fill of grave 685 (young adult), late Roman. SF BUC 1705, fragment. Devolved Dolphin Group: e-p has concave centre flanked by notches, hollows? and raised corners, pairs of large double ring-and-dots on each side; c-p with longitudinal mouldings (as on **117** and **149**) and a line of large double ring-and-dots on a slightly rounded centre; iron rivets. L >66, W >46, W c-p 19. Crummy 1983: 57, fig. 59, 1860; Philpott 1991: table A36; Crummy *et al.* 1993: table 2.67.

**Combs from non-funerary contexts**

**Hampshire**

**70.** Portchester, Hants. Trench 71, Context 353, layer 32, pit 77. Fragments. E-p missing; c-p stepped profile with panels of decoration between iron rivets, one panel has a chevron of paired grooves with a small indentation at the open end, another (incomplete) has two rows of at least three small indentations; iron rivets. L >44, W -, W c-p 19. Webster 1975: 220, fig. 117, 102.

Figure 5.12, **71.** Silchester, Hants. Insula 32, no context details. Fragments. Devolved Dolphin Group: e-p with angular convex centre flanked by points and swept-up corners, one small perforation near one corner; c-p stepped, top decorated with panels of lattice between iron rivets. L 115, W 70, W c-p 18. Boon 1974: 156, fig. 16, 11; Crummy 2001: table 1.

**Oxfordshire**

Figure 5.15, **72.** Alchester, Oxon. From the floor of a house inside the north-east corner of the walls. The house fell into disuse in the mid 2nd century and was robbed in the 4th century; some 4th-century material was in the upper layers of the debris on the floor. Fragment. Dolphin to Owl Group: e-p has three mounds separated by points and double points on each corner, and there is a large perforation beneath each mound; c-p stepped and plain; iron rivets. L >71, W 60, W c-p 17. Iliffe 1932: 36, 38, 43, 64, pl. 17, 2.

Figure 5.8, **73.** Dorchester-on-Thames, Oxon. Site near Old Castle Inn, on surface of Phase 5 metalling, late Roman. Fragment. Devolved Dolphin Group, with complex edge, e-p with wavy edge with a central key-hole shaped perforation flanked by two round ones (a very close parallel to **122** from Keil Cave); c-p missing; rivets missing. L >27, W 57, W c-p -. Bradley *et al.* 1978: 31, fig. 8, 12.

Figure 5.24, **153.** Dorchester-on-Thames, Oxon. From a shallow pit (3266) containing sherds of both late Roman and Anglo-Saxon pottery (P. Booth, pers. comm.). SF 6816, fragment. Owl Group 3: concave e-p with a central label much like that on **151**, except that the c-p does not reach to the edge, which has three points. The flanking arches are trimmed down but remain attached to the concave edge. There is a large double ring-and-dot within a triangle of small single ring-and-dots on each side of the e-p; c-p has marginal grooves and between two iron rivets is a quincunx formed by a large central double ring-and-dot flanked by four smaller ones. It must have been made by the same hand as **151** from Gussage All Saints. L >49, W 63, W c-p 16.

**Wiltshire**

**74.** Great Bedwyn, Wilts. Castle Copse, C43:IV, fill of pit, late Roman. Small fragment. E-p with curved edge, also some teeth; c-p missing; rivets missing. L >17, W >9. Associated with sherds of Overwey ware. Payne 1997: 313, no. 466.

Figure 4.8, **75.** Great Bedwyn, Wilts. Castle Copse, C43:IV, fill of pit, late Roman. Form with two narrow connecting-plates. Incomplete. Straight-centred Group: e-p straight-centred, sides damaged; c-p flat, decorated with boxed saltires of paired grooves between rivets; antler/bone strips and lead-tin sheeting are sandwiched between the c-p, e-p and t-p, the antler/bone ornamented with openwork crosses and circles to expose the metal beneath; iron rivets. L >111, W >70, W each c-p 14, central element 15 (original length estimated at 145, width at 90). Associated with sherds of Overwey ware. Payne 1997: 312-313, no. 464, fig. 145.

**Somerset**

**131.** Bath, Somerset. Period 5e, very late 4th or early 5th century. Incomplete. Devolved Dolphin Group: e-p with concave/straight centre flanked by single points, angled notches and slightly concave ends, small hole on one side below; c-p stepped, plain; 7 rivets, not very evenly spaced. L 105 (approx), W 57, W c-p 15. Cunliffe and Davenport 1985: 72, 74-5, 139, fig. 79, 37.

**132.** Bath, Somerset. Period 5d, very late 4th or early 5th century. C-p fragment only, stepped, five angled grooves between rivets, angles alternating. L >57, W -, W c-p 16. Cunliffe and Davenport 1985: 72, 74-75, 139, fig. 79, 36.

**Gloucestershire**

**76.** Uley, Glos. Context 14, Structure II (temple), Phase 6b, early 5th century. Fragment. E-p missing;

c-p stepped, no surviving decoration; rivets missing. L >23, W -, W c-p >9. Woodward and Leach 1991: 178.

77. Lydney, Glos. No context details. Fragment. E-p missing; c-p stepped and decorated with three large single ring-and-dots between iron rivets. L >93, W 64 (approx.), W c-p 19. Wheeler and Wheeler 1932: 92, pl. 32, 181.

Figure 3.4, **78**. Cirencester, Glos. Building XII, 3, site DE, VII, late Roman. Fragment. Straight-centred Group: e-p with straight centre and raised corners with single ring-and-dot, two circular motifs with three ring-and-dots (see combs **11** from Winchester Lankhills and **137** from Malton for other examples of this design), and a ring and dot set close to the junction of the e-p with the first tooth-plate; c-p missing, but its position is marked by a raised area; iron rivet. L >19, W 55, W c-p 14. Wild and Viner 1986: 114, fig. 84, 228.

79. Cirencester, Glos. Dyer Street, no context details. Tooth-plate fragment. Viner 1998: 300.

### London

Figure 3.5, **80**. London. Pudding Lane, from c. AD 370 infill of drain serving a small bath in Building 6 (Milne 1985, fig. 81, d-e). PDN81 <44>, complete. Devolved Dolphin Group, with complex edge: e-p with central mound, small central perforation below, flanked on each side by a blunt point, an asymmetrical side mound and a second blunt point before a small rounded corner; c-p stepped, with lattice decoration between seven iron rivets; c-p edges not notched from tooth-cutting. L 124, W 70, W c-p 24. Museum of London Archaeological Archive; Riddler 1988, where the comb is shown slightly enlarged.

Figure 5.8, **81**. London, Pudding Lane, context as **80** above. PDN81 <346/1>, fragments. Devolved Dolphin Group, with complex edge: e-p with wavy edge of a notched point between small angular mounds over small perforations, flanked by blunt points and hollows before rounded corners (cf. combs **73** and **122**), there is a third perforations set below and between the others to form an inverted triangle; c-p stepped and plain; iron rivets. L >78, W 60, W c-p 12. Museum of London Archaeological Archive.

**82**. London, Pudding Lane, context as **80** above. PDN81 <1208>, fragment. Museum of London Archaeological Archive.

**83**. London, Pudding Lane, context as **80** above. PDN81 <1210>, fragment. Museum of London Archaeological Archive.

**84**. London. Cannon Street Station North, from a drain serving the baths associated with the large

public building complex in the south-west of the city (Perring and Roskams 1991: 30-4). LYD88 <292>, one tooth only. Museum of London Archaeological Archive.

### Buckinghamshire

**134**. Bancroft, Bucks. Villa, sub-Roman destruction of Building 1. Object 61: fragment. C-p stepped, plain?; iron rivet. L >24, W >34, estimated W c-p 14. Bird 1994: 351, no. 335; Williams and Zeepvat 1994: 205-206.

### Kent

**85**. Canterbury, Kent. St Margaret's Street, from late Roman dark earth above Room 6 of the baths. Fragment. MacGregor and Stow 1995: fig. 515, F1186.

Figure 3.2, **86**. Richborough, Kent. West side of inner stone fort ditch with building debris, late Roman. Unfinished, some teeth not cut. Straight-centred Group: e-p straight across the centre and swept up at each corner; c-p with double-grooved saltires within panels defined by single transverse grooves and set between iron rivets. L 97, W 50, W c-p 15. Henderson 1949: 150-151, pl. 56, 266; Crummy 2001: table 1.

**142**. Richborough, Kent. Topsoil. Fragment. E-p missing; c-p flat with marginal grooves and line of double ring-and-dots, with two between each iron rivet; two rivets and two broken rivet holes remain. L >88, W 60 approx., W c-p 16-17. Radford 1932: pl 13, 42.

**87**. Springhead, Kent. Bakery site, Key Deposit III, late Roman occupation. Fragment. Concave Group: e-p concave and plain; c-p with bevelled edges and decorated with groups of four transverse grooves set between iron rivets. L >88, W 54, W c-p 14. Penn 1957: 101, fig. 18, 1, for dating of context see fig. 3 and table 1; Crummy 2001: table 1.

Figure 5.28, **88**. Darenth, Kent. From rubble in/over a demolished bath-building revealed during bulldozing an access track to a gravel pit, the comb is described in the report as 'probably 3rd century', but there is no supporting stratigraphic or artefactual evidence. Complete. Straight-centred Group: e-p straight apart from low mounds flanking the ends of the c-p; c-p with bevelled long edges and decorated with saltires flanked by pairs of transverse grooves between five iron rivets. L 102, W 57, W c-p 13. Philp 1973: 153, fig. 46, 451.

**89**. Ickham, Kent. No context given. Fragment. Straight-centred Group: e-p straight with profiling restricted to very slight notches; c-p convex, ?plain; rivets missing. L >22, W 35, W c-p 10. Riddler 2010: 213-214.

**Essex**

**90.** Colchester, Essex. Balkerne Lane, N272, ?topsoil, Period 6, c. AD 300-400+. SF BKC 4295, fragment. E-p missing; c-p fragment, stepped, flat top has pairs of diagonal grooves between iron rivets. L >51, W -, W c-p 20. Crummy 1983: 55, fig. 58, 1851.

Figure 5.26, **91.** Colchester, Essex. Cups Hotel, High Street, (405) F100, destruction debris used as late Roman cellar fill, associated with coins from a dispersed hoard with a closing date of c. AD 350-360 and pottery dating into the 5th century. SF CPS 188, fragment. Straight-centred Group: e-p has straight centre flanked by stylised dolphins; c-p stepped, flat top decorated with double-grooved saltire between pairs of transverse grooves; iron rivets. L >29, W 5, W c-p 18. Galloway 1981; Crummy 1983: 55, no. 1852; 1987: 83.

Figure 5.7, **92.** Great Dunmow, Essex. Pit 219, fill dated c. 355-65, south of shrine; comb in the same layer as two coins, both copies dated to AD 353-361 of the House of Constantinian *Fel Temp Reparatio* falling horseman issue, a pewter bowl and a copper-alloy finger-ring, and above a layer contained six similar coins and a spindlewhorl made from a recycled potsherd, probably of Much Hadham Fabric 4. Incomplete. Horse Group 2: e-p with confronted horse heads as comb **58** from Heybridge, but central element has only one large perforation; c-p with stepped profile and transverse grooves/mouldings in the centre; iron rivets. L 118 approx., W 63, W c-p 19. Greep 1988: fig. 30, 17; Wickenden 1988: 38.

**93.** Chelmsford, Essex. K1137, oven 485, Phase VIII (later than c. AD 390). Fragment. Devolved Dolphn Group: e-p centre missing, sides have deep hollow before a small point and rounded corner; c-p has quincunx of single ring-and-dots between rivets; iron rivets. L >52, W >54 approx., W c-p 18. Wickenden 1992: 82-83.

Figure 5.19, **143.** Wendens Ambo, Essex. No context details. Cambridge Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Braybrooke Collection 1948.868, incomplete. Owl Group 1: e-p with broad central notch flanked by feathered flat sections over large perforations, then deep angled notches to delineate corners (ears); there is a double ring-and dot beneath each perforation; c-p convex with marginal grooves on long sides and four double ring-and-dots alternating with four iron rivets. L 97; W 63; W c-p 14. Greep 1983: 756, no. 323, fig. 238, 35.

**144.** Great Chesterford, Essex. Cambridge Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Braybrooke Collection, 1948.865. Incomplete. Devolved Dolphin

Group: e-p with five mounds in the centre (some angular) above three small holes, sides have a concave notch and curved corners; c-p has marginal grooves and patterns of single ring-and-dots between five iron rivets, the three central ones set in a square, the end ones in a quincunx. L >111, W 60, W c-p 20. Greep 1983: 756, fig. 239, 39.

**Cambridgeshire**

Figure 5.7, **133.** Cambridge, Cambs. Arbury Road, Late Roman dumped rubbish/dark earth. Cambridge Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, 1958.83 A-D, fragment. As Horse Group 2: e-p similar to **58** and **92**, but with much larger opening beneath the lower jaw, central element also more open; c-p missing. L >33, W 62, W c-p -. Frennd 1955: 20, 26, pl. IV, 20.

**94.** Foxton, Cambs. No context details given. Bone 109, complete. Straight-centred Group: e-p with irregularly rippled raised centre and swept out corners, centre flanked by pairs of angled grooves, small central perforation at one end; c-p plain apart from transverse marks on the slightly tapered terminals, long sides bevelled. L 110, W 54, W c-p 15. Price *et al.* 1997: 119, fig. 66, 18.

**135.** Love's Farm, St Neot's, Cambs. Settlement 7 (northern), fill of well 5387, Period 4.5, late 4th to early 5th century. SF 3158, fragment. Straight-centred Group: e-p with straight centre, flanked by dolphin-like sides with semicircular notch and shallower angled notch, corner rounded; c-p missing, position marked by guidelines, would have run to the edge of the end-plate; iron rivets. L >21, W 58, W c-p approx. 15. Crummy 2018: 196, fig. 6.51. T-p fragment SF 3157 from the same feature is also part of this comb. (Another t-p fragment, SF 2443, came from a cobbled surface in the northern settlement.)

**136.** Love's Farm, St Neot's, Cambs. Settlement 6 (southern), unphased deposit 11602. SF 3104: fragments. Straight-centred Group: surviving e-p has straight centre and was probably the same as **135** as it has one deep and one shallow semicircular notch on each side; c-p flat, plain, with pair of angled steps at each end; five iron rivets. L >109, W >50, W c-p 15. Crummy 2018: 195-196, fig. 6.51.

Figure 5.16, **96.** Orton, Cambs. Orton Hall Farm, context not given, Period 3, c. AD 225/250-300/325, but recognised as later than that date. SF 707, fragment. Dolphin to Owl Group: e-p has central mound flanked by two points, fluid sides with upswept corners, large perforation below each side mound; c-p stepped and plain, tapering towards ends; iron rivets. L >63, W 58, W c-p 15 (tapering to 11). Mackreth 1996: 100, fig. 64, 94.

**Norfolk**

**97.** Caistor St. Edmund (Caistor-by-Norwich), Norfolk. Found in 1929, no context details. Norfolk Museums Service, NWHCM:1929.152.0136:A: fragment, Straight-centred Group: e-p with straight centre flanked by hollows and low corners, small perforation at each end of the centre; c-p missing; rivets missing. L >56, W >25, c-p -. (Other featureless comb fragments are listed on the Norfolk Museum website [www.culturalmodes.norfolk.gov.uk](http://www.culturalmodes.norfolk.gov.uk))

**Northamptonshire**

Figure 5.29, **98.** Thorplands, Northants. From context 32, a dark soil that was phased as probably 1st or 2nd century but overlay ditch fill containing a sherd of a 3rd- to 4th-century mortarium. The coin list for the site includes two House of Valentinian issues from the destruction debris of a building that went out of use in the late 4th or early 5th century, providing a general context for the use and loss of this comb and **99** below. SF 102, fragment. Straight-centred Group: e-p with convex centre and upswept corners (as Owl Group 2 but plain); c-p missing, but surviving iron rivet shows that it ran close to the edge of the e-p. L > 33, W 60, estimated W c-p 17-18. Hunter and Mynard 1977: 101-102, 106, 109, 137, fig. 6, top, contexts 32 and 62, fig. 19, 279.

Figure 5.26, **99.** Thorplands, Northants. From the upper fill of a very large pit that in its main (tertiary) fill contained up to 1,000 pots and a coin of Elagabalus dated to AD 218-222; the majority of the pots provided a date for the fill of the second half of the 3rd century, but it was acknowledged that there was intrusive material in the upper fill; the position of the comb was not defined. Given the size of the pit, the top may well have slumped downwards and then been levelled at a later date, either deliberately or by the slow accumulation of dark earth. SF 21, incomplete. Straight-centred Group: e-p with flat centre flanked by deep hollows, a small point and a rounded corners, two large double ring-and-dots on each side: c-p stepped and decorated with large double ring-and-dots set in pairs between iron rivets. L >66, W 59, W c-p 17. Hunter and Mynard 1977: 101-102, 104-106, 115, 137, fig. 19, 278.

**150.** Stanwick, Northamptonshire. Raunds Project, ON 75484, unstratified. Incomplete. Devolved Dolphin Group: e-p poorly-preserved, three small points in the centre flanked by large convex sides that probably ended in slightly raised corners; c-p flat, plain; three iron rivets. L >90, W >49, W c-p 15. Excavated 1984-1992 by English Heritage.

**Shropshire**

**100.** Wroxeter, Shrops. West portico, south end, Box 90, P 3.2. SF 5340: no details as this was not examined by the small finds specialist. Mould 2000: 139.

**Not catalogued.** Other comb fragments from the Wroxeter Baths Basilica site are listed in Greep 1983 (759, nos 384-390), but not all need be Roman as later material was also found; see also Pretty 1997: 251, fig. 322, 12.

**101.** Wroxeter, Shrops. No context details given. Fragment. Iron rivets. Bushe-Fox 1914: 20, pl. 9, fig. 1, 4.

**Lincolnshire**

**102.** Lincoln, Lincs. West Parade, fill of 4th-century Pit 16 just inside the lower western defences. City of Lincoln Archaeology Unit, fragments. E-p missing; c-p stepped, plain; iron rivets. L >28, W >37, W c-p 17. Information from Jenny Mann.

**103.** Lincoln, Lincs. St Mark's Station, very late 4th-century dump sealing latest strip buildings. City of Lincoln Archaeology Unit, SF 724, fragment. E-p missing; c-p stepped, with three single ring-and-dots between iron rivets; L >37, W -, W c-p 20 (approx.). Information from Jenny Mann.

**North and East Yorkshire and York**

**104.** Aldborough, North Yorks. Context unknown. 78108129, fragment. Concave Group: e-p concave, plain; c-p missing; iron rivet. L > 21, W 55, W c-p -, Smith 1852: pl. 23, 14; Bishop 1996: 38, fig. 21, 219.

**105.** Aldborough, North Yorks. Context unknown. 7810830, fragment. Devolved Dolphin Group: what remains of the e-p is very similar to comb **40** from Poundbury, but if there was a perforation on this piece it must have been on the side that is missing; c-p missing. L >21, W >45, W c-p -. Smith 1852: pl. 23, 15; Bishop 1996: 38, fig. 21, 220.

**106.** Langton, North Yorks. Found close to a coin of Theodosius I in a well in use as a rubbish pit up to c. AD 395+; associated objects include a coin of Theodosius I (AD 379-395) and a piece of bone veneer that may have come from a box similar to that housing comb **2**. The layer below these items produced only late 4th-century pottery. Fragment. E-p damaged, profile uncertain; c-p stepped and plain; iron rivets. L >86, W 63, W c-p 21. Corder and Kirk 1932: 49, 51, 73, fig. 19, 12-13.

Figure 5.8, **107.** Langton, North Yorks. No contextual information. Fragment. Form with two narrow connecting-plates. Dolphin: e-p has two confronted dolphins with notched crests, beaks joined by a short bar, with a pelta-shaped cut-out defining the lower jaws; remaining c-p fragment decorated with groups of transverse grooves; iron rivets. L >26, W 81, W c-p 10.5. Corder and Kirk 1932: 73, fig. 20; Crummy 2000: fig 3, f.

Figure 3.4, **137**. Malton, North Yorks. Malton Museum acc. no. R30.331; no other details. Fragment. Devolved Dolphin Group: e-p with central mound flanked by blunt points and fluid sides, with a small hole below the central mound and to each side a circle filled with three ring-and-dots (see combs **11** and **78** for other examples of this motif); c-p missing. L >16, W 63 approx., W c-p -. Greep 1983: fig. 235, 4.

**138**. Malton, North Yorks. Malton Museum acc. no. R30.332; no other details. Fragment. Devolved Dolphin Group: e-p with central mound flanked by blunt indented points, sides fluid; c-p missing. L >12, W >45, W c-p -; iron rivet. Greep 1983: fig. 235, 7.

Figure 5.5, **108**. Beadlam, North Yorks. Three separate pieces found in late Roman contexts, two in Building 1, Room 2, one in courtyard south of Room 1. Form with two narrow connecting-plates. Horse Group 1: e-p has confronted horse heads with small single ring-and dot eye, separated by three mounds over large double ring-and-dots, indented double points flank central mound and horses' noses form single point between outer mounds and heads, central ring-and dot is framed by four small single ones and there is a second large ring-and-dot beneath; openwork centre with more small single ring-and-dots (see the similar comb **139** from Piercebridge); surviving c-p fragment plain; iron rivets. L >43 (estimated 120), W 72, W c-p 9. Stead 1971: 186, fig. 5, 4; Riddler in Neal 1996: 50, fig. 33, 26.

Figure 5.33, **109**. Shiptonthorpe, East Yorks. Surface deposit; late 4th century+. Fragment. Concave Group: e-p sharply concave with straight centre; c-p missing, but scars show that it was flush with the edge; iron rivet. L >25, W 60, W c-p 23 approx. Allason-Jones 2006: 235-236, no. 186.

Figure 5.18, **110**. York. Wellington Row, context [71061], dark earth, late 4th to early 5th century. York Archaeological Trust, Archaeological Research Centre, SF 11961, fragments. Devolved Dolphin Group: e-p with central mound flanked on each side by three points, a deep hollow and raised corner; c-p convex, decorated with four groups of transverse grooves between five iron rivets, the central groups have three grooves, the outer ones four. L 122 approx., W 58, W c-p 14.

Figure 5.18, **111**. York. Wellington Row, context [7643], dark earth, late 4th to early 5th century. York Archaeological Trust, Archaeological Research Centre, SF 8577, incomplete. Concave Group: e-p concave, with a series of irregularly-spaced notches, small hole near the c-p at one end; c-p with single marginal groove and five pairs of transverse grooves between six iron rivets. L 120, W 58, W c-p 14.; Ottaway 1993: fig. 71, centre top.

Figure 5.18, **112**. York. Wellington Row, context [7687], dark earth, late 4th to early 5th century. York Archaeological Trust, Archaeological Research Centre, SF 8837, fragment. Dolphin to Owl Group: e-p concave, with low central mound flanked by two points, large perforation on each side of the c-p scar, which is slightly raised; c-p missing; rivets missing. L >26, W 60, W c-p 19.

Figure 5.18, **113**. York. Wellington Row, context [7289], dark earth, late 4th to early 5th century. York Archaeological Trust, Archaeological Research Centre, SF 4344, fragment. Devolved Dolphin Group: e-p with only slightly convex centre flanked by a round point, a deep narrow rounded notch and raised corner; c-p missing but guideline for position remains; staining from an iron rivet. L >23, W >35, W c-p -.

Figure 5.18, **114**. York. Wellington Row, contexts [3112] and [3118], dark earth, late 4th to early 5th century. York Archaeological Trust, Archaeological Research Centre, SF 154/170, fragments. Dolphin to Owl Group: e-p appears to show addorsed dolphins with tails formed into central raised crescent, beaks as double points on corners, large double ring-and-dot eyes, but the eyes also allow this to be seen as an owl; c-p only survives as small fragments with grooved lattice decoration, but e-p has marked raised area where c-p attached, surface shaved down on either side; iron rivets. L > 28, W 58, W c-p -.

Figure 5.18, **115**. York. Wellington Row, context [71265], dark earth, late or post-Roman. York Archaeological Trust, Archaeological Research Centre, SF 12199, incomplete. Devolved Dolphin Group: e-p with angular central mound flanked by points, hollows and raised corners; c-p plain, with bevelled long sides and tapering slightly at ends; five iron rivets. L 133, W 58, W c-p 14. Ottaway 1993: fig. 71, right.

Figure 5.18, **116**. York. Wellington Row, context [71501], dark earth, late 4th to early 5th century. York Archaeological Trust, Archaeological Research Centre, SF 14293, complete. Straight-centred Group: e-p has straight centre flanked by slight profiling; c-p stepped and plain, does not run to the edge; seven iron rivets. L 114, W 63, W c-p 18. Ottaway 1993: fig. 71, centre bottom.

Figure 5.16, **146**. York. York Museum, RE 1840, said to be from the Roman baths, incomplete. Dolphin to Owl Group: e-p has a central mound flanked by indented points and fluid sides as dolphins with ball, but has two large perforations as eyes; c-p convex/stepped, with marginal grooves on the long sides and two pairs of transverse grooves between rivets; six iron rivets, one of which is missing; Greep 1983: 760, no. 403, fig. 237, 23.

Figure 5.27, **147**. York. York Museum, 2011.245, incomplete. Straight-centred Group: e-p centre only very slightly convex, sides fluid; c-p stepped, plain, runs almost to the edge of the e-p; four copper-alloy rivets. The teeth on this comb are quite square and may be unfinished, although where the tips remain they appear to be worn. Greep 1983: 760, no. 404, fig. 74, 2.

**Not catalogued.** Also from York, but not included here are Greep 1983: 760, no. 402, fig. 237, 27 (York Museum, RE 1874, said to be from the Roman baths), other small fragments from Wellington Row (York Archaeological Trust), and comb teeth from Trentholme Drive (Wenham 1968: 51).

### *County Durham*

Figure 5.8, **117**. Newton Bewley, Hartlepool, Co. Durham. Building 65/113, late 4th to early 5th century, C14 dated to AD 350-535; SF 8, fragment. Devolved Dolphin Group with complex edge: e-p confronted dolphins with ball, somewhat obscured by the c-p running very close to the edge, perforations for eyes; one c-p with longitudinal mouldings (see **69** and **149**), the profile of the other appears to be asymmetric, with quincunxes of single ring-and-dots between iron rivets, and two single ring-and-dots at the end. L >61, W 68, W c-p 24. Platell and Johns 2001: 17-19, fig. 22; Allason-Jones 2001: 81-82; Phillips and Rowe 2004: frontispiece.

Figure 5.5, **139**. Piercebridge, Co. Durham. Area of the inner ditch of the fort, late 4th to early 5th century. Form with two narrow connecting-plates. Horse Group 1: e-p closely similar to **108** from Beadlam, with confronted horse heads with small single ring-and-dot eye separated by three mounds, the two outermost over large double ring-and-dots, the central one over seven small single ring-and-dots set 3-1-3, indented double points flank central mound and horses' noses form single point between outer mounds and heads; c-p missing. L >20, W >80, W c-p -. Cool 2008: 251-252, fig. 11.6, 1105, table 11.15; Allason-Jones and Large 2008: 11.235, no. 3.

**140**. Piercebridge, Co. Durham. In silt of bath-house drain 47 at Tees View. T-p fragment only, broken across one rivet hole, width (worn) intact. L >18, W 63, W c-p -. Cool 2008: 252-253, fig. 11.6, 1104, table 11.15.

**Not catalogued.** Five other small comb fragments from Piercebridge have not been listed here; Allason-Jones and Large 2008: 11.235-11.236, nos 1103, 1106-1109.

### *Tyne and Wear*

Figure 5.26, **118**. South Shields, Tyne and Wear. Context unknown. Incomplete. Straight-centred

Group: e-p with straight centre flanked by small points, deep hollows and low corners; c-p stepped and plain; iron rivets. L 95, W 55, W c-p 18. Allason-Jones and Miket 1984: 42, no. 2.39.

Figure 5.13, **119**. South Shields, Tyne and Wear. Context unknown. Fragment. Devolved Dolphin Group, e-p with central mound flanked by triple points and upswept corners, small perforation below mound; c-p missing, rivets missing. L >15, W 56, W c-p -. Allason-Jones and Miket 1984: 42, no. 2.40.

**120**. South Shields, Tyne and Wear. Context unknown. Fragment. Devolved Dolphin Group; e-p with angular mound flanked by indented double points and upswept corners, small perforation beneath one set of double points; c-p missing; iron rivets. L >25, W 59 approx., W c-p -. Allason-Jones and Miket 1984: 42, no. 2.44.

**121**. South Shields, Tyne and Wear. Context unknown. Fragment. Straight-centred Group; e-p with straight centre flanked by mounds, single points and upswept corners; c-p missing; iron rivets. L >20, W 63, W c-p -. Allason-Jones and Miket 1984: 42, no. 2.45.

**Not catalogued.** Other fragments from Allason-Jones and Miket 1984 have not been listed here.

### *Northumberland*

Figure 3.2, **141**. Carrawburgh, Northumberland. Chesters Museum, Hall 1900, no. 2156, Budge 1907, 395, no. 203 (where it is described as wooden), no other details. Fragment of an unfinished comb. Devolved Dolphin Group: e-p with three small mounds in a sunken centre, the middle one larger than the other two, flanked by fluid dolphin-like sides that rise to the corners; c-p flat, with deep marginal grooves on the long sides giving the impression of mouldings; one iron rivet and one broken rivet hole remain. L >54, W 69; W c-p 15. Greep 1983: 302, 758, fig. 74, 3, where it is wrongly attributed to the fort at Chesters.

### *Argyll*

Figure 5.8, **122**. Keil, Southend, Kintyre, Argyll and Bute. The Big Cave at Keil, context unknown. Fragment. Devolved Dolphin Group with complex edge: e-p with wavy edge of central mound with by two pairs of double points, flanked by side hollows, points and rounded corners, central vertical keyhole cut-out and two small perforations below the side notches (as **73** from Dorchester-on-Thames and see also **81** from London); c-p missing; iron rivets. L >25, W 51, W c-p -. Ritchie 1967: 108, fig. 2, 4.

**Sites with double-sided composite combs not in the catalogue but used in Figure 6.1**

These combs have not been used because they are either too incomplete for assignment to the late Roman form discussed in this volume or they have only recently been added to the assemblage and their contexts and associations remain uncertain or unknown.

Caerwent, Monmouthshire (Greep 1983: 760, no. 406)

Caerleon, Gwent (Greep 1983: 760, no. 407)

Corbridge, Northumberland (Greep 1983: 759, nos 375-378)

Croughton, Northamptonshire

Droitwich, Worcestershire

Dunstable, Bedfordshire

Ely, Cambridgeshire

Frocester, Gloucestershire (Greep 1983: 757, no. 327)

Gloucester, Gloucestershire (Greep 1983: 757, no. 328)

Icklingham, Suffolk (Greep 1983: 759, no. 394)

Jordan Hill, Dorset

Kempston, Bedfordshire

Kenchester, Herefordshire (Greep 1983: 757, no. 348)

Melton, Leicestershire

Stonea, Cambridgeshire (was **95**, but removed from catalogue; Greep 1996: fig. 201, 74)

Verulamium, Hertfordshire

Wallingford, Oxfordshire

Wattle Syke, West Yorkshire

Witcombe, Gloucestershire (Greep 1983: 757, no. 331)

## Appendix 1

### Combs by the sex and age of the human remains

Grave goods usually gendered as female are noted where present in unsexed graves.

Child: **11** (3.5 years; jewellery), **25** (age not given), **51** (4-5 years; jewellery), **56** (7 years; jewellery). *Total = 4, of which 3 are almost certainly female*

Young adult, ?male: **8**. *Total = 1.*

Male?: **34** (26-35 years). *Total = 1.*

Females, below, or probably below, 25 years, including older adolescents: **2, 4, 5, 29, 30, 36, 54, 57, 125, 151**. *Total = 10.*

Male: **26** (elderly; initially assessed as female), **53** (adult). *Total = 2*

Adolescent, sex uncertain: **6**. *Total = 1.*

Female?: **31** (young adult with foetal bone), **129** (18-21 years). *Total = 2.*

Adult, sex uncertain: **19, 22, 55** (middle-aged), **63**. *Total = 4.*

Females above 25 but below, or probably below, 45 years: **1, 3, 9, 13, 14, 15, 16, 27, 28, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 49, 62** (with foetal bone), **126, 127, 145**. *Total = 20.*

Age and sex uncertain or unknown: **37, 38, 45, 48, 50, 58, 64**. *Total = 7.*

Females above 45: **21, 33, 35, 47, 124, 128, 148, 149**. *Total = 8*

Females, adult: **10, 12, 17, 18** (mature), **20** (older adult), **23, 32** (older adult), **52, 59, 60, (61), 123, 152**. *Total = 13*

Female?: **24** (adult). *Total = 1.*

Unsexed graves with jewellery: **46, 65**. *Total = 2.*

Mixed adult female and adolescent bones (section collapse): **7**. *Total = 1.*

## Appendix 2

### Concordance by end-plate group

Site type nomenclature for civilian settlements smaller than a major town generally follows that of Allen *et al.* 2018 and Smith and Fulford 2019.

| Catalogue No | End-plate Group          | Site                                      | County          | Site type                               | Context              | Figure |
|--------------|--------------------------|---|-----------------|---|----------------------|--------|
| 1            | Horse 1                  | Winchester, Hyde Street                   | Hampshire       | major town / civitas capital / cemetery | burial               | 5.5    |
| 64           | Horse 1                  | Woodhall, Askrigg                         | North Yorkshire | rural settlement / cemetery             | burial               | 5.5    |
| 108          | Horse 1                  | Beadlam                                   | North Yorkshire | rural settlement / villa                | dispersed fragments  | 5.5    |
| 139          | Horse 1                  | Piercebridge                              | Co. Durham      | military / fort                         | area of fort ditch   | 5.5    |
| 2            | as Horse 1               | Winchester, St Martin's Close, Winnall    | Hampshire       | major town / civitas capital / cemetery | burial               | 5.2    |
| 58           | Horse 2                  | Heybridge                                 | Essex           | nucleated settlement / cemetery         | burial               | 5.7    |
| 92           | Horse 2                  | Great Dunmow, shrine                      | Essex           | nucleated settlement / shrine           | votive pit           | 5.7    |
| 133          | as Horse 2               | Cambridge, Arbury Road                    | Cambridgeshire  | defended vicus                          | dump/dark earth      | 5.7    |
|              |                          |   |                 |   |                      |        |
| 107          | Dolphin                  | Langton                                   | North Yorkshire | rural settlement / villa                | -                    | 5.8    |
| 73           | Dolphin, complex-ended   | Dorchester-on-Thames, near Old Castle Inn | Oxfordshire     | defended vicus                          | on metalled surface  | 5.8    |
| 80           | Dolphin, complex-ended   | London, Pudding Lane                      | -               | major town / provincial capital         | bathhouse drain      | 3.5    |
| 81           | Dolphin, complex-ended   | London, Pudding Lane                      | -               | major town / provincial capital         | bathhouse drain      | 5.8    |
| 117          | Dolphin, complex-ended   | Newton Bewley, Hartlepool                 | Co. Durham      | rural settlement                        | -                    | 5.8    |
| 122          | Dolphin, complex-ended   | Keil, Kintyre                             | Argyll and Bute | rural settlement / cave                 | occupation           | 5.8    |
| 14           | Dolphin, one at each end | Winchester, Lankhills                     | Hampshire       | major town / civitas capital / cemetery | burial               | 5.10   |
| 20           | Devolved Dolphin         | Winchester, Lankhills                     | Hampshire       | major town / civitas capital / cemetery | burial               | -      |
| 22           | Devolved Dolphin         | Winchester, Lankhills                     | Hampshire       | major town / civitas capital / cemetery | burial               | -      |
| 68           | Devolved Dolphin         | Winchester, Lankhills                     | Hampshire       | major town / civitas capital / cemetery | residual in cemetery | -      |
| 32           | Devolved Dolphin         | Horndean                                  | Hampshire       | rural settlement / cemetery             | burial               | -      |
| 37           | Devolved Dolphin         | Easton Hill                               | Wiltshire       | rural settlement / cemetery             | burial               | 5.13   |

| Catalogue No | End-plate Group              | Site                        | County           | Site type   | Context              | Figure |
|--------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------|---|----------------------|--------|
| 40           | Devolved Dolphin             | Poundbury                   | Dorset           | major town / civitas capital / cemetery           | burial               | 5.12   |
| 44           | Devolved Dolphin             | Poundbury                   | Dorset           | major town / civitas capital / cemetery           | burial               | 5.13   |
| 53           | Devolved Dolphin             | Colchester, Butt Road       | Essex            | major town / <u>civitas</u> capital? / cemetery   | burial               | 5.14   |
| 55           | Devolved Dolphin             | Colchester, Butt Road       | Essex            | major town / <u>civitas</u> capital? / cemetery   | burial               | 5.14   |
| 69           | Devolved Dolphin             | Colchester, Butt Road       | Essex            | major town / civitas capital? / cemetery          | residual in cemetery | -      |
| 71           | Devolved Dolphin             | Silchester                  | Hampshire        | major town / civitas capital                      | -                    | 5.12   |
| 93           | Devolved Dolphin             | Chelmsford                  | Essex            | defended vicus                                    | oven                 | -      |
| 105          | Devolved Dolphin             | Aldborough                  | North Yorkshire  | major town / civitas capital                      | -                    | -      |
| 110          | Devolved Dolphin             | York, Wellington Row        | (Yorkshire)      | major town / provincial capital                   | dark earth           | 5.18   |
| 113          | Devolved Dolphin             | York, Wellington Row        | (Yorkshire)      | major town / provincial capital                   | dark earth           | 5.18   |
| 115          | Devolved Dolphin             | York, Wellington Row        | (Yorkshire)      | major town / provincial capital                   | dark earth           | 5.18   |
| 119          | Devolved Dolphin             | South Shields               | Tyne and Wear    | military / fort (supply depot for Hadrian's Wall) | -                    | 5.13   |
| 120          | Devolved Dolphin             | South Shields               | Tyne and Wear    | military / fort (supply depot for Hadrian's Wall) | -                    | -      |
| 124          | Devolved Dolphin             | Amesbury, Amesbury Down     | Wiltshire        | nucleated settlement / village / cemetery         | burial               | -      |
| 129          | Devolved Dolphin             | Amesbury, Amesbury Down     | Wiltshire        | nucleated settlement / village / cemetery         | burial               | -      |
| 131          | Devolved Dolphin             | Bath                        | Somerset         | defended vicus / temple / baths                   | temple               | -      |
| 137          | Devolved Dolphin             | Malton                      | North Yorkshire  | military / fort (Norton = vicus)                  | -                    | 3.4    |
| 138          | Devolved Dolphin             | Malton                      | North Yorkshire  | military / fort (Norton = vicus)                  | -                    | -      |
| 141          | Devolved Dolphin, unfinished | Carrawburgh                 | Northumberland   | military / fort (Hadrian's Wall)                  | -                    | 3.2    |
| 144          | Devolved Dolphin             | Great Chesterford           | Essex            | defended vicus                                    | -                    | -      |
| 149          | Devolved Dolphin             | Great Whelnetham            | Suffolk          | rural settlement / cemetery                       | burial               | -      |
| 150          | Devolved Dolphin             | Stanwick                    | Northamptonshire | rural settlement                                  | -                    | -      |
| 12           | Dolphin to Owl               | Winchester, Lankhills       | Hampshire        | major town / civitas capital / cemetery           | burial               | 5.15   |
| 15           | Dolphin to Owl               | Winchester, Lankhills       | Hampshire        | major town / civitas capital / cemetery           | burial               | 5.15   |
| 72           | Dolphin to Owl               | Alchester                   | Oxfordshire      | defended vicus                                    | destruction debris   | 5.15   |
| 96           | Dolphin to Owl               | Orton, Orton Hall Farm      | Cambridgeshire   | rural settlement / farm                           | -                    | 5.16   |
| 146          | Dolphin to owl               | York (York Museum, RE 1840) | -                | major town / provincial capital                   | dark earth           | 5.16   |

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| Catalogue No | End-plate Group   | Site                         | County          | Site type  | Context    | Figure    |
|--------------|-------------------|------------------------------|-----------------|--|------------|-----------|
| 112          | Dolphin to Owl    | York, Wellington Row         | -               | major town / provincial capital                              | dark earth | 5.18      |
| 114          | Dolphin to Owl    | York, Wellington Row         | -               | major town / provincial capital                              | dark earth | 5.18      |
| 28           | Dolphin to owl?   | Winchester, Winchester Hotel | Hampshire       | major town / civitas capital / cemetery                      | burial     | -         |
|              |                   |                              |                 |  |            |           |
| 5            | Owl 1             | Winchester, Victoria Road    | Hampshire       | major town / civitas capital / cemetery                      | burial     | 5.19      |
| 47           | Owl 1             | Cirencester, Bath Gate       | Gloucestershire | major town / civitas capital / provincial capital / cemetery | burial     | 5.19      |
| 143          | Owl 1             | Wendens Ambo                 | Essex           | rural settlement / villa or farm                             | -          | 5.19      |
| 4            | Owl 2             | Winchester, Victoria Road    | Hampshire       | major town / civitas capital / cemetery                      | burial     | 1.1, 5.21 |
| 31           | Owl 2             | Andover, Winchester Street   | Hampshire       | roadside settlement? / cemetery                              | burial     | 5.21      |
| 36           | Owl 2             | Chichester, Westgate         | West Sussex     | major town / civitas capital / cemetery                      | burial     | 5.21      |
| 125          | as Owl 2          | Amesbury, Amesbury Down      | Wiltshire       | nucleated settlement / village / cemetery                    | burial     | -         |
| 11           | Owl 3             | Winchester, Lankhills        | Hampshire       | major town / civitas capital / cemetery                      | burial     | 5.22      |
| 17           | Owl 3             | Winchester, Lankhills        | Hampshire       | major town / civitas capital / cemetery                      | burial     | 5.22      |
| 151          | Owl 3             | Gussage All Saints           | Dorset          | rural settlement / cemetery                                  | burial     | 5.23      |
| 153          | Owl 3             | Dorchester-on-Thames         | Oxfordshire     | defended vicus   | pit        | 5.24      |
|              |                   |                              |                 |  |            |           |
| 9            | Straight-centred  | Winchester, Lankhills        | Hampshire       | major town / civitas capital / cemetery                      | burial     | -         |
| 10           | Straight-centred  | Winchester, Lankhills        | Hampshire       | major town / civitas capital / cemetery                      | burial     | 5.29      |
| 23           | Straight-centred  | Winchester, Lankhills        | Hampshire       | major town / civitas capital / cemetery                      | burial     | -         |
| 25           | Straight-centred  | Winchester, Lankhills        | Hampshire       | major town / civitas capital / cemetery                      | burial     | -         |
| 35           | Straight-centred? | Roden Down                   | Berkshire       | rural settlement / cemetery                                  | burial     | -         |
| 41           | Straight-centred  | Poundbury                    | Dorset          | major town / civitas capital / cemetery                      | burial     | 5.28      |
| 42           | Straight-centred  | Poundbury                    | Dorset          | major town / civitas capital / cemetery                      | burial     | 5.26      |
| 45           | Straight-centred  | Woodyates                    | Dorset          | nucleated settlement / village / cemetery                    | burial     | -         |
| 48           | Straight-centred  | London, Giltspur Street      | -               | major town / provincial capital / cemetery                   | burial     | 4.6       |
| 62           | Straight-centred  | Lynch Farm, Orton Waterville | Cambridgeshire  | rural settlement / farm / cemetery                           | burial     | 4.3       |
| 75           | Straight-centred  | Castle Copse, Great Bedwyn   | Wiltshire       | rural settlement / villa                                     | pit        | 4.8       |
| 78           | Straight-centred  | Cirencester                  | Gloucestershire | major town / civitas capital / provincial capital            | -          | 3.4       |

| Catalogue No | End-plate Group              | Site                                      | County           | Site type   | Context                                | Figure |
|--------------|------------------------------|---|------------------|---|--|--------|
| 86           | Straight-centred, unfinished | Richborough                               | Kent             | military / fort (Saxon Shore)                     | building debris                        | 3.2    |
| 88           | Straight-centred             | Darenth                                   | Kent             | rural settlement / villa / baths                  | demolition debris                      | 5.28   |
| 89           | Straight-centred             | Ickham                                    | Kent             | nucleated settlement / industrial                 | -                                      | -      |
| 91           | Straight-centred             | Colchester, Cups Hotel                    | Essex            | major town / civitas capital?                     | destruction debris                     | 5.26   |
| 94           | Straight-centred             | Foxton                                    | Cambridgeshire   | rural settlement / farm                           | -                                      | -      |
| 97           | Straight-centred             | Caistor St Edmund (Caistor-by-Norwich)    | Norfolk          | major town / civitas capital                      | -                                      | -      |
| 98           | Straight-centred             | Thorplands                                | Northamptonshire | rural settlement / farm                           | dark earth                             | 5.29   |
| 99           | Straight-centred             | Thorplands                                | Northamptonshire | rural settlement / farm                           | late Roman settlement into earlier pit | 5.26   |
| 116          | Straight-centred             | York, Wellington Row                      | -                | major town / provincial capital                   | dark earth                             | 5.18   |
| 118          | Straight-centred             | South Shields                             | Tyne and Wear    | military / fort (supply depot for Hadrian's Wall) | -                                      | 5.26   |
| 121          | Straight-centred             | South Shields                             | Tyne and Wear    | military / fort (supply depot for Hadrian's Wall) | -                                      | -      |
| 126          | Straight-centred             | Amesbury, Amesbury Down                   | Wiltshire        | nucleated settlement / village / cemetery         | burial                                 | -      |
| 135          | Straight-centred             | Love's Farm, near St Neot's               | Cambridgeshire   | nucleated settlement / village / farm             | well                                   | -      |
| 136          | Straight-centred             | Love's Farm, near St Neot's               | Cambridgeshire   | nucleated settlement / village / farm             | -                                      | -      |
| 145          | Straight-centred?            | Childrey Warren, near Letcombe Bassett    | Oxfordshire      | rural settlement / cemetery                       | burial                                 | 4.7    |
| 147          | Straight-centred             | York (York Museum)                        | -                | major town / provincial capital                   | -                                      | 5.27   |
| 148          | Straight-centred             | Great Whelnetnam                          | Suffolk          | rural settlement / cemetery                       | burial                                 | 3.3    |
| 152          | Straight-centred             | Somersham, Knobb's Farm                   | Cambridgeshire   | rural settlement / farm / cemetery                | burial                                 | -      |
|              |                              |   |                  |   |  |        |
| 7            | Concave                      | Winchester, Victoria Road                 | Hampshire        | major town / civitas capital / cemetery           | burial                                 | -      |
| 13           | Concave                      | Winchester, Lankhills                     | Hampshire        | major town / civitas capital / cemetery           | burial                                 | 5.31   |
| 26           | Concave                      | Winchester, Eagle Hotel, Andover Road     | Hampshire        | major town / civitas capital / cemetery           | burial                                 | 5.33   |
| 27           | Concave                      | Winchester, Winchester Hotel, Worthy Lane | Hampshire        | major town / civitas capital / cemetery           | burial                                 | -      |
| 33           | Concave                      | Dorchester-on-Thames, Queenford Farm      | Oxfordshire      | defended vicus / cemetery                         | burial                                 | 5.31   |
| 34           | Concave                      | Tubney Wood                               | Oxfordshire      | rural settlement / cemetery                       | burial                                 | 5.31   |

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| Catalogue No | End-plate Group | Site                                      | County          | Site type   | Context            | Figure |
|--------------|-----------------|---|-----------------|---|--------------------|--------|
| 63           | Concave         | Glasshoughton, Castleford                 | West Yorkshire  | rural settlement / cemetery                         | burial             | 5.32   |
| 87           | Concave         | Springhead                                | Kent            | nucleated settlement / roadside settlement / bakery | occupation         | -      |
| 104          | Concave         | Aldbrough                                 | North Yorkshire | major town / civitas capital                        | -                  | -      |
| 109          | Concave         | Shiptonthorpe                             | East Yorkshire  | nucleated settlement, roadside settlement           | surface            | 5.33   |
| 111          | Concave         | York, Wellington Row                      | -               | major town / provincial capital                     | dark earth         | 5.18   |
|              |                 |   |                 |   |                    |        |
| 3            | -               | Winchester, St Martin's Close, Winnall    | Hampshire       | major town / civitas capital / cemetery             | burial             | -      |
| 6            | -               | Winchester, Victoria Road                 | Hampshire       | major town / civitas capital / cemetery             | burial             | -      |
| 8            | -               | Winchester, Lankhills                     | Hampshire       | major town / civitas capital / cemetery             | burial             | -      |
| 16           | -               | Winchester, Lankhills                     | Hampshire       | major town / civitas capital / cemetery             | burial             | -      |
| 18           | -               | Winchester, Lankhills                     | Hampshire       | major town / civitas capital / cemetery             | burial             | -      |
| 19           | -               | Winchester, Lankhills                     | Hampshire       | major town / civitas capital / cemetery             | burial             | -      |
| 21           | -               | Winchester, Lankhills                     | Hampshire       | major town / civitas capital / cemetery             | burial             | -      |
| 24           | -               | Winchester, Lankhills                     | Hampshire       | major town / civitas capital / cemetery             | burial             | -      |
| 29           | -               | Winchester, Winchester Hotel, Worthy Lane | Hampshire       | major town / civitas capital / cemetery             | burial             | -      |
| 30           | -               | Winchester, Winchester Hotel, Worthy Lane | Hampshire       | major town / civitas capital / cemetery             | burial             | -      |
| 38           | -               | Poundbury                                 | Dorset          | major town / civitas capital / cemetery             | burial             | -      |
| 39           | -               | Poundbury                                 | Dorset          | major town / civitas capital / cemetery             | burial             | -      |
| 43           | -               | Poundbury                                 | Dorset          | major town / civitas capital / cemetery             | burial             | -      |
| 46           | -               | Northover, Ilchester                      | Somerset        | defended vicus / cemetery                           | burial             | -      |
| 49           | -               | Dropshort Farm (Magiovinium)              | Buckinghamshire | defended vicus / cemetery                           | burial             | -      |
| 50           | -               | Bledlow-cum-Saunderton                    | Buckinghamshire | rural settlement / villa / cemetery                 | burial (disturbed) | -      |
| 51           | -               | Colchester, Butt Road                     | Essex           | major town / civitas capital? / cemetery            | burial             | -      |
| 52           | -               | Colchester, Butt Road                     | Essex           | major town / civitas capital? / cemetery            | burial             | -      |
| 54           | -               | Colchester, Butt Road                     | Essex           | major town / civitas capital? / cemetery            | burial             | -      |
| 56           | -               | Colchester, Butt Road                     | Essex           | major town / civitas capital? / cemetery            | burial             | -      |
| 57           | -               | Colchester, Butt Road                     | Essex           | major town / civitas capital? / cemetery            | burial             | -      |

| Catalogue No | End-plate Group | Site                                  | County          | Site type   | Context                  | Figure |
|--------------|-----------------|---------------------------------------|-----------------|---|--------------------------|--------|
| 59           | -               | Foxton                                | Cambridgeshire  | rural settlement / farm / cemetery                | burial                   | -      |
| 60           | -               | Guilden Morden                        | Cambridgeshire  | rural settlement / cemetery                       | burial                   | -      |
| 61           | -               | Chesterton, Castor (Durobrivae)       | Cambridgeshire  | defended vicus / cemetery                         | burial                   | -      |
| 65           | -               | Norton                                | North Yorkshire | vicus (for Malton fort) / cemetery                | burial                   | -      |
| 66           | -               | Winchester, Eagle Hotel, Andover Road | Hampshire       | major town / civitas capital / cemetery           | residual in cemetery     | -      |
| 67           | -               | Winchester, Victoria Road             | Hampshire       | major town / civitas capital / cemetery           | unstratified in cemetery | -      |
| 70           | -               | Portchester                           | Hampshire       | military / fort (Saxon Shore)                     | -                        | -      |
| 74           | -               | Castle Copse, Great Bedwyn            | Wiltshire       | rural settlement / villa                          | pit                      | -      |
| 76           | -               | Uley                                  | Gloucestershire | religious complex / temple                        | -                        | -      |
| 77           | -               | Lydney                                | Gloucestershire | religious complex / temple                        | -                        | -      |
| 79           | -               | Cirencester                           | Gloucestershire | major town / civitas capital / provincial capital | -                        | -      |
| 82           | -               | London, Pudding Lane                  | -               | major town / provincial capital                   | bathhouse drain          | -      |
| 83           | -               | London, Pudding Lane                  | -               | major town / provincial capital                   | bathhouse drain          | -      |
| 84           | -               | London, Cannon Street                 | -               | major town / provincial capital                   | bathhouse drain          | -      |
| 85           | -               | Canterbury, St Margaret's Street      | Kent            | major town / civitas capital                      | dark earth above baths   | -      |
| 90           | -               | Colchester, Balcerne Lane             | Essex           | major town / civitas capital?                     | late Roman topsoil       | -      |
| 100          | -               | Wroxeter                              | Shropshire      | major town / civitas capital                      | baths basilica           | -      |
| 101          | -               | Wroxeter                              | Shropshire      | major town / civitas capital                      | -                        | -      |
| 102          | -               | Lincoln                               | Lincolnshire    | major town / civitas capital / provincial capital | pit                      | -      |
| 103          | -               | Lincoln                               | Lincolnshire    | major town / civitas capital / provincial capital | dump                     | -      |
| 106          | -               | Langton                               | North Yorkshire | rural settlement / villa                          | well used as rubbish pit | -      |
| 123          | -               | Winchester, Hyde Church Lane          | Hampshire       | major town / civitas capital / cemetery           | burial                   | -      |
| 127          | -               | Amesbury, Amesbury Down               | Wiltshire       | nucleated settlement / village / cemetery         | burial                   | -      |
| 128          | -               | Amesbury, Amesbury Down               | Wiltshire       | nucleated settlement / village / cemetery         | burial                   | -      |
| 130          | -               | Amesbury, Amesbury Down               | Wiltshire       | nucleated settlement / village / cemetery         | residual in cemetery     | -      |
| 132          | -               | Bath                                  | Somerset        | defended vicus / temple / baths                   | temple                   | -      |

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| Catalogue No | End-plate Group | Site         | County          | Site type                     | Context                        | Figure |
|--------------|-----------------|--------------|-----------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------|
| 134          | -               | Bancroft     | Buckinghamshire | rural settlement / villa      | demolition/ destruction debris | -      |
| 140          | -               | Piercebridge | Co. Durham      | military / fort               | bath-house drain               | -      |
| 142          | -               | Richborough  | Kent            | military / fort (Saxon Shore) | topsoil                        | -      |
| 95           | -               | not used     | -               | -                             |                                | -      |

## Appendix 3

### Concordance by site type

Places are listed in alphabetical order within site type, apart from in the major towns group, where Winchester is placed first.

| Catalogue No | End-plate Group          | Site                                   | County    | Site type                               | Context | Figure    |
|--------------|--------------------------|--|-----------|---|---------|-----------|
| 1            | Horse 1                  | Winchester, Hyde Street                | Hampshire | major town / civitas capital / cemetery | burial  | 5.5       |
| 2            | as Horse 1               | Winchester, St Martin's Close, Winnall | Hampshire | major town / civitas capital / cemetery | burial  | 5.2       |
| 3            | -                        | Winchester, St Martin's Close, Winnall | Hampshire | major town / civitas capital / cemetery | burial  | -         |
| 4            | Owl 2                    | Winchester, Victoria Road              | Hampshire | major town / civitas capital / cemetery | burial  | 1.1, 5.21 |
| 5            | Owl 1                    | Winchester, Victoria Road              | Hampshire | major town / civitas capital / cemetery | burial  | 5.19      |
| 6            | -                        | Winchester, Victoria Road              | Hampshire | major town / civitas capital / cemetery | burial  | -         |
| 7            | Concave                  | Winchester, Victoria Road              | Hampshire | major town / civitas capital / cemetery | burial  | -         |
| 8            | -                        | Winchester, Lankhills                  | Hampshire | major town / civitas capital / cemetery | burial  | -         |
| 9            | Straight-centred         | Winchester, Lankhills                  | Hampshire | major town / civitas capital / cemetery | burial  | -         |
| 10           | Straight-centred         | Winchester, Lankhills                  | Hampshire | major town / civitas capital / cemetery | burial  | 5.29      |
| 11           | Owl 3                    | Winchester, Lankhills                  | Hampshire | major town / civitas capital / cemetery | burial  | 5.22      |
| 12           | Dolphin to Owl           | Winchester, Lankhills                  | Hampshire | major town / civitas capital / cemetery | burial  | 5.15      |
| 13           | Concave                  | Winchester, Lankhills                  | Hampshire | major town / civitas capital / cemetery | burial  | 5.31      |
| 14           | Dolphin, one at each end | Winchester, Lankhills                  | Hampshire | major town / civitas capital / cemetery | burial  | 5.10      |
| 15           | Dolphin to Owl           | Winchester, Lankhills                  | Hampshire | major town / civitas capital / cemetery | burial  | 5.15      |
| 16           | -                        | Winchester, Lankhills                  | Hampshire | major town / civitas capital / cemetery | burial  | -         |
| 17           | Owl 3                    | Winchester, Lankhills                  | Hampshire | major town / civitas capital / cemetery | burial  | 5.22      |
| 18           | -                        | Winchester, Lankhills                  | Hampshire | major town / civitas capital / cemetery | burial  | -         |
| 19           | -                        | Winchester, Lankhills                  | Hampshire | major town / civitas capital / cemetery | burial  | -         |
| 20           | Devolved Dolphin         | Winchester, Lankhills                  | Hampshire | major town / civitas capital / cemetery | burial  | -         |
| 21           | -                        | Winchester, Lankhills                  | Hampshire | major town / civitas capital / cemetery | burial  | -         |
| 22           | Devolved Dolphin         | Winchester, Lankhills                  | Hampshire | major town / civitas capital / cemetery | burial  | -         |

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| Catalogue No | End-plate Group  | Site                                      | County          | Site type  | Context                  | Figure |
|--------------|------------------|---|-----------------|--|--------------------------|--------|
| 23           | Owl 2            | Winchester, Lankhills                     | Hampshire       | major town / civitas capital / cemetery                      | burial                   | -      |
| 24           | -                | Winchester, Lankhills                     | Hampshire       | major town / civitas capital / cemetery                      | burial                   | -      |
| 25           | Straight-centred | Winchester, Lankhills                     | Hampshire       | major town / civitas capital / cemetery                      | burial                   | -      |
| 26           | Concave          | Winchester, Eagle Hotel, Andover Road     | Hampshire       | major town / civitas capital / cemetery                      | burial                   | 5.33   |
| 27           | Concave          | Winchester, Winchester Hotel, Worthy Lane | Hampshire       | major town / civitas capital / cemetery                      | burial                   | -      |
| 28           | Dolphin to owl?  | Winchester, Winchester Hotel              | Hampshire       | major town / civitas capital / cemetery                      | burial                   | -      |
| 29           | -                | Winchester, Winchester Hotel, Worthy Lane | Hampshire       | major town / civitas capital / cemetery                      | burial                   | -      |
| 30           | -                | Winchester, Winchester Hotel, Worthy Lane | Hampshire       | major town / civitas capital / cemetery                      | burial                   | -      |
| 66           | -                | Winchester, Eagle Hotel, Andover Road     | Hampshire       | major town / civitas capital / cemetery                      | residual in cemetery     | -      |
| 67           | -                | Winchester, Victoria Road                 | Hampshire       | major town / civitas capital / cemetery                      | unstratified in cemetery | -      |
| 68           | Devolved Dolphin | Winchester, Lankhills                     | Hampshire       | major town / civitas capital / cemetery                      | residual in cemetery     | -      |
| 123          | -                | Winchester, Hyde Church Lane              | Hampshire       | major town / civitas capital / cemetery                      | burial                   | -      |
| 104          | Concave          | Aldborough                                | North Yorkshire | major town / civitas capital                                 | -                        | -      |
| 105          | Devolved Dolphin | Aldborough                                | North Yorkshire | major town / civitas capital                                 | -                        | -      |
| 97           | Straight-centred | Caistor St Edmund (Caistor-by-Norwich)    | Norfolk         | major town / civitas capital                                 | -                        | -      |
| 85           | -                | Canterbury, St Margaret's Street          | Kent            | major town / civitas capital                                 | dark earth above baths   | -      |
| 36           | Owl 2            | Chichester, Westgate                      | West Sussex     | major town / civitas capital / cemetery                      | burial                   | 5.21   |
| 47           | Owl 1            | Cirencester, Bath Gate                    | Gloucestershire | major town / civitas capital / provincial capital / cemetery | burial                   | 5.19   |
| 78           | Straight-centred | Cirencester                               | Gloucestershire | major town / civitas capital / provincial capital            | -                        | 3.4    |
| 79           | -                | Cirencester                               | Gloucestershire | major town / civitas capital / provincial capital            | -                        | -      |
| 51           | -                | Colchester, Butt Road                     | Essex           | major town / civitas capital? / cemetery                     | burial                   | -      |
| 52           | -                | Colchester, Butt Road                     | Essex           | major town / civitas capital? / cemetery                     | burial                   | -      |
| 53           | Devolved Dolphin | Colchester, Butt Road                     | Essex           | major town / civitas capital? / cemetery                     | burial                   | 5.14   |
| 54           | -                | Colchester, Butt Road                     | Essex           | major town / civitas capital? / cemetery                     | burial                   | -      |
| 55           | Devolved Dolphin | Colchester, Butt Road                     | Essex           | major town / civitas capital? / cemetery                     | burial                   | 5.14   |
| 56           | -                | Colchester, Butt Road                     | Essex           | major town / civitas capital? / cemetery                     | burial                   | -      |

| Catalogue No | End-plate Group        | Site                      | County       | Site type   | Context              | Figure |
|--------------|------------------------|---------------------------|--------------|---|----------------------|--------|
| 57           | -                      | Colchester, Butt Road     | Essex        | major town / civitas capital? / cemetery          | burial               | -      |
| 69           | Devolved Dolphin       | Colchester, Butt Road     | Essex        | major town / civitas capital? / cemetery          | residual in cemetery | -      |
| 90           | -                      | Colchester, Balkerne Lane | Essex        | major town / civitas capital?                     | late Roman topsoil   | -      |
| 91           | Straight-centred       | Colchester, Cups Hotel    | Essex        | major town / civitas capital? / cemetery          | destruction debris   | 5.26   |
| 38           | -                      | Dorchester, Poundbury     | Dorset       | major town / civitas capital / cemetery           | burial               | -      |
| 39           | -                      | Dorchester, Poundbury     | Dorset       | major town / civitas capital / cemetery           | burial               | -      |
| 40           | Devolved Dolphin       | Dorchester, Poundbury     | Dorset       | major town / civitas capital / cemetery           | burial               | 5.12   |
| 41           | Straight-centred       | Dorchester, Poundbury     | Dorset       | major town / civitas capital / cemetery           | burial               | 5.28   |
| 42           | Straight-centred       | Dorchester, Poundbury     | Dorset       | major town / civitas capital / cemetery           | burial               | 5.26   |
| 43           | -                      | Dorchester, Poundbury     | Dorset       | major town / civitas capital / cemetery           | burial               | -      |
| 44           | Devolved Dolphin       | Dorchester, Poundbury     | Dorset       | major town / civitas capital / cemetery           | burial               | 5.13   |
| 102          | -                      | Lincoln                   | Lincolnshire | major town / civitas capital / provincial capital | pit                  | -      |
| 103          | -                      | Lincoln                   | Lincolnshire | major town / civitas capital / provincial capital | dump                 | -      |
| 48           | Straight-centred       | London, Giltspur Street   | -            | major town / provincial capital / cemetery        | burial               | 4.6    |
| 80           | Dolphin, complex-ended | London, Pudding Lane      | -            | major town / provincial capital                   | bathhouse drain      | 3.5    |
| 81           | Dolphin, complex-ended | London, Pudding Lane      | -            | major town / provincial capital                   | bathhouse drain      | 5.8    |
| 82           | -                      | London, Pudding Lane      | -            | major town / provincial capital                   | bathhouse drain      | -      |
| 83           | -                      | London, Pudding Lane      | -            | major town / provincial capital                   | bathhouse drain      | -      |
| 84           | -                      | London, Cannon Street     | -            | major town / provincial capital                   | bathhouse drain      | -      |
| 71           | Devolved Dolphin       | Silchester                | Hampshire    | major town / civitas capital                      | -                    | 5.12   |
| 100          | -                      | Wroxeter                  | Shropshire   | major town / civitas capital                      | baths basilica       | -      |
| 101          | -                      | Wroxeter                  | Shropshire   | major town / civitas capital                      | -                    | -      |
| 110          | Devolved Dolphin       | York, Wellington Row      | -            | major town / provincial capital                   | dark earth           | 5.18   |
| 111          | Concave                | York, Wellington Row      | -            | major town / provincial capital                   | dark earth           | 5.18   |
| 112          | Dolphin to Owl         | York, Wellington Row      | -            | major town / provincial capital                   | dark earth           | 5.18   |
| 113          | Devolved Dolphin       | York, Wellington Row      | -            | major town / provincial capital                   | dark earth           | 5.18   |

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| Catalogue No | End-plate Group        | Site                                      | County          | Site type   | Context               | Figure |
|--------------|------------------------|---|-----------------|---|-----------------------|--------|
| 114          | Dolphin to Owl         | York, Wellington Row                      | -               | major town / provincial capital                     | dark earth            | 5.18   |
| 115          | Devolved Dolphin       | York, Wellington Row                      | -               | major town / provincial capital                     | dark earth            | 5.18   |
| 116          | Straight-centred       | York, Wellington Row                      | -               | major town / provincial capital                     | dark earth            | 5.18   |
| 146          | Dolphin to owl         | York (York Museum, RE 1840)               | -               | major town / provincial capital                     | dark earth            | 5.16   |
| 147          | Straight-centred       | York (York Museum)                        | -               | major town / / provincial capital                   | -                     | 5.27   |
| 72           | Dolphin to Owl         | Alchester                                 | Oxfordshire     | defended vicus                                      | destruction debris    | 5.15   |
| 131          | Devolved Dolphin       | Bath                                      | Somerset        | defended vicus / temple / baths                     | temple                | -      |
| 132          | -                      | Bath                                      | Somerset        | defended vicus / temple / baths                     | temple                | -      |
| 133          | as Horse 2             | Cambridge, Arbury Road                    | Cambridgeshire  | defended vicus                                      | dump/dark earth       | 5.7    |
| 61           | -                      | Chesterton, Castor (Durobrivae)           | Cambridgeshire  | defended vicus / cemetery                           | burial                | -      |
| 93           | Devolved Dolphin       | Chelmsford                                | Essex           | defended vicus                                      | oven                  | -      |
| 33           | Concave                | Dorchester-on-Thames, Queenford Farm      | Oxfordshire     | defended vicus / cemetery                           | burial                | 5.31   |
| 73           | Dolphin, complex-ended | Dorchester-on-Thames, near Old Castle Inn | Oxfordshire     | defended vicus                                      | on metallated surface | 5.8    |
| 153          | Owl 3                  | Dorchester-on-Thames                      | Oxfordshire     | defended vicus                                      | pit                   | 5.24   |
| 49           | -                      | Dropshort Farm (Magiovinium)              | Buckinghamshire | defended vicus / cemetery                           | burial                | -      |
| 144          | Devolved Dolphin       | Great Chesterford                         | Essex           | defended vicus                                      | -                     | -      |
| 46           | -                      | Ilchester, Northover                      | Somerset        | defended vicus / cemetery                           | burial                | -      |
| 92           | Horse 2                | Great Dunmow, shrine                      | Essex           | nucleated settlement / shrine                       | votive pit            | 5.7    |
| 58           | Horse 2                | Heybridge                                 | Essex           | nucleated settlement / cemetery                     | burial                | 5.7    |
| 109          | Concave                | Shiptonthorpe                             | East Yorkshire  | nucleated settlement / roadside settlement          | surface               | 5.33   |
| 87           | Concave                | Springhead                                | Kent            | nucleated settlement / roadside settlement / bakery | occupation            | -      |
| 124          | Devolved Dolphin       | Amesbury, Amesbury Down                   | Wiltshire       | nucleated settlement / village / cemetery           | burial                | -      |
| 125          | as Owl 2               | Amesbury, Amesbury Down                   | Wiltshire       | nucleated settlement / village / cemetery           | burial                | -      |
| 126          | Straight-centred       | Amesbury, Amesbury Down                   | Wiltshire       | nucleated settlement / village / cemetery           | burial                | -      |
| 127          | -                      | Amesbury, Amesbury Down                   | Wiltshire       | nucleated settlement / village / cemetery           | burial                | -      |
| 128          | -                      | Amesbury, Amesbury Down                   | Wiltshire       | nucleated settlement / village / cemetery           | burial                | -      |
| 129          | Devolved Dolphin       | Amesbury, Amesbury Down                   | Wiltshire       | nucleated settlement / village / cemetery           | burial                | -      |

| Catalogue No | End-plate Group   | Site                                   | County           | Site type                                 | Context                        | Figure |
|--------------|-------------------|--|------------------|---|--------------------------------|--------|
| 130          | -                 | Amesbury, Amesbury Down                | Wiltshire        | nucleated settlement / village / cemetery | residual in cemetery           | -      |
| 135          | Straight-centred  | Love's Farm, near St Neot's            | Cambridgeshire   | nucleated settlement / village / farm     | well                           | -      |
| 136          | Straight-centred  | Love's Farm, near St Neot's            | Cambridgeshire   | nucleated settlement / village / farm     | -                              | -      |
| 45           | Straight-centred  | Woodyates                              | Dorset           | nucleated settlement/ village / cemetery  | burial                         | -      |
| 31           | Owl 2             | Andover, Winchester Street             | Hampshire        | roadside settlement? / cemetery           | burial                         | 5.21   |
| 77           | -                 | Lydney                                 | Gloucestershire  | religious complex / temple                | -                              | -      |
| 76           | -                 | Uley                                   | Gloucestershire  | religious complex / temple                | -                              | -      |
| 50           | -                 | Bledlow-cum-Saunderton                 | Buckinghamshire  | rural settlement / villa / cemetery       | burial (disturbed)             | -      |
| 108          | Horse 1           | Beadlam                                | North Yorkshire  | rural settlement / villa                  | dispersed fragments            | 5.5    |
| 88           | Straight-centred  | Darenth                                | Kent             | rural settlement / villa / baths          | demolition debris              | 5.28   |
| 75           | Straight-centred  | Great Bedwyn, Castle Copse,            | Wiltshire        | rural settlement / villa                  | pit                            | 4.8    |
| 74           | -                 | Great Bedwyn, Castle Copse             | Wiltshire        | rural settlement / villa                  | pit                            | -      |
| 107          | Dolphin           | Langton                                | North Yorkshire  | rural settlement / villa                  | -                              | 5.8    |
| 106          | -                 | Langton                                | North Yorkshire  | rural settlement / villa                  | well used as rubbish pit       | -      |
| 134          | -                 | Bancroft                               | Buckinghamshire  | rural settlement / villa                  | demolition/ destruction debris | -      |
| 143          | Owl 1             | Wendens Ambo                           | Essex            | rural settlement / villa or farm          | -                              | 5.19   |
| 94           | Straight-centred  | Foxton                                 | Cambridgeshire   | rural settlement / farm                   | -                              | -      |
| 59           | -                 | Foxton                                 | Cambridgeshire   | rural settlement / farm / cemetery        | burial                         | -      |
| 62           | Straight-centred  | Lynch Farm, Orton Waterville           | Cambridgeshire   | rural settlement / farm / cemetery        | burial                         | 4.3    |
| 96           | Dolphin to Owl    | Orton, Orton Hall Farm                 | Cambridgeshire   | rural settlement / farm                   | -                              | 5.16   |
| 98           | Straight-centred  | Thorplands                             | Northamptonshire | rural settlement / farm                   | dark earth                     | 5.29   |
| 99           | Straight-centred  | Thorplands                             | Northamptonshire | rural settlement / farm                   | intrusive in upper pit fill    | 5.26   |
| 145          | Straight-centred? | Childrey Warren, near Letcombe Bassett | Oxfordshire      | rural settlement / cemetery               | burial                         | 4.7    |
| 37           | Devolved Dolphin  | Easton Hill                            | Wiltshire        | rural settlement / cemetery               | burial                         | 5.13   |
| 63           | Concave           | Glasshoughton, Castleford              | West Yorkshire   | rural settlement / cemetery               | burial                         | 5.32   |
| 148          | Straight-centred  | Great Whelnetham                       | Suffolk          | rural settlement / cemetery               | burial                         | 3.3    |
| 149          | Devolved Dolphin  | Great Whelnetham                       | Suffolk          | rural settlement / cemetery               | burial                         | -      |

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| Catalogue No | End-plate Group              | Site                      | County           | Site type   | Context            | Figure |
|--------------|------------------------------|---------------------------|------------------|---|--------------------|--------|
| 60           | -                            | Guilden Morden            | Cambridgeshire   | rural settlement / cemetery                       | burial             | -      |
| 151          | Owl 3                        | Gussage All Saints        | Dorset           | rural settlement / cemetery                       | burial             | 5.23   |
| 32           | Devolved Dolphin             | Horndean                  | Hampshire        | rural settlement / cemetery                       | burial             | -      |
| 35           | Straight-centred?            | Roden Down                | Berkshire        | rural settlement / cemetery                       | burial             | -      |
| 152          | Straight-centred             | Somersham, Knobb's Farm   | Cambridgeshire   | rural settlement / cemetery                       | burial             | -      |
| 34           | Concave                      | Tubney Wood               | Oxfordshire      | rural settlement / cemetery                       | burial             | 5.31   |
| 64           | Horse 1                      | Woodhall, Askrigg         | North Yorkshire  | rural settlement / cemetery                       | burial             | 5.5    |
| 89           | Straight-centred             | Ickham                    | Kent             | rural settlement / industrial                     | -                  | -      |
| 122          | Dolphin, complex-ended       | Keil, Kintyre             | Argyll and Bute  | rural settlement / cave                           | occupation         | 5.8    |
| 117          | Dolphin, complex-ended       | Newton Bewley, Hartlepool | Co. Durham       | rural settlement                                  | -                  | 5.8    |
| 150          | Devolved Dolphin             | Stanwick                  | Northamptonshire | rural settlement                                  | -                  | -      |
| 141          | Devolved Dolphin, unfinished | Carrawburgh               | Northumberland   | military / fort                                   | -                  | 3.2    |
| 137          | Devolved Dolphin             | Malton                    | North Yorkshire  | military / fort (Norton = vicus)                  | -                  | 3.4    |
| 138          | Devolved Dolphin             | Malton                    | North Yorkshire  | military / fort (Norton = vicus)                  | -                  | -      |
| 65           | -                            | Norton                    | North Yorkshire  | vicus (for Malton fort)                           | burial             | -      |
| 139          | Horse 1                      | Piercebridge              | Co. Durham       | military / fort                                   | area of fort ditch | 5.5    |
| 140          | -                            | Piercebridge              | Co. Durham       | military / fort                                   | bath-house drain   | -      |
| 70           | -                            | Portchester               | Hampshire        | military / fort (Saxon Shore)                     | -                  | -      |
| 86           | Straight-centred, unfinished | Richborough               | Kent             | military / fort (Saxon Shore)                     | building debris    | 3.2    |
| 142          | -                            | Richborough               | Kent             | military / fort (Saxon Shore)                     | topsoil            | -      |
| 119          | Devolved Dolphin             | South Shields             | Tyne and Wear    | military / fort (supply depot for Hadrian's Wall) | -                  | 5.13   |
| 120          | Devolved Dolphin             | South Shields             | Tyne and Wear    | military / fort (supply depot for Hadrian's Wall) | -                  | -      |
| 118          | Straight-centred             | South Shields             | Tyne and Wear    | military / fort (supply depot for Hadrian's Wall) | -                  | 5.26   |
| 121          | Straight-centred             | South Shields             | Tyne and Wear    | military / fort (supply depot for Hadrian's Wall) | -                  | -      |

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