

BONE STYLI

(Text revised for publication from a preliminary draft by I Riddler)

It is probable that these neatly turned items are writing implements for use with waxed tablets (N L Ramsay in Alexander & Binski 1987, 382-3, nos 420-1, and Arthur MacGregor *pers comm*, revising an earlier interpretation that they were used to mark horizontal lines in manuscripts to act as writing guides - cf. D Brown in Biddle 1990, 733-5; MacGregor 1985a, 125). The revised interpretation is supported by the occurrence of such implements in surviving late medieval writing sets, e.g., from Hamburg in Germany; this set also includes waxed tablets (Hanse 2 1989, 202, no 12.3). The use of these objects as styli would explain their frequent occurrence in scholastic and ecclesiastical establishments (e.g., Egan 1989b, 231-2, nos 22-7, fig 66; J Geddes in

Hare 1985, 149-51, fig 45, nos 6-20; Woodfield 1981, 103, fig 10, no 4).

These items were also formerly identified as being of Roman date (e.g., Guildhall Museum Catalogue 1908, 43). Some from Whitby in Yorkshire, which were long accepted as Anglo-Saxon, are likely to have come from later medieval levels (MacGregor 1985a, 124). The 13 stratified examples listed below confirm a late medieval date for these objects, underlined by further examples from 13th- and 14th-century contexts at Southampton, King's Lynn, Hull and Oxford (*ibid*; Platt & Coleman Smith 1975, nos 1928, 1936-7; Clarke & Carter 1977, fig 143.9; Durham 1977, fig 38.15). They may well have continued into the post-medieval period, as examples from 16th-century contexts are recorded from London and elsewhere (e.g., Woodfield 1981, 103, fig 10, no 4).

The points of Nos 904 and 905 (the latter is rather blunt) have been roughly cut in the bone, presumably following breakage of the shafts and the loss of original iron tips.

No	Site	Acc No	Context	Ceramic phase	Fig	Length (mm)	Diameter of shaft (mm)	Point	Comments
899	CUS73	265	I,12	9		42+	6	missing	shaft incomplete
900	CUS73	256	I,12	9		61	5	missing	
901	CUS73	269	III,10	9	210	78	6	(?)iron	
902	TL74	1482	353	10		54+	7	iron	knop missing
903	TL74	156	309	10	210	65	6	missing	
904	BC72	2799	118	10-11	210	85	9	bone	point re-carved
905	TL74	584	414	11	210	54	8	bone	point re-carved
906	BWB83	2676	334	11	210	72	7	iron	
907	TL74	155	291	11		74+	8	iron	knop missing
908	TL74	790	414	11	210	83	5.5	missing	
909	TL74	162	306	11	210	86	7.5	missing	
910	TL74	2649	10	10-12		65	5.5	missing	
911	SWA81	802	2108	12	210	91	9	(?)iron	

Numbers 899-901 have been published (Henig 1974, 197-8, nos 216 and 218-19, fig 197; nos 214-15 and 217 were not located for the present catalogue).