

Wells of Wonders: New Discoveries at Cetamura del Chianti

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editor
Nancy T. de Grummond

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II.2.1.1. Worked Bone Implements (cat. nos. 124-133)

Kelsey Swanson and Lora Holland

Twelve worked-bone artifacts include one or two needles, styluses for writing, cosmetic applicators, and some possible hairpins, though precise identification of their use is subject to debate (Bianchi 1995; Stephens 2008). Our general principle has been to identify as a stylus those artifacts showing wear on both ends, but in some cases an end is missing, or the evidence for wear is inconclusive. Some may have been ritually broken (at head, middle, or end); and if some are indeed hairpins, then the objects in this assemblage served as appropriate offerings both for men and women at Cetamura. Their location in the well is problematic for their identification as Etruscan or as Roman artifacts, since they come from both Etruscan and Roman Well Groups and one specimen (cat. no 131) even had joining parts coming from two groups spanning as much as nearly 140 years.



Fig. 1. Bone implements. From left to right: Top, cat. nos. 124, 125, 126, 127, 128; Bottom, 129, 130, 131, 132, 133

124. Bone needle

Inv. C-12-305. Prov. 5N/18W.85. L. 5.7. Max. w. 0.4. Wt. 2 g
Needle made of smoothed bone with large, rough-cut eye. Top section above eye is smooth and rounded with a small, pointed tip end. Needle tapers downward; bottom point has broken off. Bone dark brown with some slightly black sections. Judging from the width of the needle and the eye, it could be a needle used for hair sewing as well as for sewing textiles or other materials.

Dating: Found in Well Group VII (ca. 37–68 CE).

Bibl.: Ruegg 1995, 97–99. Stephens 2008.

KSw, LH

125. Bone implement

Inv. C-13-837. Prov. 5N/18W.102.2. L. 4.7. W. 0.5. Wt. ca. 1 g
Worked bone shaft with one end pointed, other end bro-



Fig. 124



Fig. 125

ken off. Shaft rough, more rectangular than cylindrical. Coloration gray to brown. Various identifications possible (awl, needle, stylus, applicator?).

Dating: Found in Well Group III (150–100 BCE).

Bibl.: Ruegg 1995, 94–96.

NTdeG

126. Bone implement

Inv. C-13-877. Prov. 5N/18W.100.1. L. 3. Diam. 0.2. Wt. 1 g
Worked bone shaft broken on both ends. Cylindrical in shape, slightly tapering; smooth in texture. Coloration tan to brown, with some blackened spots. Possibly a fragment of a bone cosmetic applicator, hairpin or stylus, or, less likely, a needle.

Dating: Found in Well Group III (150–100 BCE).

Bibl.: Ruegg 1995, 94–99. Stephens 2008.

KSw, LH

127. Bone implement

Inv. C-13-935. Prov. 5N/18W.99.2 and 97.1. L. 8.4. Diam. 0.5. Wt. 4 g

Two joining pieces of a cylindrical worked-bone implement. Smooth, very finely polished. Head broken off (cf. cat. nos. 128–30) and missing. Implement is narrow at the neck; below that, a carinated shoulder. Tapers to a point



Fig. 126



Fig. 127

at the opposite end. Coloration gray with mottling of tan to dark brown.

Implements of this sort are typically identified as cosmetic applicators, styli, or hairpins.

Dating: Found in Well Group IV (ca. 100–50 BCE).

Bibl.: Ruegg 1995, 94–99. Stephens 2008.

KSw, LH

128. Bone implement

Inv. C-13-450. Prov. 5N/18W.96.2. L. 9. W. 0.5 at middle of head and 0.8 at widest point. Wt. 4 g

Intact cylindrical bone implement. The head is a thin bulb with a small nipple on top. Several grooves in the neck. Shaft gradually widens until it narrows back into a very



Fig. 128

fine point. Coloration gray with dark brown and black spots.

Implements of this sort are typically identified as cosmetic applicators, styli, or hairpins.

Dating: Found in Well Group IV (ca. 100–50 BCE).

Bibl.: Ruegg 1995, 94–99. Stephens 2008.

KSw, LH

129. Bone implement

Inv. C-13-692. Prov. 5N/18W.95.1. L. 7.9. W. 0.5 at widest section of head; 0.5 at widest part of shaft. Wt. 3 g

Intact cylindrical bone implement. Head roughly conical. Light carination of shaft above the point. Parts of shaft not well smoothed; vertical ridges and tiny horizontal striations suggest where bone was sawn. Coloration tan and brown.

Implements of this sort are typically identified as cosmetic applicators, styli, or hairpins.

Dating: Found in Well Group IV (ca. 100–50 BCE).

Bibl.: Ruegg 1995, 94–99. Stephens 2008.

KSw, LH

130. Bone implement

Inv. C-13-452, C-13-693, C-13-738. Prov. 5N/18W.95. L. 11.6. W. 0.6 at head, 0.8 at widest section. Wt. 11 g



Fig. 129



Fig. 130

Three joining pieces of a whole cylindrical worked-bone implement. Found with the globular head and point broken off, perhaps intentionally so for ritual purposes. Bone is finely polished, dark gray with some blackened areas, especially at the head. Wear on one section of the globular end, revealing porous bone, and slightly blunted point suggest use as a stylus, as does its weight, which seems too heavy to be practical as a hairpin or applicator.

Probably a stylus for writing.

Dating: Found in Well Group IV (ca. 100–50 BCE).

Bibl.: Ruegg 1995, 95. Stephens 2008.

KSw, LH

131. Bone implement

C-13-691. Prov. 5N/18W.88. and 95.1. L. 6.5. W. 0.2 at pointed end, 0.4 at widest section. Wt. 3 g

Two joining pieces of a whole cylindrical worked-bone implement. Was broken in half in the center, perhaps intentionally for ritual purposes. Small, simple, and lacking both head and carination. Bone is well polished with brown coloration and dark brown/black spots.

Considerable wear on both ends of the object suggest use as a stylus for writing.



Fig. 131

Dating: Found in Well Groups IV (ca. 100–50 BCE) and VI (31 BCE–37 CE).

Bibl.: Ruegg 1995, 95.

KSw, LH

132. Bone implements (2)

Inv. C-2013-525a. Prov. 5N/18W.93.1. L.7.2. W. 0.2 at top; 0.5 at widest section. Wt. 3 g

Inv. C-2013-525b. Prov. 5N/18W.93.1 L. 7.1. W. 0.5 at head; 0.5 at widest section. Wt. 3 g

Two intact cylindrical worked-bone implements found together and assigned the same inv. no. Possibly dedicated at the same moment.

a. Bone smooth; light tan with some black spots. Form



Fig. 132

simple, with no head and slight swelling in the middle of the shaft. Wear on the pointed end and the top end is possibly from use as a stylus. Probably a stylus, similar in form to cat. no.131.

b. Bone is well polished; tan with brown and black spots. Head bulbous; pinprick hole on top of bulb. Four horizontal grooves at neck; shaft somewhat thicker near the pointed end.

Implements of this sort are typically identified as cosmetic applicators, styli, or hairpins.

Dating: Found in Well Group VI (31 BCE–37 CE).

Bibl.: Ruegg 1995, 94–99. Stephens 2008.

KSw, LH

133. Bone implement

C-12-303 and C-13-47. Prov. 5N/18W.85 and 88.1. L. 7.6.

W. 0.4 at top; 0.8 at widest section. Wt. 5 g

Two joining pieces of a cylindrical worked-bone implement, broken at the neck beneath the bulbous end, per-



Fig. 133

haps intentionally for ritual purposes. The other end has flattening on two opposite sides to create a wedge. The shaft is creamy light brown, but the bulb is tan in color. Shaft narrows, then gets gradually wider, and ends in a dulled point. Wear on both ends of the bone may indicate its use as a stylus.

Dating: Found in Well Group VII (37 CE–68 CE).

Bibl.: Ruegg 1995, 95. Stephens 2008.

KSw, LH