

## Other small finds

**M1**, ME 0344+358, Square Λ, Pass 1

**Bronze pin**, almost completely preserved(?) broken at upper part. Very pointed end. Extensive corrosion of a 3.63 segment from the point up. No corrosion in the remainder 1.61. L. 5.24; Ø (at upper uncorroded part) 0.26, Ø (near corroded point) 0.12.



*Comments:* The uncorroded part of this pin is significant. It probably indicates that this part was somehow protected and not exposed to oxygen like the remainder. Our suggested explanation is that the pin had been inserted into a wooden(?) shaft and that the glue (bitumen?) used was the protective factor. It would thus seem very likely that this bronze pin may have been placed in a wooden shaft and functioned as a stylus for one of the scribes in the archive. The pin was found in the same square as the unfinished(?) clay bar **PE Hh 017**.

Since the upper part of the pin is broken it seems likely that at least two centimetre was needed to stabilise the pin in the wooden shaft. We thus suggest that the original length might have been *c.* 6 centimetre.

Based on the above considerations we had a copy made of the “stylus” with the pin made in brass and the shaft in olive wood. Practical experiments proved that it could very well have been used for the inscriptions, but the long, thin pointed end made it practically impossible to hold in the same way as a pencil is held today. For best possible control of the writing instrument it would probably have been placed between the crook of the index and middle fingers while the tips of these two fingers and the thumb held firmly around the pin of the stylus. Holding the stylus this way had the additional advantage that it would have met the clay more or less at a right angle, as it must have done from what we can observe on the clay bar.

The interpretation of the object as a stylus shall not be considered absolutely certain. For an alternative interpretation of **M1**, see further below, pp. 216-18.

Fig. 27. Conjectural reconstruction of stylus.

