

Object Analysis

An object analysis is intended to engage you with the primary material; however, this is not simply a description of an object, but entails some analytical and critical thought. It is your analysis that I am interested in, but this needs to be situated within an understanding of current research (of this or similar types of object).

Starting points:

1. You need to source the object: either include a museum accession number or the publication details and catalogue number.
2. Think about why you have chosen this object and how it fits into your overall research portfolio.

Empirical observation:

This should be the basis of any analysis. You should present the object clearly, identifying and briefly describing its key characteristics (what is it made of, what size is it, shape, details of manufacture, relevant details of decoration etc.). For guidance on describing objects have a look at the catalogue of finds in an excavation report for example.

Contextualising the object:

You should also research the site and context in which the object was found (unless your object is without provenance - which should be made clear in your analysis), and its associated finds, its degree of completeness (are any breaks post-depositional) should and make some assessment of how it might have been used in antiquity.

You should also briefly consider how this object has been analysed by previous scholars and place your own work within a wider framework of literature. Is your object something that is not written about, and if so why?

Analysis:

The key to this analysis is to think about how your chosen object was used and handled or viewed in antiquity, how was it incorporated within ancient cult/ritual or ceremonial practices and how was it perceived. Is the meaning of the object important? How might you determine this?

To answer these questions, you will need to think about some of the theoretical approaches we have covered in the module, such as Connerton's incorporated knowledges, memory, object biography, inalienability, sensory archaeology, structuralism (for meaning), etc.