**FC-93 Pathways Through the Andes Final Paper**

**Object Paper Assignment Sheet**

This is not a typical research paper; you might not have a single thesis statement that you are supporting throughout. Perhaps it would be helpful to consider this paper like a “biography” of the object. You are attempting to describe it, to analyze it, and to determine its cultural significance. To do this, you will have to conduct both research and firsthand object examination. Throughout this course we have tried to take the knowledge presented in lectures and course readings and to apply it directly to physical objects. The goal of this assignment is for you to demonstrate your ability to do this independently. We want you to demonstrate that you “understand” this object.

By now most of you have selected your objects. If you have any questions about selecting your object or if you unsure of your decisions, please feel free to contact me. Once you have selected your object, please send me the object number so that I know what you’re working on.

First, try and accumulate some background research on your object. Find out what similar kinds of objects have been published on. How have they been interpreted? Has your object already been published on by an author? What have they said about it? The course readings are a good starting point. The authors who wrote these articles have written many other related articles. The bibliographies at the back of the articles and books will help locate more relevant literature and the names of other authors. If you have a problem finding a source, email me and I’ll try and help you out.

Once you feel comfortable that you have a sense of the object, make an appointment with the curators (pmresrch@fas.harvard.edu) to view the object(s). Be sure to bring a number of things to your appointment: a camera will be very helpful, as it will allow you to document what you’ve seen and include it in your paper. Bring a notepad for taking notes, and be sure to ask for a ruler, magnifying glass, tweezers, or any other instruments you think might be helpful (Room 20 has these available for use.)

When examining the object, be sure to take very exact notes of its dimensions, shape, approximate weight, color, materials, etc. This information is very important and will be hard to recoup if you forget to do it during your appointment (because the online information is not always thorough or reliable.) Try to figure out how this object attained these characteristics (i.e. how was it made or manufactured?) Was it altered over the course of its life? Is it broken? Is it whole? Are there any scenes or images on your object? What are they? What do they mean or what significance do they have? As you examine the object, consider how this specific object compares to the objects you’ve read about in your own research thus far. Does it fit the model that other authors have described? Is it significantly different? How does it compare to other objects we’ve looked at in section? How does it compare to objects we’ve talked about in lecture? Once you’ve examined the object(s), further research will be necessary depending on how the object meets or defies your expectations.

Now go back to your research and try to figure out what the object means or what cultural significance it might have. How do you account for the differences or similarities of your object from the corpus? Can you draw any conclusions about your object? Perhaps you’ve discovered that the imagery or designs upon this particular object are uniquely significant? Maybe you’ve found that your object is a poor example or a particularly good example of a particular kind of object? A poorly made object is no less significant than a well made object. In fact, a poorly made object can sometimes be more revealing. Note this. What might this imply? What do you think are the most important characteristics of this object? How does the object resonant with the overarching themes we have discussed in this course?

Finally, present your findings in **approximately 8 double-spaced pages**. (Please feel free to add extra pages of images.) This may seem like a “short” paper, but I assure you – writing a succinct paper of this sort can often be more challenging than writing it in twenty pages. You must hone down the object to its most important characteristics. Again, think of this paper like a “biography.” Although you won’t have a thesis statement, try to construct a narrative for the object (we’ll discuss this more in section.) A biographer must identify the individual that they’re writing about immediately: be sure to include the object number within the first few sentences so that it is clearly identified. When describing the physical qualities of your object (size, shape, materials, etc.) try to be as clear and succinct as possible. When you first introduce your object, try to avoid uncertain or subjective terms. As you move through the analysis of the object, feel free to gradually introduce more interpretive language. Make sure, however, that your paper remains tight and well-edited. At the end, please include a formal bibliography that identifies your sources and footnotes/internal citations where relevant.

This assignment is due on **January 12th,** the last day of reading period.

**Searching the Peabody Database:**

Performing a search on the Peabody Database can be slightly tricky. First go to the search homepage:

<http://www.peabody.harvard.edu/col/default.cfm>

You now have two options:

Option 1

1. On the search homepage, click “Perform A Search”
2. Click “Keyword” (always click keyword. The other search options are useless.)
3. Type any **one** word i.e. **INCA** or **TEXTILE,** but not “Inca Textile” because it won’t recognize this as two separate search terms. You also might have to experiment with spellings: **INCA** vs. **INKA**, **Quipu** vs. **Khipu,** etc.

Option 2

1. On the search homepage, click “Researcher Options”
2. From the pull down menu, select a pre-made list to browse. These lists are neither comprehensive nor exhaustive, but they’re a good start. Some important lists are: “SA: Peru; Ceramics; Inca (51)”, “SA: Peru; Keros (4)” and “SA: Peru; Khipus (7)”

However, as you can see there is no pre-made list for Inca textiles, many of which are included in the lists for tunics, mantles, etc. Inca gold and metal work is subsumed within a list of Andean metalwork, etc. This takes some browsing.

If you have any questions or run into any problems, please feel free to ask questions.