

## **Tutorial Paper: Object Study**

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The following object study describes MU406, a Black-topped Red Polished bowl, located in the Cyprus cabinet in the Museum of Ancient Cultures, Macquarie University. This paper will describe the approximate dimensions, material and state of preservation of the object. The construction of the object and its surface treatment. Along with the function and larger macro influences of the object.

Measuring 12 centimeters horizontally and 10 centimeters vertically, this object is a well preserved hemispheric bowl. The bowl is an open vessel, handmade with no decoration or incisions. On one side of the bowl there is a horizontal pierced horn lug that measures 2 centimeters out from the rim and 6 centimeters down to the center of the body. The bowl has a semicircular base with a body that very slightly curves inwards at the rim, but for the most part is vertical through the body. Although the object is well preserved there are some signs of erosion. The object is in a good state of preservation. It is mostly complete with only a small repair made in modern times to the rim, where it has broken off. There is an indent on the body 90 degrees from the handle, that is tear-like. The indent may have occurred in antiquity, as it seems slightly weathered. The base of the bowl also shows evidence of erosion with some parts having flaked away, although it is unknown when this occurred. This object is very similar to No. G 212 in the University of Graz, Archäologische Sammlungen which is also a Black-Topped Red Polished bowl. However its handle is attached and is shaped as a horizontal eyelet that was possibly used to hang the bowl up (Koiner, unknown).

The surface is covered in a burnished red slip with a black rim, created during firing. The rim and interior are black and the base is red. Generally Red Polished pottery in Cyprus is handmade and have two geological traditions; similar typology to MU406 is found in North Cyprus, and in South Cyprus vessels with a matte surfaces are found (Frankel, 1994:206). The slip method involve's a burnished red slip that covered the surface of a pot. The final colour of the pot depended on the amount of iron oxide in the slip solution, the more iron oxide the more red the luster. The firing method is what gave the pot its unique color combination. The potter would have to employ tight control over firing conditions. By controlling the cooling and heating process's multi-coloured pots could be made. Vessels like this were polished before firing and is most cases were ornate with geometric and linear patterns. An analysis of these patterns reveal that different regions within Cyprus had different styles. Plain pots, like Mu406 were mostly found in the South and extreme west of the island (Tatton-Brown, 1988:24-25). However this object was found in the north of the island near the Kyrenia range.

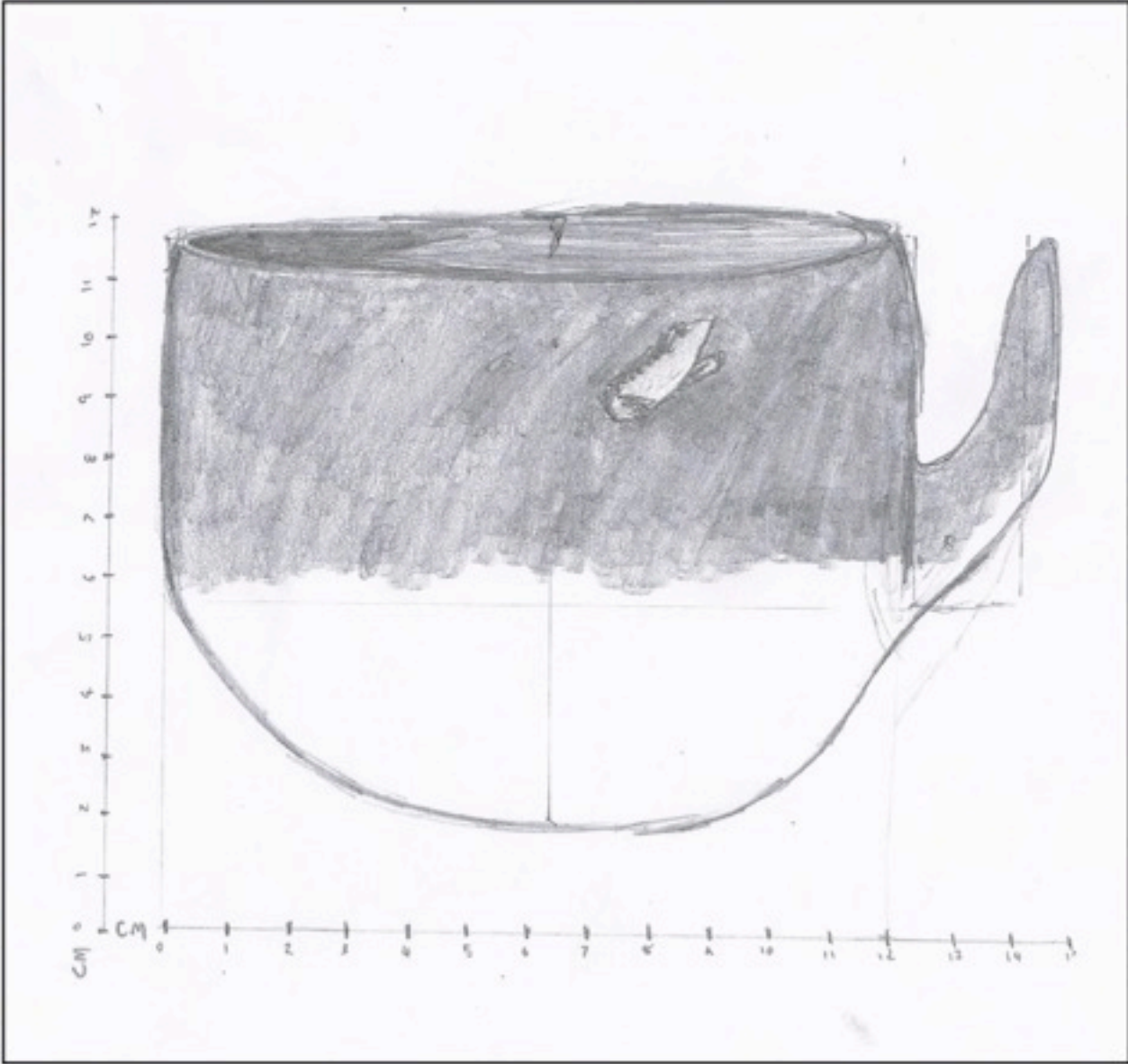
The design and function of the bowl may have been used in a funerary context. Most Black-Topped Red Polished typology are found in grave sites. This bowl was found in the cemetery of Vounous in North Cyprus by James and Eleanor Stewart (Eleanor Stewart, 1950). The site features many well preserved burials. The burial spatial dimensions of this site are north-south orientations, however at this time cemeteries differed in social and mortuary practices and featured different modes of burial (Smith et al., 2008:73-74). Mara Horowitz (2008:77-78) reanalysis of the Vounous site showed that during Early Bronze Age, Late Cypriot IB and Late Cypriot IIA, the site underwent renovations and add on to grave sites. She notes that their is a great diversity is the style of pottery at the site, with the most common being Black-Topped Red Polished ware. Interestingly their is no evidence that pottery was ever made at the site. Most pottery would be imported into the

site probable from Phlanouhi-*Melissa*, a settlement that shares similar types of pottery remains, and around Cyprus (Smith et al., 2008:77-78). Considering where the object was found and the similarity to other finds in burials sites it may be concluded that this object was traditional buried with the dead and may have had little function in everyday life.

This bowl can be interoperated as representing the influences of trade in the wider social context. The wider culture of Bronze Age Cyprus was undergoing a fundamental social change in their economy and subsistence. The island, because of the islands natural copper resources, was become a trading hub. The island major trading partners would have been Syria and Anatolia. According to Keswani (2005:341-422) many of the characteristics for Black-Topped Red Polished ware came from Anatolia through trade routes (Keswani, 2005:341-422, Keswani, 1993:75-76). The object MU406 has been heavily influenced by this interaction and cross cultural and social and economic transparency happening around this time.

This object study considered MU406 in the Museum of Ancient Cultures, Macquarie University. This paper described the approximate dimensions of the object. The material and method of manufacture used. The state of preservation with an examination of the damages and repairs over the object history. The surface treatment with a basic summery of the slip method. The function of the object in a funerary context, and a very brief look into how the features of this object were influenced by larger social and economic events.

MU406 Black-topped Red Polished: Front View



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