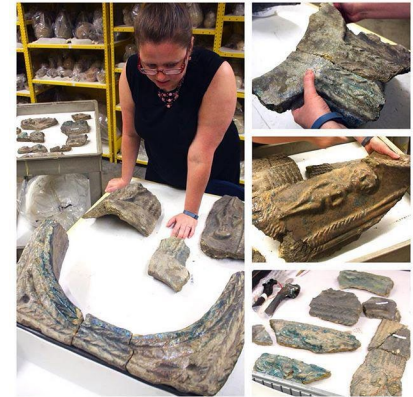


INTERNSHIP IN THE NEAR EASTERN COLLECTION AT THE PENNMUSEUM

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Internship overview

I interned at the Penn Museum in the Near Eastern Collection under Katy Blanchard, along with fellow museum studies students Alex Stern and Sean Keenan. As interns, we were cataloging, photographing, and rehousing material from the site of Beth Shean in Israel.

Some of the material from Beth Shean had been in the collection for nearly 90 years, but still didn't have a picture on the database. Objects are far more likely to be included in academic research when people can see what they look like before contacting the collections keeper. Although our internship was cut short, we assisted in adding over 1,000 photos to the online collection.

In times like today, the importance of having collections that are remotely accessible is especially evident!

Daily responsibilities

1. Pull old box from shelf
2. Check objects against existing list on database to see if everything is accounted for
 - a. Make note of missing or extra objects
3. Photograph each object from multiple angles
4. Put into clearly labeled bags
5. Put objects into new box, return to shelf, dispose of old box

We tended to get through 2-3 boxes a day - there were probably over a hundred boxes in total.



An example of the type of object that we photographed a lot: this is a pottery sherd. It is oriented so that the rim is at the top, and the scale and object number are clearly visible. A box might have anywhere from 10 to 30+ objects in it. Objects might be pottery sherds like this one, complete or semi-complete vessels, lamps, or other stone or clay objects.



One of 6 limestone busts from Beth Shean that I personally handled and photographed. My pictures are now on the official Penn Museum website!

More information, including pictures from other angles and a bibliography, can be found at the Penn Museum online collection:

<https://www.penn.museum/collections/object/72341>

The role of the collections department

- Functions as a research resource for people who come from all over the world to see objects in the penn museum's collection
- Classroom resource for classes at Penn and other colleges and universities
- Internal museum resource for curators and exhibit designers

Katy Blanchard in the storage area of the
Near Eastern Collection.

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/pennmuseum/4875593301>



Katy Blanchard - Keeper of the Near Eastern Collection

As keeper, her job includes:

- Collection maintenance - rehousing, organization, etc.
 - This is what we were helping with during our internship
- Original research on objects
- Bring out objects to work with students and professors
- Give tours in the collection and answer questions from the public
- Recommend objects to researchers and curators, assist with research



Katy Blanchard and project manager Brad Hafford preparing a box of clay tablets to return to Iraq (2019). <https://whyy.org/articles/after-long-term-extended-loan-penn-museum-sends-ancient-iraqi-artifacts-home/>