Artefacts Outside of Exhibits

Marcia Adams, ’21. Classical and Near-Eastern Archaeology and Middle Eastern Studies
Faculty Advisor: Jennie Bradbury, Classical and Near-Eastern Archaeology
Field Supervisor: Katherine Blanchard, Fowler/Van Santvoord Keeper, Near Eastern Collections

Museum Collections in Storage
The artefacts we see in museums make up only a tiny portion of those housed there; the rest are all in storage and are often never on display. They are still a valuable academic resource. There is a wider variety of objects in storage than in galleries, making them more useful for researchers and classes. This semester I have worked in collections storage helping to update records through photography and data-enhancement, making these artefacts more accessible to all.

Photographing Artefacts
- This semester I have worked with a wide variety of objects and learned new photography skills
- Shot-on photography for more 3D objects like vessels and figurines
- Shot-down photography for flatter objects like plaques, bracelets, and tablets
- I also learned more about photo-editing to improve the quality of my photography; the better the quality of the photo, the more useful they are to others

Accessible Archaeology
- The Penn Museum’s online collections allow anyone to look at its objects, including those not on display
- People who are unable to physically visit the museum can still engage with the artefacts
- Photography and well-kept object records are therefore an essential part of accessibility in museums and archaeology, and being able to contribute to that has been a valuable experience for me

The Horsemen of Nippur
This semester I focused my work on a small selection of horse-and-rider figurines from the site of Nippur, Iraq. Alongside photographing them, I visited the Museum Archives to find more information about their context to update their records. It highlighted to me the importance of using archival materials to enhance the information in artefact records, making them more substantial and useful for future researchers.