

## Penn Museum Collections Study Room Object Research Guide

Object Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Museum Number: \_\_\_\_\_

### What can you learn from *examining* the object?

*Note: Please do not handle the object unless you have been given permission to do so.*

#### **Description:**

Spend some time looking closely at the object. *What do you see?* Jot down some descriptive notes, without making any interpretations yet.

#### **Materials:**

What is the object made of? Are there multiple materials? Where did these materials come from, and how were they obtained?

#### **Method of Construction:**

How was the object made? What resources would be required to make this object? What can you tell about the manufacturing process? What skills or training would have been required? How can you tell?

#### **Decoration, iconography, or symbolism:**

What is this object trying to tell its audience? Do you notice any text, decoration, or symbols? How do you interpret them?

#### **Function, purpose, use:**

Does the form of this object provide any clues as to its intended function? Is there any evidence of wear, repair, or re-use? How would you describe the object's current condition? *Who* may have used this object, and why?

## What can you learn from *researching* the object?

### Date:

What methods might you use to obtain a date (or date range) for this object?

*Examples: C14 dating might help us determine a relative date for an organic object. Stylistic dating might help us determine a date range for a painted ceramic vessel.*

### Source:

Where does this object come from? Does it have a group of cultural affiliation? What region or archaeological site does it come from? Is it associated with a named individual?

### Provenance/provenience:

Where has the artifact been since its creation? How did it arrive in the Museum's possession? What do we know about the history of the collector or archaeological expedition?

### Other questions:

You may have made some observations that require further research. Write down some questions that you would like to explore further here:

### Measurements:

Take multiple measurements, including any distinguishing features. Please use calipers or a cloth measuring tape!

Height: \_\_\_\_\_

Depth: \_\_\_\_\_

Weight (grams): \_\_\_\_\_

Width: \_\_\_\_\_

Diameter: \_\_\_\_\_

Munsell color (example: 10YR 5/8):

Length: \_\_\_\_\_

Thickness: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Illustration:**

It may be helpful to draw your object to scale, using some graph paper. **Do not trace the artifact.** Instead, use calipers or a cloth measuring tape to measure the object at various points.

## What would you like to know about the object that would require *further study*?

**After you have studied your object in person, you may need to conduct further research. Here are some potential avenues to explore:**

- If you are interested in learning more about the **object's context or historical background**, consider any relevant excavation records or other archival documents in the [Penn Museum Archives](#). To seek out this material, you can make a separate appointment, in advance, with Archives staff. Contact: [archives@pennmuseum.org](mailto:archives@pennmuseum.org).
- If you are interested in learning more about the **object's provenance**, you may want to access object-specific records or object files. To do this, you can make a separate appointment, in advance, with the Registrar's Office. Contact: [objectrecords@pennmuseum.org](mailto:objectrecords@pennmuseum.org).
- You may be interested in studying similar objects, **or comparative analysis**. What can you learn about your object, compared to similar examples? You might seek comparative examples found in publications, or in the Penn Museum's [online collections database](#).
- You will likely want to conduct some **background research** on the relevant time period, culture, archaeological site, etc. The [Museum Library](#) has many resources to help with this type of research.
- If there is a more in-depth scientific hypothesis you are hoping to explore, you may consider meeting with a specialist and/or requesting access to specialized equipment within the museum, particularly through the Center for the Analysis of Archaeological Materials. To discuss this process, please contact Sarah Linn, Research Liaison, at [slinn@upenn.edu](mailto:slinn@upenn.edu).
- If you have any other questions, or need further suggestions or advice, please feel free to contact the Academic Engagement Department at [classuse@pennmuseum.org](mailto:classuse@pennmuseum.org).