

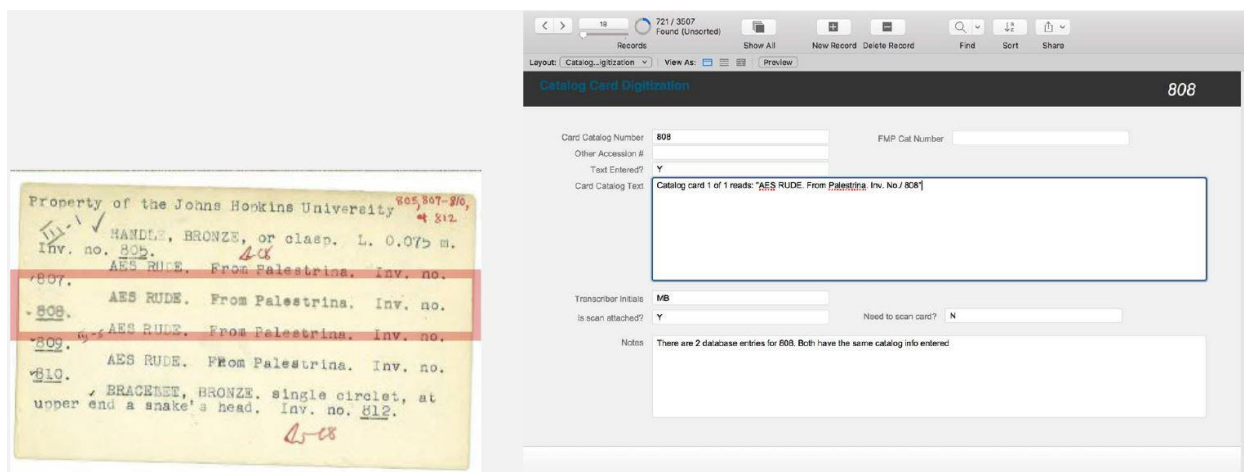
## Databases, A Workflow, and A Student Staff: The Johns Hopkins Archaeological Museum's Approach to Digitizing 137 Years of Collections Records

*Kate Gallagher, Curator of Collections*

*John Hopkins Archaeological Museum, Baltimore, MD*

In this session, Ms. **Gallagher** discussed managing multiple digitization projects and her student staff at the Johns Hopkins Archaeological Museum (JHAM). The JHAM has two permanent staff and 10-15 undergraduate and graduate student workers each semester. Their 10,000-object collection is a hands-on “working” collection that is used for teaching, study, and research, and it is primarily comprised of artifacts from the Egyptian, Near Eastern, Greek, Roman, and pre-Columbian American cultures.

According to Gallagher, having a primarily student staff means a constant, funded labor force for JHAM, but also inconsistent skill levels and a high turnover, which means training must be clear and concise for their student staff. Over the past five years, Gallagher has had her student workers digitizing catalog cards and ledgers from JHAM's museum archives. These paper records were first scanned, and then the student workers entered the metadata from these records into a FileMaker Pro database. Gallagher created a FileMakerPro database that was separate from their main object database for the students to work in, which made metadata entry and checking the students' work much easier.



*Example of hard-copy catalog card and transcription of card in FileMakerPro database.  
Image courtesy of Kate Gallagher.*

Although there were many records to process, Gallagher focused on breaking up the records into smaller projects, and each workflow instruction sheet had clearly defined goals and purposes listed at the top. This allowed each student to know why they were working on this project and how it was relevant to JHAM. These workflow instruction sheets also kept track of when certain project milestones were completed, and who

finished them, so that projects could be handed off as students graduated or left JHAM's staff.

### Card Catalog Data Entry Project

**Goal:** To create an entry in FileMaker database for every catalog number recorded on a catalog card that has not been entered to date. Entry will include the text on the card and a digital copy of the card will be attached.

**Purpose:** To assist in matching unnumbered objects with original accession numbers by making the card catalog searchable. This will also assist in tabulating the number of missing objects.

Started: February 2015, updated March 2015

Completed by: Kate Gallagher, Collections Manager and Emily Rodgers (Lead), Adrienne Kramer, and Helena Arose, Student Staff 2017

Additional Catalog Cards from Evergreen House Museum

Started: October 2018

Completed by Casey Haughin (Lead), December 2018

#### Workflow

##### Lead Student Staff

1. Begin with box 1, or the last noted number on the *Card Catalog Entry Log* in front of binder.
2. Bring card box to computer working area
3. Search FileMaker Database for number
4. If card catalog text is already entered...
  - a. Review text for accuracy
  - b. If the location field is blank, enter "Unknown"
  - c. If dimensions are provided on the card but are not in the dimension fields, enter in appropriate dimension fields.
  - d. Got to History tab, Click "Add" in the Media Field. Find digital copy of card on computer (work\_study\_share/FinalizedCat Cards/) and attach .pdf file with the same number.
  - e. ~~Cross off number in Accession Numbers in Database (Dec 2014)~~  
printout in project binder. If the accession number is used twice in the database (the accession number will be listed twice on the printout) write the material type or other descriptor next to the crossed out number to indicate which object has been checked off.

If not entered, create a new entry [Using Project Database: If not entered, Follow

##### Creating FMP Entry Based on Paper Records]

- f. ~~Enter accession number~~
- g. ~~Enter "Unknown" in location field~~
- h. ~~Enter a Basic Description — refer to Catalog Guidelines for instructions~~

*Example of workflow sheet. Image courtesy of Kate Gallagher.*

Over the past five years, JHAM's students have transcribed over 12,068 descriptions from catalog cards and inventories, and their work has resulted in over 5,000 new object entries in JHAM's primary object database. Additionally, the museum used this information to reassign over 350 objects with their original catalog numbers. JHAM's student workers also gained invaluable experience in registration work and understood the need for systematic approaches with their own research. Hopefully a few of them were inspired to work in the museum field after completing their degrees.

My first museum position, outside of internships, was as a graduate assistant at the C.H. Nash Museum at Chucalissa, a site-specific archaeological museum run by the

University of Memphis, Memphis, TN. I spent three years working at Chucalissa, two as a graduate assistant and one as a contract collections assistant. As a former student worker at a university museum, I was particularly interested to see how Gallagher supervised so many student workers and maintained the high levels of detail and diligence necessary for registration work. As a student, I firmly believe I would have benefited from her instruction as well. Helping students understand why this work is necessary, even though it may appear tedious to them, is important, and Gallagher made sure to do this for every project she had her students working on. Her ideas also inspired me to be clearer and more concise when instructing student interns at my current institution.

*Submitted by:*

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