

Tips and Tricks for Research and Documentation

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What We Will Talk About

- Keywords
- Free Access to Sources
- Reaching out to Academics
- Evaluating Sources
- Archiving Sources
- Source Citations
- Taking Notes
- Writing Documentation

Keywords

- How you describe something might not be how others describe it.
- Use the terms that authors use in order to find the most sources.
- Set up search engine alerts to get new articles send to your inbox.
- Use subject heading links in library catalogs to find similar sources.

Always Double Check

- Journal publishers and search engines are tricky.
- Search the name of the journal to find their actual website.
- Search the title of the paper/author to see if they have shared it on academia.edu or researchgate
- Google Alerts are great to get titles – but always double check for a free resource!

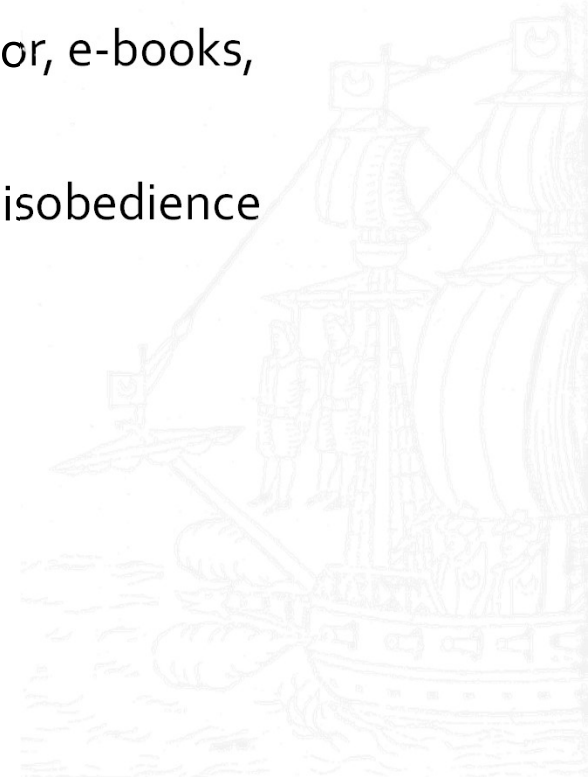
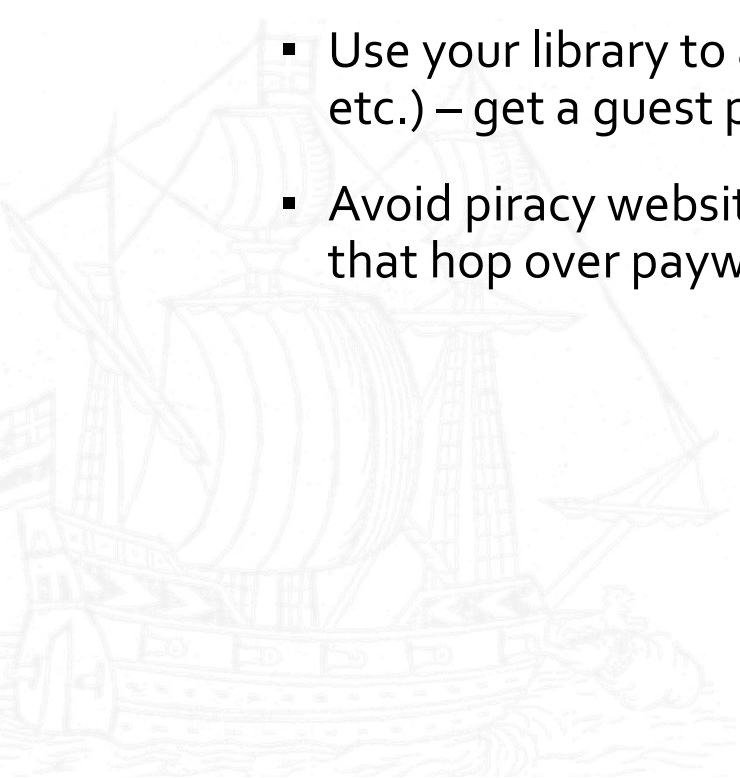
IMAGE SOURCE



Piracy is Bad

IMAGE SOURCE

- Many academic publishers keep content behind paywalls.
- Use your library to access subscriptions (EBSCO, ARTStor, e-books, etc.) – get a guest pass!
- Avoid piracy websites operating under the flag of civil disobedience that hop over paywalls (sci-hub, Library Genesis).



WorldCat

- Worldcat.org is a library catalog maintained by OCLC and partner libraries.
- Many libraries use this catalog to facilitate interlibrary-loans (ILL).
- With a free account, you can create book lists.
- You still need to use your library's specific ILL request method to ask for materials.

Librarians are Friends

- Find out what your local library's ILL policy is.
- Be open with your librarian – they are expert information navigators and can help you find things.
- Be polite and respectful of the librarian's time. They serve the public – not just you.
- Supporting your local library benefits your community.

Contacting Museums, Academics

- Only use official channels – contact forms, emails listed on faculty directories.
- Use the proper address for their position (curator, professor, etc) even if they are a SCAdian.
- Be polite and respectful of their time.
- Have a specific request.
- Don't mention the SCA – you are an independent researching looking to [recreate a thing, experiment with techniques, etc.]

Contacting Museums, Academics

Question about Paper Weigh



Marti Fuerst <fuerstme@gmail.com>
to casva ▾

Good morning!

I am working on a project to reproduce a woodcut
NGA (item # 1951.16.7 in the Rosenwald Collecti

Could you assist me with the estimated weight of

Thank you so much for your time.

Best,

Marti Fuerst

Feather Embellishment in Tang China

Inbox ×



Marti Fuerst <fuerstme@gmail.com>
to bchen5 ▾

Wed, Jun 5, 2019, 3:02 PM



Good afternoon, Dr. Chen -

First off, I want to say that I have been reading your work for some time, and I was very happy to learn of the publication of *Empire of Style: Silk and Fashion in Tang China*. I am interested in the historical reproduction of Tang Dynasty garments, and I was wondering if you might help shine some light on a particular mystery for me.

Princess Anle's hundred-feather skirt is something I have seen mentioned and alluded to across the literature associated with Tang Dynasty material culture, but I haven't seen much that would describe how it was made - specifically if the feathers were embroidered, glued, or woven into the fabric. The closest I can come to information about feather embellishment are the screens in the Shosoin Repository that have feathers forming tensho script characters glued to them. Do you have any other information, or can you point me in a direction where I might get more information about how the feather-skirt might have been embellished or constructed?

Thank you so much for your time.

Best,

Marti Fuerst

Evaluate Sources

- Consider:
 - Currency
 - Relevance
 - Authority
 - Accuracy
 - Purpose



Mining for Sources

IMAGE SOURCE

- Quality sources will have bibliographies of sources the author cited.
- Scan bibliographies to find potentially helpful sources to add to your list.



Archive Websites

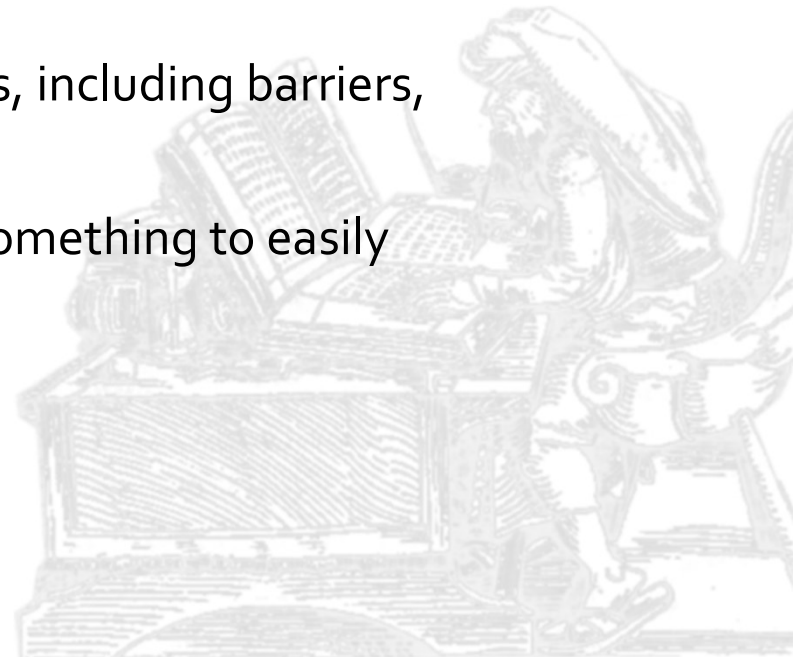
IMAGE SOURCE

- Websites need to be maintained – and sometimes that stops.
- Feed your favorite website sources to the Internet Archive's Wayback Machine to archive them.
- Do this regularly to get new snapshots of a website – if it ever goes away, you can access it through the WM.

Keep a Journal

IMAGE SOURCE

- Physical or digital, document your journey as you are walking it.
- In a research journal, record how and where you found things and what information was important.
- In a project journal, record the making process, including barriers, mistakes, and edits.
- This helps you stay organized and gives you something to easily reference when writing.



Cite Your Sources

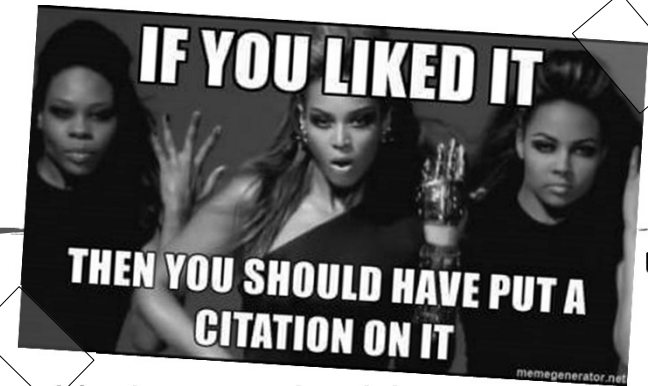


IMAGE SOURCE

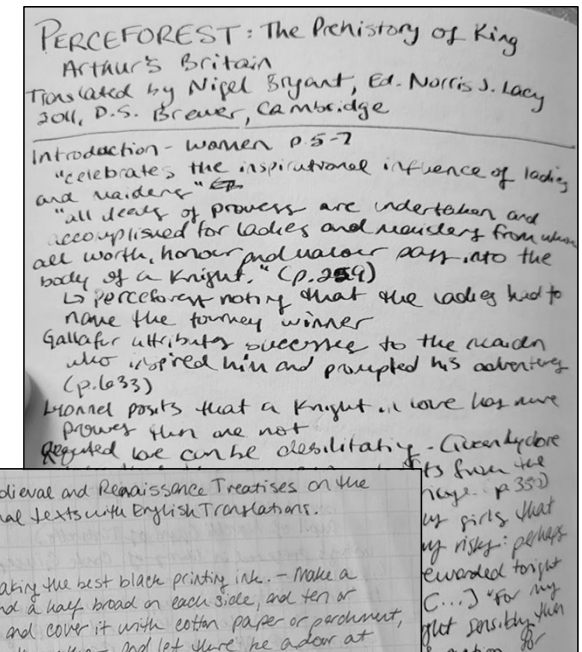
- Citing your sources gives you more credibility and helps you build a foundation to make your claims and suppositions.
- **NOT** citing your sources implies you are claiming the intellectual property of others – this is **NOT COOL**. This is **THEFT**.
- Even if something is in the public domain, you should cite it. You're pointing your audience to the information, which is always proper.
- Cite fellow SCAdians when you build on their work, you consulted their handouts/papers, or you contact them for assistance.

Cite Your Sources

- Pick a style and stick with it – be consistent!
- Online guides like the [Purdue Online Writing Lab](#) provide instructions for multiple styles and examples for different types of sources.
- Cite museum objects.
- If you don't use a formal style, give your audience enough information:
 - Title
 - Author/Editor
 - Journal/Book Title (if an essay or article in a larger work; if a journal, include the volume and issue)
 - Publisher and Publication date
 - ISBN Number (if a book)
 - URL (if an online source)

Take Notes

- Write citations before anything else.
- Try to write down full quotes with page numbers.
Use quotation marks to note quotes vs. summaries.
- Paraphrase and summarize only when synthesizing information and drawing conclusions in your research journal.
- Consider color-coding.



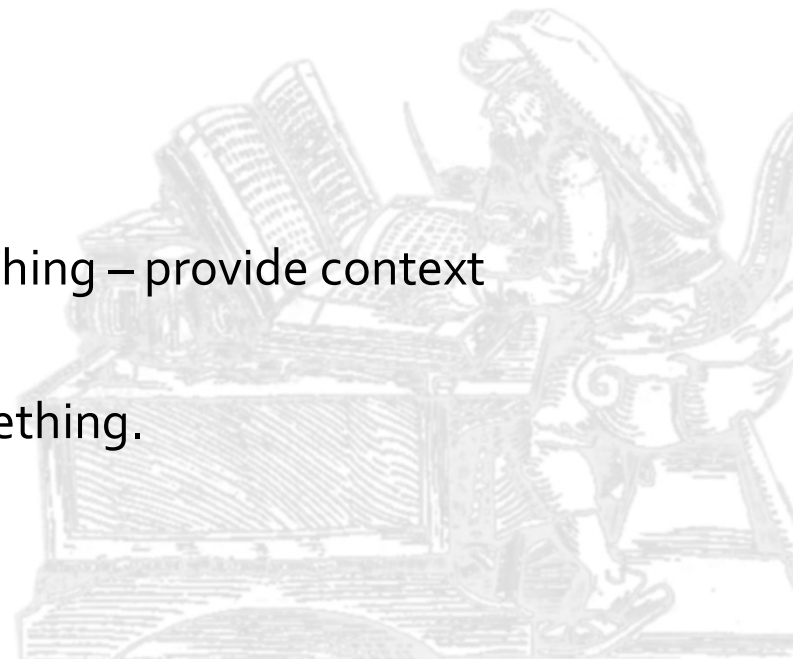
Merrifield, Mary P. Medieval and Renaissance Treatises on the Arts of Painting: Original Texts with English Translations.
New York: Dover, 1999.

p.618: "329. The mode of making the best black printing ink. - Make a large lantern, two feet and a half broad on each side, and ten or twelve feet in height, and cover it with cotton paper or parchment, for it is as good as the other, and let there be a door at the front of it, and put into it a tripod, or on the tripod a pen, and on the pen two pounds of Breake pitch. Set the pitch on fire, then shut the door; take care that the lantern is air-tight, and let the pitch burn until it is entirely consumed, when smoke from it will affix itself to the interior of the lantern like soot. Then take out the earthen pan and the tripod;

Provide Context

IMAGE SOURCE

- Your audience is broader than you think.
- Provide enough information so that a new person can learn enough to:
 - Understand the culture, region, and period
 - Make something similar to yours
 - Find more information about the topic
- It does not matter if you do the Very Popular Thing – provide context anyway.
- Never assume that your audience knows something.



Provide Context

IMAGE SOURCE

- Your audience is broader than you think.
- Provide enough information so that a new person can learn enough to:
 - Understand the culture, region, and period
 - Make something similar to yours
 - Safely find more information about the topic
- Do not assume a “default.”
- Keep it short (150-400 words).
- Blog post: [On the Importance of Introductions](#)



Provide Context

The Tang Dynasty (唐朝, tǎng) lasted from 618 to 907 CE and is widely considered the “golden age” of imperial China. The People’s Republic of China currently recognizes 56 different ethnic groups. The culture discussed here is that of the Han Chinese during the Tang Dynasty, but China has never been a monolith in terms of culture. During the Tang Dynasty, the Han majority’s tolerance for foreign influence created a cosmopolitan culture which included a stream of Chinese and Indian Buddhist monks, Turks from the northern steppes and Central Asia, Koreans, Japanese, Arabs, Persians, Malaysians, and other Southeast Asian cultures. Tang Dynasty China had cultural contact with Europe – via the Roman/Byzantine Empire. There are written as well as archaeological sources that show that China had contact with the Roman Empire from as early as the third century C.E. Unfortunately, there are elements in modern Han Chinese society that seek to oppress other Chinese ethnic groups, sometimes violently – such as the Uighurs in Xinjiang.

Use an Outline

IMAGE SOURCE

- Your documentation is your primary method of communication with your audience.
- Outlines help you make sure you don't forget to include important information.
- Mistress Ellisif's SCA Documentation Made Easy
- Mistress Eithni's Documentation Outline (and more tips!)
- Ouyang taishi's Scribal Documentation Template



Reuse Documentation

- Reuse documentation for:
 - Background information
 - Tools and materials
 - Techniques
- Update when you get new information.
- Point your audience to an appendix for more detailed information.

For information about materials, tools, sewing techniques used in period and what I used for this project, please see the appendix.

Thanks!



Ginny is here to pay the Puppy Tax.

Reach out on Facebook, by email, or my website!

- [Cite Your Sh*t](#)
- fuerstme@gmail.com
- Biblionalia.info/leah