

Annotation, Bibliography, Citation: The ABCs of References

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When investigating an SCA project, whether it's for an A&S competition or not, we usually consult a number of sources, including books, films/videos, academic papers and journal articles, some of which may be digital documents (many papers from conferences are now published this way). As you begin your research, start to keep track of your sources **from the very beginning**, so you can refer to them in your documentation as your project progresses.

Why record where you got your information?

- A. You must be able to find the info again when you want to review it later.
- B. Your sources support your summary/interpretation of the information.
- C. Your readers can verify your work and find more information on the topic.

Building a solid set of references helps you organize and present your information in a way that others can easily understand. When you present that information in a class handout, or provide a summary page describing an item you've put in a display, a reference list will help those who are intrigued by your project understand your quest for information, even if you're not there to tell them what your favorite source was. If you enter an A&S competition, the judges will get a better feel for all of the sources that informed you as you were creating your entry, which helps them to understand the project as a whole—and you'll probably earn a better score. Even short form documentation (one sheet of paper) with a brief source list is to your advantage.

Annotations, bibliographies, and citations are **tools** for building your knowledge base for projects—from a simple, single item project to a broad category of related groups of information addressing a larger topic—and help you to share that knowledge!

How do you start building your source list?

Record basic bibliographic information for each & every source you use, as you go, from the first time you are curious about a topic, to the final proofreading of your handout, summary, or documentation. You need to know the following:

Full name of the expert(s),*author(s), editor(s), and/or translator(s)

Complete title, including subtitles and volume/# info for journals or series, and the title & page numbers for essays or articles

Name of the publisher, place published, year of publication, ISBN**

Digital document information such as URL, date/time accessed

Specific page numbers for quotes, images, or detailed information

* If you consult an expert in person, via email or other correspondence, make a note of the date pertinent conversations took place, and cite that person's contribution as "personal communication."

**The ISBN makes for fast online searching and is helpful for bibliophiles who loved your book and want to buy it. Some of us still prefer hardcopy! ☺

I make a note of where I physically was when I got the info—name & location of museum, library or friend's bookcase, if I was on a "special" computer in a private library or archive, special collection, etc. It can be very helpful years later, when you realize a photocopy or handwritten page from a notebook has gone missing and that book is in a non-circulating library, or you Google something and can't get the info online because the database you were using can only be accessed through a dedicated terminal at *that* museum, or a URL is dead... And so on.

HINT: If the digital source you consulted is gone, try the Wayback Machine digital archive of webpages: <https://archive.org/web/> .

Stick to reputable sources. If your source doesn't provide most or all of the bibliographic info listed previously, your source *probably isn't reliable*. You should be able to backtrack all of the info by going to the author's bibliography or reference list and tracking down those sources for yourself. There are some really good blogs out there, with a lot of good information including great references, and many more bad ones...because you can't verify where the author's information came from. So, onward to the ABCs—we'll start with B.

B is for Bibliography

For formal documentation (A&S competition, research paper, etc.): If the criteria specify a particular format, use that format!! If the criteria *don't* specify a format, pick a style guide and use that format to organize your information. For gray areas (bits of info not covered by the style guide), decide what you want to do and be consistent. Many colleges have style summaries & examples for favorite manuals (Chicago, APA, MLA) online, and you can buy an inexpensive paper copy of any style guide used. For SCA documentation, it generally doesn't matter which you use, but you **MUST follow the same format for all of your sources**.

Depending on the style guide, you will either have a "Bibliography" (all sources consulted) or a list of "References" or "Works Cited" (only those sources specifically referred to or cited). Here are a couple of examples:

APA style: Harris, J. (1993). *Textiles: 5000 Years*. NY: Harry N. Abrams.

Chicago style: Harris, Jennifer. *Textiles: 5000 Years*. NY: Harry N. Abrams, 1993.

Generic style: Harris, J. *Textiles: 5000 Years*. NY: Harry N. Abrams, 1993. ISBN 0810938758

Don't know who came up with that last one, but I see it often.

Notice that the font is just a little smaller on the very last last example, so it will all fit on one line! But is still clearly legible, not too small.

For informal or short form documentation, such as a single sheet summary or "thumbnail" page, you can list the "top three" (most important) sources you consulted as "Sources" or "Resources." If the documentation criteria call for a cover page on a large, multi-page documentation packet, you can just list the titles of the references/works cited, with a note that a full list follows at the end of the complete documentation (see example 1).

No matter what style you use, please set your font and spacing in such a way that the information is easy to read! White space on the page isn't a bad thing...and for handouts or copies used for judging, it leaves space in the margins for the reader or judge to make notes and comments or ask questions. My rule of thumb: Nothing less than 10pt Calibri font or comparable and 1.15 spacing for sources. Footnotes may vary.

"Many of us are over 40 and trying to read lines of text this small is a complete pain in the hind end" (Deppe, 2014, p.2)
"When there is more than one line of text, single spaced, it's even harder to read." (Deppe, 2014, still p. 2)

A is for Annotation

An annotation is a brief summary of the source, whether it is a book, academic paper, or website, often included with lengthy, formal papers and theses. This is not an abstract (which is one or more paragraphs, usually limited to 500 words or less), but one to three sentences describing each of the sources you've listed in your bibliography or reference list. Do not write a full review of the work! Keep it short and succinct.

Welch, A. (1979). *Calligraphy in the Arts of the Muslim World*. Austin: University of Texas Press.

This is an exhibition catalogue of artifacts bearing Arabic calligraphy with discussion of calligraphy and artistic styles. The author provides a nice discussion of the symbolic meaning and cultural context of the use of script in Islamic art.

Kendrick, A. F. (1924). *Catalogue of Dated Muhammadan Textiles of the Medieval Period*. London: The Victoria and Albert Museum.

This is a catalog of tiraz textiles from medieval Egypt, Syria and Iraq in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London. The anthropological analysis is somewhat biased and dated, but the descriptions of the textiles and translations of the inscriptions thereon are helpful as a starting point for tiraz research.

C is for Citation

Now we're into writing the paper. Whenever you make a general statement that comes from a particular author, you should cite the author. How you do this depends on the style guide; my preferred method includes the simple citation in the text, rather than using a foot note or end note. If you have a lot of sources, cite general stuff in the text and use a regular bibliography or reference list; do NOT put all of your general citations in footnotes or endnotesⁱ unless your style manual or editor specifically requests that format. When in doubt, cite, cite, cite. Plagiarism is Bad, and although citing the same author over and over again may become unwieldy, it is important for your readers to know which source that info came from, and really, no one except your composition teacher will penalize you for too many citations. When in doubt, cite, cite, cite.

Mameluk embroideries generally have a ground of plain woven linen, from a simple spun, undyed bast-fiber yarn. This is presumably flax, for which Egypt was famous in medieval times and earlier (Geijer, 1979).

If you include an image, quote or a very specific item of information, you must cite the author *and* the page number or URL where it came from. When in doubt, quote the author directly rather than trying to reword something that is very direct and especially attributable to that particular author, noting that block quotes like the one below are typically limited to 40 words or less to avoid copyright infringements. Once in a while I will use footnotes for page number citations which only occur once in the document, and nowhere else, but only if I'm writing brief documentation (not more than 3 pages, plus a page the bibliography) for a very simple A&S project. It looks tidier for short documents, in my opinion—but again, it depends on your style manual and whether the format was specified.

Quote: "The way in which close counted herringbone is worked is typical of one category of Mameluk embroidery and, if present on a textile, strongly suggests a Mameluk Egypt origin" (Ellis, 2001, p. 57).

Continued next page!

Footnotes: I withdrew a single weft yarn to define the line along which the script would be stitched; this technique was used on many Egyptian couched or back-stitched tiraz textiles,¹ but more recent research suggests this is not common to the chain-stitched tiraz from Syria or Iraq.²

Hyperlink: Alternatively, the dress panels can be embroidered with a small overall design, like this medieval Egyptian tunic, [T76-1925 in the Victoria and Albert Museum](#).

A brief note about copyright:

Keep in mind that copyright laws only allow "fair use" for the average author. Copying a lot of information or images into your documentation, especially if you know that document will be posted online, does NOT constitute fair use, even with citations. Most A&S documentation is not intended to be published—but a LOT of it goes into newsletters or onto websites. Photos of homemade but exact reproductions of a museum item may also in fact violate copyright, or intellectual property laws, something to be aware of. Remember that you can embed links in your text to provide immediate access to an internet-connected reader for digital documents and images, so the reader can go directly to a museum record or database image on its original website—why run the risk of violating copyright when you don't have to? And if you're using short form documentation, you've got all that extra space that the image would have taken up on the page to provide more information. "A picture is worth a thousand words," but only if it contributes to your overall document, and *not* if you have to violate copyright to provide that image. There is a lot of helpful information concerning copyright online, so take time to do a little research on that as well.

¹ Golombek, L. & Gervers, V., (1977), p. 84.

² Kerner, J. (2007), p. 19.

Full citations for the little text examples, from various things I've written over the years:

Ellis, M. (2001). *Embroideries and samplers from Islamic Egypt*. Oxford: Ashmolean Museum.

Geijer, A. (1979). *A History of Textile Art*. London: Sotheby Parke Bernet Publications.

Golombek, L. & Gervers, V. "Tiraz Fabrics in the Royal Ontario Museum." In Gervers, V. (Ed.) (1977). *Studies in Textile History: In memory of Harold B. Burnham*. Pp. 82-125. Toronto: Royal Ontario Museum.

Kerner, J. (2007). "Embroidering History: A tiraz Textile from the Reign of al-Muqtadir Billah." *Artibus Asiae*, Vol. 67 #1, Part II, pp. 13-24.

<http://www.jstor.org/stable/25261867> Accessed 1/14/14 11:22

**This is the last page. We're done now; I hope you enjoyed the class!
Questions?? Pop quiz: What style format did I use for the references above
and those on page 4? Answer can be found on page 3!**

¹ Endnotes come and go with reference fashions, but, as you know by now if you're reading this handout as hardcopy, you have to flip to the back of the document-- or "click" to digitally jump to the entry if you're reading an older digital format without hypertext onscreen, both of which break up the flow of information in the text. Furthermore, after you're done reading this, you'll have to get yourself back to the place you were reading when you came across the endnote, which isn't always easy on a very long digital document if it is not equipped with a "return to where I was" feature. If you use endnotes—or footnotes, which often end up being endnotes if there are no page breaks-- in a digital document, please be sure hypertext is enabled!