

Joanne Pang

8 Apr 2020

### Reflective Essay

This research paper that I am submitting to the Undergraduate Library Research Award is the result of a final assignment for my “Egyptian Art and Archaeology” class which I took in Fall 2019. The paper required students to choose an Ancient Egyptian artefact of their desire, and write about its material culture.

I chose my particular object, a miniature broad collar, for the initial reason of no other than its exterior. I’ve always been fond of precious stones, and seeing the brilliance and details on this vibrant gold necklace has garnered my attention. There are few primary sources of information and analysis on this particular object, and I decided to find books and journals on particular aspects that make up the miniature broad collar such as its physical material and construction method, and research these instead, connecting them to the thesis instead of trying to only see one picture altogether.

The main resources utilised in my research paper was through Hannon Library’s LINUS system and JSTOR, which had an extensive collection on the different aspects of research required to understand the collar, as well as JSTOR. I was provided with many secondary sources that included published books, peer-reviewed articles and journals. Initially, I ran into a dead end because I was struggling to find truly relevant sources and had too wide a range of information, but with the help of the library’s information desk, the librarian gave me multiple suggestions on how to narrow down my search field, what types of keywords I might want to try, which greatly aided my process in filtering content and

sources. The most successful searches were when I was able to specify the exact keywords that I needed, such as using “broad collar” and “Egypt” at the same time. Contrariwise, trying to search for “Egypt jewel”, ended up being too broad a subject than I was expecting. The librarian also instructed me on how to utilise the index of a book to quickly find out which books have the exact area of information that I need for my thesis.

The library’s access to JSTOR contained information and links to all the art bulletins owned by the Metropolitan Museum of Art, which contained short curatorial interpretations of the object, and was a key source that pointed me in the direction I had to be looking at. My professor also provided me with guidance and access to the archaeology department’s personal library, which provided additional curated sources of information. From this, I learnt to seek out, combine and compare information from different resource pools that helped enrich and broaden my research to support my thesis.

I have only chosen credible published books, scholarly articles or journals, as evidenced by their support of citations as well as displaying an unbiased and objective opinion on the subject matter. In regards to contradictions in information, I sought out more sources of the same subject matter, take into account those outlying opinions, and chose the opinion supported by the majority.

I also realized that I cannot just rely on information from the same source. In my initial stages, I heavily relied on the Met’s art bulletins as having verified and sound statements, for they have used this particular collar in many issues of their bulletins or books, all of them having the same statements relating to the necklace’s purpose. Later, I realized that the paper could be biased from only one particular stream of view, and I made sure to find evidence that supported the Met’s argument on the necklace’s purpose and context, as

well as search for a wider variety of sources by independent authors to further reduce biasness in my research paper.

Through my research, I learned to better utilize the library's resources on how to find relevant sources and narrow down information, as well as how varied and different sources can not only help to create a richer essay, but also reduce biasness in my paper. The library provided very helpful support which allowed me to write this essay about the miniature broad collar, and I am truly proud of the result.