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Library Research Award Reflective Essay
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As a student in the intersection between history and classics, I sought to combine my two courses of study when approaching my history thesis. I had always been interested in the reception and perception of ancient history, and in the process of writing a paper for a previous history class I began my research into the conceptualization of Minoan Crete, an ancient Bronze Age society, as “European.” For my history thesis I decided to explore this idea further, with the final project centering around the argument that our current frameworks of understanding were intentionally constructed by British archaeologist Sir Arthur Evans and exploring the legacy of his work in the history of scholarship as well as modern academic and public presentations of the ancient civilization. To accomplish this, I surveyed a variety of scholarly publications as primary sources, both to analyze Evans’s work myself as well as to assess the legacy of Evans’s ideas in the field throughout the decades following his discoveries and publications. I also surveyed a variety of introductory textbooks, those utilized at secondary and post-secondary levels, in order to assess the ways in which Minoan Crete is presented to students at this introductory level. Because of the nature of my primary sources, scholarly publications and texts, library materials and services played a central role in my research process.

One of my first research approaches was to turn to the library catalog and pull items from various on-campus libraries. I found myself spending the most time in Suzzallo-Allen, Odegaard, and the Art library the most, flipping through a wide range of material, becoming incredibly familiar with countless indexes and lists of contents to survey discussions of Minoan Crete. I decided to focus my research on the depiction of Minoan religion, particularly the question of the Minoan Goddess and monotheism, and so these became the key terms I looked for when quickly

libraries to fill in the gaps. By adjusting my strategies, I was able to gain access to these texts that I wouldn't have otherwise been able to through the UW libraries alone. I utilized borrowing services such as Summit and Interlibrary Loan frequently, for textbooks as well as a variety of other texts and documents, and the existence and accessibility of these services was incredibly beneficial to my research and final thesis. With these services I was able to access nearly every document I sought out in my research process.

Another incredibly vital service that I utilized heavily in my research was a variety of digital databases, especially Hathi Trust. Many of Evans's earlier works and publications were published prior to 1924 which, being out of copyright, made Hathi a particularly powerful database when researching his early work. Other digital materials that were useful in my research were digital texts hosted on sites such as ProQuest and online handbooks that serve as introductory texts and surveys of topics at a college-level that would be easily available to a student. The accessibility of these various digital databases and resources was incredibly useful in complementing my physical research materials, both in making older documents easily available as well as rounding out my research with sources that would be utilized by students.

One of the major reasons I decided to participate in the history honors program was in order to gain the experience of dedicating time and research to a multiple quarter-long thesis, and this project certainly achieved that goal. In the process, I had the opportunity to truly experience the sheer amount of information that I can access through the university library and its numerous resources and services. I was lucky enough that I could get my hands on almost any published document if given the time, and it truly gave me an appreciation for just how valuable a resource the library can be.