

Classics Project



WORKSHOP 2: CHOOSING A TOPIC

From Idea to Project



- You've decided on your rough subject area – you have an idea of what you want to do
- Then what are the considerations that you need to take into account in order to make your research project a success?

Considerations: The Material



- What primary sources are there relating to your subject area?
 - How do you find out?
 - Are there enough of them? (And what is enough, anyway?)
 - Can you access them?
 - ✦ Availability in LRC
 - ✦ Language skills – not only ancient, but modern languages too!

Considerations: Materials



- What secondary sources are there relating to your area?
 - How do you find out?
 - How do you avoid getting bogged down by scholarship?
 - ✦ Why reading too much can be bad
 - ...and what can that tell you?
- Can you access the necessary secondary literature on your subject area?
 - ✦ Availability in the LRC
 - ✦ Language skills

Considerations: About you

- Do you have pre-conceptions about your area?
 - Have you studied it before? Have you not studied it before?
- Can you let go of those preconceptions?
- Or else:
 - You will read primary and secondary evidence with blinkers on
 - Your readings will be vulnerable to criticism



Group exercise



- Please divide up into groups according to subject area:
- Greek Law (near the door down the stairs)
- Ptolemaic Egypt (Far corner down the bottom)
- Poets and Power (upper left corner)
- Literary representations of the City of Rome (upper right corner)

Group Exercise



- Consider the following issues:
 - Have we missed anything you need to consider for a successful project?
 - How do you locate the material you will need?
 - What are the main primary sources you expect to use?
 - What are the main secondary sources you expect to use?
 - How do you work with them (primary and secondary)?
 - What do you expect to be the main problems you will have to face?

For next time



- Relate the results of your group discussion on the Moodle forum for this class (“Workshop 2 Discussion forum”)
- Make sure that you cover all the issues you were asked to consider throughout this class.
- Continue reading around your topic (you will need to choose a specific title in the next workshop)