

ANNOTATION INSTRUCTIONS

“So, what is an annotation?” I hear you ask. You could think of it as an object entry in an exhibition catalog, or a super-concentrated research paper. It should run around 1000-3000 words not including endnotes, captions, and bibliography. It needs to clarify, explain, and, in most cases demonstrate a recipe, or set of recipes from the manuscript, or provide information on concepts to be found in the manuscript. It should discuss prior or contemporaneous recipes from other sources, discuss other parts of the manuscript that might be relevant to the recipe under analysis, and provide information and observations on materials and processes in the manuscript, as well as on reconstruction methodology. It will synthesize information from your field notes, but should be written in a less personal style. However, you should retain the first person narrative for some parts of your annotation, e.g., narrating your experiments. Obviously, one of the most valuable aspects of annotations produced in this class will be their multi-media character, so you will need to carefully plan the integration of the images, videos, and spoken word presentation. If any of you have an exhibition catalog that you think has model entries and essays—that is, they are informative, integrate original research, have useful bibliography, and are well-written—please bring them to class. However, keep in mind that we are doing something really new in this class, and we probably won’t find the perfect model for the sort of text at which we are aiming. The same goes for the writing style—you can experiment with this, as with everything else, and see how we all react. Susan Dackerman’s *Prints and the Pursuit of Knowledge* is a possible model, as it is also a collective graduate-student-generated project.

In the first semester of the class, we found that the most successful annotations were those that produced an integrated narrative by identifying what constituted the “puzzle” in the recipe that the hands-on reconstruction solved. This allowed the authors to weave together in a single narrative more conventional document and text-based historical research with more “subjective” hands-on material research. Annotations should never be just a description of your reconstruction process, but should make an argument about what research into the recipe revealed.

You should plan to finish the drafts of your annotations by April 20 get them up on the Annotations page in the Wiki, so we can all have a look, then you’ll present them to a prepared and critical audience on April 27. Final annotations will be due on May 7, and we’ll have a final annotation workshop on May 11 (a joint session with our V&A collaborators). Final annotations will be due on May 18.