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My paper, *Miasma and the Formation of Greek Cities*, was written for an independent study course I took with Dr. Sydnor Roy as a 2012 Diamond Research Scholar. The idea for the project originated from a paper I wrote for another course in which I examined the structure of the ancient Athenian system of homicide courts. I found this topic fascinating, and it left me wondering what social and religious phenomena had informed the development of such an interesting and unusual civic institution. I quickly identified a specific type of *miasma*, a ritual pollution with both physical and spiritual elements incurred by killers, which could bring plague, famine, or other kinds of ruin upon an entire city if not properly expiated. What struck me about this phenomenon was how each of the five unique homicide courts at ancient Athens seemed specially tuned to mitigate the *miasma* from certain types of killings. With this in mind, I set out to determine how far back I could trace the roots of this belief and to find out if it had been used by those who founded the court system to establish its necessity and legitimacy.

In order to do this, I needed to make use of several types of evidence. In addition to primary source texts, such as Homer and Hesiod, and the traditional corpus of secondary scholarship, I consulted the records of archaeological excavations and the diverse and disparately located collection of epigraphic evidence. This last type of source was particularly difficult to access because there is no single method by which inscriptions are catalogued or published and no translation is typically provided when the inscriptions are accessible. The best way to consult this body of evidence is through the use of a highly specialized reference series called the *Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum (SEG)*, or the “Greek Epigraphic Supplement.” Each year, a new volume is issued that collects a short abstract of every scholarly work relating to a
Greek inscription published since the last volume. These abstracts are categorized by topic, geographic location of the inscription, and chronology, and can be searched using an online concordance or hardbound versions published every ten years or so.

I was first able to access this resource while researching in the American School of Classical Studies at Athens' Blegen Library. The Blegen is the world's foremost library for Classical research, containing just about item ever published on the ancient Greek and Roman worlds. Using the SEG allowed me to identify several critical pieces of evidence for my project, such as the sacred laws from Selinos and Cyrene, which helped me to prove that miasma played a role in laws outside of Classical Athens.

Back in the United States, I utilized a wide variety of more standard library resources in the completion of my project. In addition to the perennial favorite JSTOR, I regularly consulted *L'Année philologique*, a Classics specific resource that annually collects abstracts of published works similarly to the SEG, but with a much wider scope. Also useful in identifying secondary sources was the *Bryn Mawr Classical Review*, an easily searchable collection of book reviews on Classical topics published by Bryn Mawr College. Many of the publications I identified through these means were available at Paley Library, which has a very extensive and impressive collection of Classical scholarship. For those items I could not find at Paley, I turned to either PALCI EZ-Borrow, which allowed me to obtain a hard copy of many rare books on highly specialized topics, or the University of Pennsylvania's Van Pelt Library, which also has a very extensive collection, including many published conference proceedings not available at Paley.

I learned many lessons in the process of researching this topic, all of which will be immensely valuable as I transition into graduate study next year. First, I learned to always read several book reviews before committing oneself to reading an entire scholarly book. Reviews
help sort through the vast amount of material to what is most relevant to the topic. Second, I learned the true value of a good bibliography – many of the most useful sources I found were not the direct results of my searches, but rather were items cited in the works I first identified. Finally, I learned how valuable careful organization is to academic research. I realized early on how frustrating it could be to forget where a particular piece of information had come from, or to forget what I had initially found useful in a scholarly publication. Ultimately, a system of careful outlining combined with the tracking of my sources using the RefWorks service through the Paley Library website allowed me to be successful in this area. I am very proud of the final result of my research, and quite grateful for the lessons learned – all of which would not have been possible without the superior resources available both through Temple’s Paley library and the other facilities I visited for this project.