

ELEMENT SEVEN



support@oxbridgeessays.com

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CALL NOTES

First Zoom Call

- The client has expressed an interest in undertaking research in the early-modern context, building on similar research undertaken in late-medieval context.
- We spoke at length about various ideas and honed in on the idea of investigating where the supernatural meets religion in early-modern Europe.
- Client has been reading Parish's volume on *Superstition and Magic in Early Modern Europe*
- Client uncertain about direction – what topic, what region, what methods, etc.
- We spoke about debates around religious responsibility for witch burnings (i.e., Protestant versus Catholic).
- Recommended Lesson and Russ' article on witch trials as a starting point for this topic
- Client has some interest in this, but I explained how research into witch trials is somewhat oversaturated at present – too many applicants, too few unturned stones.
- Spoke about other topics related to religious disputes – magic in medieval medicine, Hippocratic debates in medieval era.
- Client suggested ghosts and apparitions – a really good area that is subject to a lot of cultural variation (i.e., lots of fresh research opportunities).
- We talked about Protestant attitudes towards demonology and the incompatibility of folk beliefs with Enlightenment rationalism.
- Lots of different paths we could go down – literary, artistic, theological, etc.
- Informed client that we would need research to examine how available primary sources are given the potential concentration of relevant beliefs among the illiterate.
- Could examine local court records? Client speaks German and has undertaken research in Germany before. Potential for cross-cultural comparisons of folk traditions.
- Agreed on this direction – comparing folk beliefs about ghosts against the backdrop of the Reformation, maybe across two to three countries.
- Client likes the interdisciplinary direction and has some experience in Church History – wouldn't mind bringing this in.
- Uncertain about methods – could examine primary sources in a number of ways, using dialogic analysis or thematic analysis (e.g., compare themes derived from comparable texts across cultures).
- Spoke about potential destinations for PhD. Client is UK-based and flexible within the UK. This is useful as I know there are some experts in this dotted across Scottish unis
- Will put together a proposal for the client as well as a list of potential supervisors for them to contact.
- We spoke about getting funding. Client could potentially self-fund, but naturally wants to attain funding if possible. We spoke about tailoring research focus depending upon the department and awards available. Client will look to adapt our initial proposal with our guidance.
- Will touch base in second call to discuss report sent across.
- Recommended some texts to read in meantime – Edward's 'The History of Ghosts in Early Modern Europe' (2012) and Handley's chapter in *Visions of an Unseen World* (2014).

Second Zoom Call

- Spoke with client and recapped last meeting. He is now further along in terms of selecting a university based on what we sent across.
- Would prefer to study in Scotland as believes courses are cheaper, lots of relevant supervisors, and more funding for this topic – agreed this was a good move.
- Discussed my experience of both St Andrews and Edinburgh, as well as personal opinion of both supervisors.
- Explained the funding situation in Scotland and how this works. Discussed that applications to AHRC still apply and that they can apply to SGSAH also. Both universities also offer extensive funding options, with Edinburgh being particularly generous for living costs. Cautioned that both are very expensive places to live.
- Discussed the importance of an insurance option and client agreed to apply also to Warwick because of connections developed there during undergraduate study
- Spoke about refining the proposal. Supervisor at St Andrews will like the German focus, and the comparison with Scotland will go down well. Probably the best fit in terms of supervisor because of shared focus on Reformation and supernatural beliefs.
- Noted also lots of shared ground with the supervisor at Edinburgh. Murray has supervised similar projects, though his academic profile has not been updated in a while. Recommended reaching out to her personally.
- We discussed how to make first contact with a potential supervisor. I recommended using institutional email and briefly stating experience and interest. Agreed to send across the template introductory email for the client to adapt.
- Client knows Warwick supervisor personally (though not well), and we noted their publishing history on ghosts in early-modern Scotland. Client is comfortable reaching out personally and will contact a mutual acquaintance at the university about it also.
- Got back onto refining the proposal. Client is happy with topic and focus, but is uncertain about methodology. I suggested we amend this to leave it open as I agree that thematic analysis may not entirely fit and that some openness/flexibility is expected.
- We discussed the importance of identifying archives for potential research and also the cost/difficulty of research in Germany. Client has previously received research grant to undertake a research trip to Germany, so is experienced. Also has some experience in reading early-modern script, which is naturally very helpful. Has Latin.
- Client is reading Lederer's 'Living with the Dead Ghosts in Early Modern Bavaria' and is keen to research in this context, as carried out previous postgraduate research in Bavaria. Recommended McKeever's study as essential. Agreed, we need to differentiate in terms of research gap and reiterate the comparative nature of the study.
- Promised to identify potential archives and sources for the client in the next version of the proposal. Client is content to send across three similar proposals, assuming initial discussions with potential supervisors go well and no potential issues are identified.
- Recapped plan after this meeting: send across draft email for supervisors, amend proposal to include archives and keep analysis methods open, and emphasise the research gap.
- Timeline is relatively open as we are preparing early, but promised quick delivery to get the ball rolling on their applications.