

Summary Report of Stay at the Danish Institute in Athens for the period 17/06/24 - 01/07/24

I was privileged to be granted a stay at the Danish Institute in Athens (DIA) in the summer of 2024 to conduct fieldwork at the Roman Agora in the Plaka area. This stay was part of an ongoing research project: *Exploring Hermeneutic Methods in Archaeological Site Communication*, aimed at investigating how archaeology employs scientific theoretical methods, specifically positivism, in its historical dissemination.

Prior to my stay at DIA, I had conducted a similar study at Julius Caesar's Forum in the heart of Rome. The stay in Athens was applied for based on the evaluation of the same topic. During the stay, I spent time observing the movement patterns of visitors at the Roman Agora, which I compared to previous observations made in Rome. The results of both fieldwork studies were evaluated, and I attempted to deduce what researchers can understand from this behavior and its learning potential.

Firstly, this led me to ponder the invisible communication strategies that archaeological sites themselves present. There are many semiotic signs around these cultural-historical sites, which pulsate as the beating heart of the epicenter of mass tourism. I was convinced that many of these signs, both directly and indirectly, shape our behavior and understanding when we visit such places. My question thus centered on how, or rather how not, the sites themselves relate to these signs.

Being able to make repeated observations at the Roman Agora allowed me to validate my thesis from Rome and thereby reconceptualize how a positivist-oriented communication strategy isolates itself from the surrounding, bustling city. I believed I could demonstrate how such an approach does not challenge visitors' behavioral movement patterns, and therefore there is reduced learning potential for visitors.

In addition to my observations at the Roman Agora and writing sessions at the Nordic Library, the stay at Maggina also allowed me to visit many of the city's interesting museums and cultural-historical sites. These visits were a great inspiration to me and led to further wonderings on how a clearer communication strategy at indoor museums makes more use of a hermeneutic approach compared to the positivist approaches of outdoor museums.

In my interpretations of the observations made, I temporarily realized the need to present the topic to some attentive individuals. DIA was very welcoming and helpful in inviting friends of the institute for a project presentation. They provided the perfect framework for such an event, and the subsequent dialogues with the attendees made significant progress for my project.

I extend my deepest gratitude to the institute for the stay and the scholarship. This support has markedly propelled the next stages of my research and offered new perspectives that I might not have otherwise considered. I am hopeful for the opportunity to return and further develop these insights.

Naples, 22.07.24

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