

Having recently completed my PhD, I was very excited to hear that I had been awarded the HiSoMA Bourse. This presented an excellent chance to delve into an area of research I'd been really looking forward to getting to grips with, namely, how music and musicians were regulated in antiquity, and what that might tell us about our current attitudes to musical regulation or censorship. What follows is a short reflect on some of the things that I most appreciated during my stay in HiSoMA, and why I would wholeheartedly recommend others to apply for this opportunity in the future. As an Early Career Researcher, having the time to develop ideas and work beyond my PhD thesis is really meaningful, as well as the international experience.

The topic for my research, the regulation of music and poetry in the ancient world, stemmed from a range of observations during my PhD at the University of Reading (which explored the role of music in ancient Sparta). The regulation of music in Sparta was often presented by ancient sources as being something particularly notable. This has, on the whole, been taken at face value, meaning that there has never been a wide-scale survey of the regulation (or censorship) of music in antiquity.

Being able to dedicate a month to this project, without having to worry about any other commitments, really sped-up what I was able to get done. My first two weeks were spent primarily building a collection of sources relating to the project, as broad a range of examples as possible, to be refined and categorised over the next few weeks (sadly, this was cut short due to Covid-19, though I hope to return at some point in the future).

The two main areas I looked at were examples of organised bodies involved with musico-poetic performance, and specific and general cases of musico-poetic censorship. In total, I catalogued around 80 individual examples in the first two weeks, and I expect this number to increase (one which will likely become a case-study for further examination is a fascinating inscription recording posthumous honours from a group of Attalids to a politically influential aulos-player).

None of this would have been possible, of course, without the superb Bibliothèque de la Maison de l'Orient. Beautifully laid out and with staff who were very accommodating of my not too perfect French, being able to nip down from the office to the library to check references was a real luxury and saved a lot of time. Taking the volumes I needed to refer to in more depth back to the office was very convenient, and without the interruptions that might happen if the library wasn't so close to hand. The library was particularly well stocked with a wide range epigraphic corpora that aren't widely available, which was particularly valuable for my survey of musical regulation.

Just as importantly were the series of conversations I had with HiSoMA members throughout my stay (and, in the case of Sibylle Emerit, after!). It was particularly rewarding to hear the insights from academics working in the different research clusters of HiSoMA, and those outside my direct area of study. Many thanks to everyone I spoke with during my stay. Particular thanks must go to Sabine Fourrier, Richard Bouchon, and Alcorac Alonso Deniz. I reserve my final thanks to Pascale Brillet-Dubois and Stéphane Gioanni for all their support and giving me the opportunity to conduct my research at HiSoMA. It was a truly rewarding and beneficial stay in ways far beyond what I can write in this short summary.

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