

This reflective essay will display my experience of my latest block, Independent Investigation. For this block, we are required to choose any topic that we would prefer to write an essay on, as well as research - for my topic, I chose to; investigate how the archaeological excavation of Sparta differs from that of the Western concept of the Spartan Mirage (a French term referring to how Sparta is perceived in a legendary/mythological sense) and why that could potentially be, or how the archaeological findings of Sparta support the evidence from ancient primary sources that have reported on Sparta, alongside whether they differ and disprove certain information.

I decided to set myself a challenge for this block and delve into an area of research regarding Sparta that I haven't had much personal experience with, which is that of the entire archaeological excavation. This means that I am currently having to learn the processes and findings of the teams responsible and decide how many of the excavations (4 in total from the first in 1892 to the latest discoveries of the Roman stoa from 1988-1991) are relevant, and only then after reviewing, I can apply that information to my current knowledge of the Spartan Mirage.

I did originally struggle majorly with the specific topic, as I knew I wanted to write my essay on some level of archaeology, but I was unsure how I could turn that into an investigative essay - there is no real definition of what makes up the Spartan Mirage in specific points, but there is more to work with when it comes to primary sources, so I may end up switching my plan towards that route. This block is helping me to learn how to decide on what will be more beneficial for myself, as well as give myself a challenge, and how I can do both whilst supporting the essay and having a higher word count to explore in-depth for both topics.

By the end of this module, I hope to have more knowledge on the physicalities found in Sparta, and be able to apply both that and my current knowledge to my future essays, experience and career.