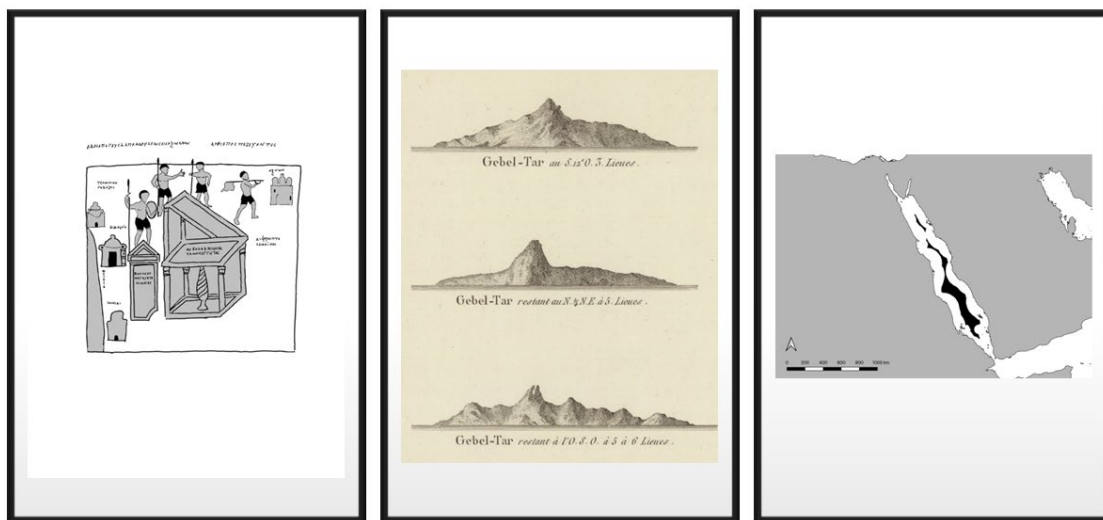




The Øivind Andersen Lecture Series

Coastal and High Sea Navigation in the Red Sea in the Hellenistic and Roman Periods

Lecture by Prof. **Eivind Heldaas Seland** (Professor of Ancient History and Premodern Global History, Vice Dean for Research, Department of Archaeology, History, Cultural Studies, and Religion, University of Bergen)



Kosmas Indikopleustes' map of the Aksumite kingdom. 6th/9th century CE. Drawing after manuscript Vat.gr.699, 15v. Eivind Heldaas Seland Jabal al-Tair from different directions and distances. Carte générale de la Mer Rouge, 1798-1799. Public Domain / Bibliothèque nationale de France. Sea to land visibility in the Red Sea. (Eivind Heldaas Seland)

The lecture will take place on **Thursday, 28 May 2026, at 7:00** p.m. (EEST) at the Norwegian Institute at Athens, Tsami Karatasou 5, 11742 (the lecture will also be streamed online via Zoom)

Registration is required for both in-person and virtual attendance.

To attend **in-person**, please register at norwinst@uib.no

To attend **via Zoom**, please register via the following link:

<https://uib.zoom.us/meeting/register/z-gNize2RNK9-LMT9KIUAg>



Abstract

The Red Sea was a challenging maritime environment for ancient navigators. There were dangerous reefs along the coasts, strong winds, and few settlements offering provisions, pilots, and sheltered anchorage. Many navigators originated outside the region, from the Mediterranean and the Western Indian Ocean World, and would need to familiarize themselves with conditions in the Red Sea in order to plot a safe course without the benefit of charts and instruments. Ancient geographical, ethnographic, and historical texts reveal traces of navigation practices in the form of toponyms and practical advice. This talk addresses the evidence of such practices in the Red Sea in the pre-Islamic period, combining it with GIS-modelling of sea-land visibility, shedding light on the gradual accumulation of experience and peer to peer/master to apprentice transfers of knowledge that we know must have taken place, but that are otherwise largely lost to us.

Biographical Information

[Eivind Heldaas Seland](#) is professor of ancient history and premodern global history at the University of Bergen. His research interests include the Red Sea and Indian Ocean in the preislamic period, the Hellenistic and Roman Near East, environmental history, and the reception and use of classical history in later periods.