



NEWSLETTER



The Norwegian Institute at Athens

July - December 2025



Erik Østby (1945–2025), former Director of the Institute (Photo: NIA)

The Norwegian institute at Athens

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Ragna Valén, Senior Advisor, UiB	
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Dr. Delia Tzortzaki, Leader and Representative of	Professor Halvard Fossheim, FoF/HF, UiB
UiB in Greece; Senior Advisor/Researcher, NIA/UiB	Senior Lecturer Eirik Welø, IFIKK/HF, UiO
Dr. Paschalis Zafeiriadis, Senior Advisor/Re-	Dr. Zarko Tankosic, Project Manager, Administrative
searcher, NIA/UiB	Manager AHKR/HF, UiB
Costas Polyzos, Graduate Assistant, NIA	Jonas Joel Joseph, Student Representative, UiB
Sofia Ktistopoulou, In-house Assistant, NIA	

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Rome – Athens, and Beyond

Less than a month before the turn of the year, the Norwegian Institute at Athens lost a legendary figure for Greek archaeology and one of its pioneering directors. Erik Østby, professor of Greek archaeology at the University of Bergen, passed away after having given his noble fight for years. The current issue of our Newsletter is dedicated to the memory of an international scholar, a true 'devotee' to the study of Archaic and Classical antiquity, most particularly architecture in Italy and Greece. During his lifetime, Erik was ardently documenting his archaeological work thus leaving a precious archive behind, which is being duly preserved, digitally organized and catalogued at the Institute. In October 2024 Paschalis Zafeiriadis and I visited him at his home in central Bergen, as always during our annual administrative trips to Bergen, unaware that this was our last coffee and cookies ritual together, our last time to exchange news, listen to his lively accounts about his work in progress, be amused by his vivid recollections, share views about future action. For quite some time before the latest events, the Institute had committed and begun to organize a tribute conference in honor of Erik, which eventually had to be postponed and never happened in the end. We will pursue this plan, even more so now, and strive to make it happen within the next couple of years. For the purposes of this issue, Knut Ødegård, Professor in Greek and Roman history and archaeology at the University of Oslo, kindly offers an overview over his mentor's life achievement, as an act of collective remembrance.

Issue no. 6 (July - December 2025), which comes out with a slight delay due to unforeseen technical and other matters, presents novel collaborative initiatives and promising first outcomes, not unrelated to Erik's vision and aspirations. Erik would definitely be happy to know that in October 2025 the Norwegian Institutes in Rome (DNIR/UiO) and Athens (NIA/UiB) launched ENCOUNTERS, a joint lecture series with focus on early career scholars working in Norway, Italy and Greece. On the initiative of Prof. Han Lamers (Dept. of Classics, University of Oslo), who had just assumed his duties at DNIR, a longstanding plan to bring

those institutions closer finally took shape! Twice a year, young scholars from all three countries will be taking the floor in Rome (October) and Athens (May) to present their recent work. I am very grateful to Prof. Lamers for spearheading the initiative and for an amazing collaboration during 2025! Worth noting is that both Norwegian Institutes receive royal patronage which for the Norwegian Institute at Athens was renewed in the second half of 2025.



Prof. Han Lamers at his office in Rome (Photo: Delia Tzortzaki)

Speaking of institutional support, in November 2025 we had the pleasure and honor to welcome the newly appointed Ambassador of Norway to Greece, Harriet Elisabeth Berg, and the Deputy Head of Mission, Geir Håkon Johansen at our premises, accompanied by Adviser Christina Sordina, steadfast collaborator of the Institute.



H.E. the Ambassador of Norway to Greece Harriet Elisabeth Berg and Deputy Head of Mission Geir Håkon Johansen at the NIA (Photo: Christina Sordina)

We are delighted to witness a continuing tight cooperation between the Institute and the Embassy leading to creative ideas of how to join forces in matters of research, education and

dissemination of Norwegian academic production.

Just a week later, an eagerly anticipated event took place at the Institute. Nine Norwegian and seventeen Greek professionals from the Museum of Cultural History, University of Oslo (KHM) and the Hellenic Ministry of Culture respectively - including former and current Directors, Head of Departments, curators, and other scientific personnel - gathered for a two-day workshop (20 - 21 November) to seal the kick-off of the MoU agreement between the KHM and the Greek Ministry. (photo 3). Signed in 2024 by the leadership of both institutions, the MoU will run until 2030 to include the opening of the new Museum of Viking Age in Oslo. The Athens workshop functioned as an introductory meeting and a launch pad for further action in 2026 -2028. Our first bilateral activity is on schedule for late May - early June 2026.



MoU delegates during the inaugural workshop at the NIA (Photo: Paschalis Zafeiriadis)

Towards the end of 2025, a unique celebratory moment marked the year making Erik's absence even more prominent: the 30-year anniversary of the Nordic Library or Norlib! Throughout 2025, the board of Directors of the Library consisting of the leaders of all four Nordic Institutes at Athens (DIA, FIA, NIA, SIA), together with the Head and Academic Librarians at Norlib, designed the program of a well-attended two-day jubilee. Despite the torrential rain, the opening night on 4 December at the Finnish and Swedish Institutes, staged various attractions:

- Greetings from officials and former Norlib members and users including the first Director of the Institute, Øivind Andersen, whose speech was a reminder of endless construction phases, Greek bureaucracy and dedication to the cause.



The first NIA Director, Prof. Øivind Andersen, greeted the audience at the 30-year anniversary of the Nordic Library (Photo: Oona Luiri)

- The presentation of the tribute volume VOREAS filled with personal accounts from the early days of and at the Library.



Presentation of the tribute volume VOREAS (Photo: Oona Luiri)

- A guided tour to the small-scale anniversary photo exhibition Our First Steps mounted by the staircase entryway of the Norlib to visualize raw concrete aesthetics and deserved scholarly pride.



Presentation of the photo exhibition Our First Steps (Photo: Oona Luiri)

The second day of the festivities was devoted to a colloquium focusing on the future of Research Libraries in a Digital World. Experts from Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden as well as local professionals were invited to present new methodologies, tools and strategies aimed to address ever increasing techno-epistemological challenges affecting users and library content alike. Hosted at the Danish Institute this fine arrangement brought a considerable turnout and was followed by seated lunch at the Norwegian Institute, where generations met and old colleagues reconvened.



Delegates, organizers and participants at the Colloquium about the future of Research Libraries (Photo: Anton Ala-Heikkilä)

Another moment of collaborative action was the drafting of the research initiative Democracy spanning over 2026 and 2027. Triggered by the Dutch Institute, which pulled the four Nordic Schools and the Academy of Athens together, Democracy tackles issues of crisis and resilience from a historical and interdisciplinary perspective cutting through time. The first move of this promising conjoint platform is an international workshop taking place on 28 - 29 April 2026, at the Swedish Institute. Save the date, then, and await the program in early April!

To turn to our hosted events at the NIA, we received just a mouthful of them albeit significant ones, during the second half of 2025: happy to see the workshop of the research group Ancient World back at the Institute, in early October. About a month later, five UiO students from the Teacher Education MA-program, led by Senior Lecturer Janne Scheie, participated in the International Baccalaureate program at Pierce College to gain experience about how IB teaching is performed in Greek second-grade

schools. Most notably, what piqued the students' interest, and could become the stimulus for newfangled comparative research, was the great dissimilarity they experienced regarding pedagogical methods and class organization in Norway and Greece. We appreciate their comments and feedback available at the end of this issue, and thank Janne Scheie for her uninterrupted, enthusiastic engagement with this project for three years in a row.

Our organized events on the other hand have been plenty. Five slots in the fall calendar were filled with scholars from Norway at all stages of career development discussing topics as varied as care and infant mortality in ancient Athens, Viking history, Norwegian prehistoric archaeology, healing rituals from a field anthropology perspective and not least, the progress of NIA's own Gourimadi Archaeological Project. Moreover, two hybrid research workshops, each accompanied by a public lecture, attracted considerable attention. While the innovative Digital Archaeology workshop organized by Dr. Paschalis Zafeiriadis (NIA) and Assoc. Prof. Markos Katsianis (University of Patras) entered its second consecutive year this time highlighting *Data and Technology Politics in Archaeology*, NIA's Costas Polyzos set up and chaired *Cuius Regio? How Religion Shaped the Modern Histories of Norway and Greece*. It was most exciting to expand on these less explored fields of study combining religion, heritage studies, sociology and political science and to make the acquaintance of UiB and KIFO scholars keenly participating in person and online.

Lastly, this autumn saw the completion of two more publications, namely *Stylistic Innovation in Western Greek Ceramics: Western Archaic Polychrome Pottery (WAPP) in Context* edited by Signe Barfoed and Catherine Morgan and *Digital Impacts on Archaeological Fieldwork: Advantages and Limitations* edited by Paschalis Zafeiriadis, Markos Katsianis and Søren Handberg, which are now in printing stage and will enrich our Papers and Monographs from the Norwegian Institute at Athens series.

A big thanks, as ever, to the leadership of the University of Bergen and to the Institute's dedicated administrators, Per Arne Foshaug, CFO - UiB and Senior Advisor Ragna Valen! Special thanks also go to the members of our

invaluable advisory board in Norway and to Dr. Eirik Welø in particular who joined in late 2025, for their unceasing support and enthusiasm. A special mention should be given to our research affiliates Helge Ask (MF), Jorunn Økland (UiO) and Thodoris Rakopoulos (UiO), who populated the Institute in the fall 2025 confirming the motto of my old university: *in fluctu vita!*

Enjoy more information and details in the next pages, best spring wishes from all of us at the Norwegian Institute, Athens!

Delia Tzortzaki

Research Opportunities at the NIA

The Erik Østby Archaeology Stipend (2026–2027)

The Norwegian Institute at Athens will shortly announce the Erik Østby Archaeology Stipend for the academic year 2026–2027. The stipend is awarded annually and commemorates Prof. Erik Østby, former Director of the Institute, in recognition of his enduring contribution to Greek archaeology and to the scholarly life of the Institute during his tenure as Director.

The stipend supports MA and PhD students at Norwegian universities whose research engages with Greek archaeology in its broadest sense. Eligible projects may address topics ranging from Prehistory to the Byzantine period and may draw on approaches centered on archaeological material culture, ancient architecture, or closely related fields.

The forthcoming call, including detailed eligibility criteria and application guidelines, will be available by the end of March 2026 on the Institute's website and social media channels.

Research Affiliate Program

The [Research Affiliate Program](#) aims to further the role of the NIA as an international research hub and bring under its academic roof researchers and projects from Norway that could

benefit from its role as a liaison between Norway and Greece.

Advanced or early-career scholars and MA/PhD students from Norwegian Universities are eligible to apply. The Program offers our [affiliated researchers](#) the opportunity to benefit from our international academic network in Greece and abroad, office space at our premises, access to the Nordic Library, and the possibility to transfer books from the Nordic Library to their NIA office.

For those interested in joining our Research Affiliate Program, please contact us via [email](#) with your completed [application form](#) and C.V. While applications are accepted year-round, office space is assigned on a first-come, first-served basis, so availability may vary.

Fall 2025 Research Affiliates

* [Helge Ask](#) (PhD Student, New Testament Studies, Center of Mission and Global Studies (CMG), Faculty of Theology and Social Sciences (FTS), VID Specialized University)



Helge Ask (Research Affiliate - Fall 2025; Photo: VID)

Project Title: ***Angels Who Sinned: Reading Jude 6 and 2 Pet 2:4. From an Imperial-Critical Perspective***

* Prof. [Theodoros Rakopoulos](#) (Department of Social Anthropology, University of Oslo)

Project Title: ***Of Taboo and "the Wild": Hunting and Selling Boar Among Sufi Muslims***



Prof. Theodoros Rakopoulos (Research Affiliate - Fall 2025 / Spring 2026; Photo: UiO)

* Assoc. Prof. [Peter Stuart Robinson](#) (Department of Social Sciences, The Arctic University of Norway)



Assoc. Prof. Peter Stuart Robinson (Research Affiliate – Fall 2025 / Spring 2026; Photo: UiT)

Project Title: ***Ontological Presentism: Ancient Democracy in the Eye of the Unselfconscious ‘Homo Economicus’***

* Clio Chrysostomidis (MA Student, Archaeology, Department of Archaeology, Conservation, and History, University of Oslo)



Clio Chrysostomidis (Research Affiliate - Fall 2025; Photo: Miriam Sørli Larsen / UIO)

Project Title: ***Challenging Care: Infant Mortality and Kourotrophic Practices in Classical and Hellenistic Athens***

Spring 2026 Research Affiliates

* Prof. [Arve Egil Asbjørnsen](#) (Department of Biological and Medical Psychology, University of Bergen)

Project Title: ***Implicit Language Learning***

* Prof. [Theodoros Rakopoulos](#) (Department of Social Anthropology, University of Oslo)

* Assoc. Prof. [Peter Stuart Robinson](#) (Department of Social Sciences, The Arctic University of Norway)

* [Annika Svendal Os](#) (PhD Student, Antiquity's Effective History, Department of Archaeology, History, Cultural Studies and Religion, University of Bergen)



Annika Svendal Os (Research Affiliate - Spring 2026; Photo: A. Os)

Project Title: ***Ancient History in Norwegian Schools***

* [Magnus Knutsen](#) (PhD Student, Ancient History, Department of Archaeology, History, Cultural Studies and Religion, University of Bergen)



Magnus Knutsen (Research Affiliate - Spring 2026;
Photo: UIB)

* Assoc. Prof. [Lars Tuastad](#) (Assoc. Prof. Student, The Grieg Academy – Department of Music, University of Bergen)



Lars Tuastad (Research Affiliate - Spring 2026; Photo:
Tine Grieg Viig)

Project Title: **User Involvement in Music Therapy Research: Opportunities and Challenges**

* [Yijing Yang](#) (Doctoral Research Fellow, Department of Philosophy, Classics, History of Art and Ideas, University of Oslo)



Yijing Yang (Research Affiliate - Spring 2026; Photo:
UIO)

Project Title: **Nutritive soul as the Demarcation Point Between Life and Non-life Based on Aristotle's Philosophy and Theophrastus' Writings on Plants.**

July - December 2025 Activities

Activities Hosted at the NIA

Workshop: The workshop was organized by the [Ancient World Research Group](#), a collaborative body drawing its members from the Department of Archaeology, the Department of History, the Department of Cultural Studies and Religion, the Department of Linguistic, Literary and Aesthetic Studies, and the Department of Philosophy, University of Bergen, and aimed to facilitate an internal discussion on the current state of the group's research and to advance preparations toward the publication of its results.



The Ancient World Research Group in action (Photo:
NIA)

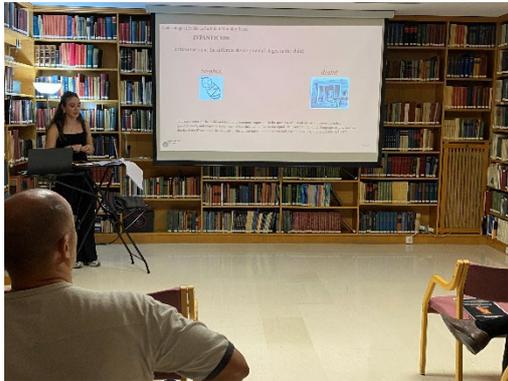
Course: Practicum Placement course. A course for MA students focusing on International Baccalaureate teaching methodologies was held at Pierce College, Athens, with the Institute facilitating networking and presenting its activities to the students at its facilities. The initiative is organized by the Department of Teacher Education and School Research, with Senior Lecturer [Janne Thoralvsdatter Scheie](#) responsible for its coordination.

Activities (co-)Organized by the NIA

Lecture: [Challenging Care: Infant Mortality and Kourrotrophic Practices in Classical and Hellenistic Athens](#). Lecture by Clio Chrysostomidis (MA Student, Department of Archaeology, Conservation, and History University of Oslo).

Lecture Recording:

<https://youtu.be/Ei0dDopr3T8?si=pw4GVn4jbRD4MvVq>



Clio Chrysostomidis delivering a lecture at the NIA

Lecture: [When Scandinavian Epigraphy Became Latinized](#). Lecture by Dr. [Alessandro Palumbo](#) (Associate Professor of Medieval Studies at the Department of Linguistics and Scandinavian Studies, University of Oslo) marking the inauguration of the ENCOUNTERS Lecture Series, a collaborative initiative of the Norwegian Institutes in Athens and Rome.

Lecture: [The Varangians in the Greek East \(10th-12th c.\)](#). Lecture by Dr. [Paschalis Androudis](#) (Associate Professor of Byzantine and Islamic Art and Archaeology, School of History and Archaeology, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki).

Lecture Recording:

https://youtu.be/Lx3yd-qgWLQY?si=Ao_xl3Ko5P2RbE8c



Dr. Androudis delivering a lecture at the NIA

Lecture: [Healing Rituals in Modern and Ancient Greece: A Comparison](#). Lecture by Dr. [Evy Johanne Håland](#) (Norwegian Government Grant Holder), Emerita/National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Department of Archaeology and History of Art, Marie Curie Intra-European Fellow, Emerita. Senior lecturer at SeniorUni Norge AS).

Lecture Recording:

https://youtu.be/Qly-waBqPz_U?si=DrE8xFSvBP29Uybp

Lecture: [Rethinking the Neolithic Package: Monumentality, Mobility, and Maritime Economy at Selje, Western Norway](#). Lecture by Dr. [Konrad Smiarowski](#) (Researcher, Section for Cultural Heritage Management, University Museum of Bergen) and Dr. [Morten Ramstad](#) (Head of Section for Cultural Heritage Management, University Museum of Bergen).



Dr. Ramstad delivering a lecture at the NIA

Lecture Recording:

<https://youtu.be/SMqm7Q31HiU?si=-Zl-oDS8zx9pQ47E3>

Workshop: [Cuius regio \(?\) – How Religion Shaped the Modern Histories of Norway and Greece workshop](#). Inaugural workshop in the newly introduced NIA Religious Studies Series. The scientific and organizing committee comprises [Costas Polyzos](#) (PhD Candidate, Department of Sociology, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens; Graduate Assistant, Norwegian Institute at Athens), Dr. [Delia Tzortzaki](#) (Museum Studies, The Norwegian Institute at Athens / University of Bergen), Dr. [Sven Thore Kloster](#) (Director, KIFO – Institute for Church, Religion, and Worldview Research), and

[Christian Lomsdalen](#) (PhD Candidate, Religious Studies, University of Bergen).

Lecture: [1700 Years After Nicaea: Church and State in Europe](#). Keynote lecture for the [Cuius regio \(?\) – How Religion Shaped the Modern Histories of Norway and Greece workshop](#) (NIA Religious Studies Series) by Dr. [Sven Thore Kloster](#) (Director of KIFO – Institute for Church, Religion, and Worldview Research, Norway).



Dr. Kloster delivering the keynote lecture for the Cuius Regio Workshop at the NIA

Lecture Recording:

<https://youtu.be/7VrfvGvhUOw?si=SQ6WIWKjHtd0TxUC>

Lecture: [Bridging the GAP: The Gourimadi Archaeological Project, 2024-2025 Excavation Seasons](#). Lecture by Dr. [Žarko Tankosić](#) (SFF Center for Early Sapiens Behavior (SapienCE), University of Bergen), Dr. [Paschalis Zafeiriadis](#) (The Norwegian Institute at Athens, University of Bergen), and Dr. [Fanis Mavridis](#) (Ephorate of Paleanthropology/Speleology, Ministry of Culture).



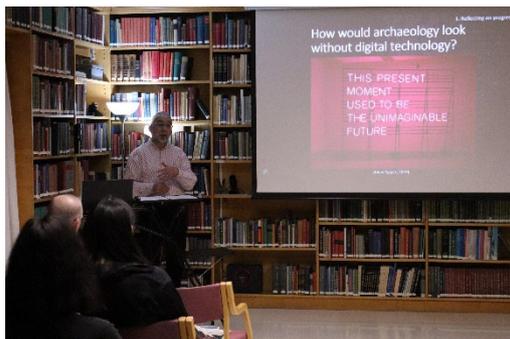
Dr. Tankosić delivering a lecture at the NIA

Lecture Recording: <https://youtu.be/v5qJOR-Jcmno?si=6GZkjFuop-Wu8s1f>

Inaugural Meeting Memorandum of Understanding 2024-2030: The [first meeting](#) setting the agenda for the Memorandum of Understanding signed in 2024 between the Museum of Cultural History – University of Oslo (KHM) and the Hellenic Ministry of Culture. The Norwegian Institute at Athens has played a key role in facilitating this process over the years and will organize and host various academic activities in the coming years. In November, the current and former Directors of KHM, along with several academics and curators, share their expertise on the Vikings in the Mediterranean and presented best practices in museum and heritage management.

Workshop: [Data and Technology Politics in Archaeology](#). The second workshop in the [Exploring the Layers of Digital Archaeological Practice](#) Series continued to shape an international platform for the study of the manifold impact of digital technologies and processes in archaeological practice and theory. The series board is composed of Dr. [Paschalis Zafeiriadis](#) (Senior Advisor; Researcher, Norwegian Institute at Athens / University of Bergen), Assoc. Professor [Markos Katsianis](#), (Department of History and Archaeology, University of Patras), Prof. [Nicoló Dell'Unto](#) (Department of Archaeology and Ancient History, Lund University), Dr. [Björn Nilsson](#) (Head of Department, Department of Cultural History, University of Bergen), and Assoc. Professor [Søren Handberg](#) (Department of Archaeology, Conservation and History, University of Oslo).

Lecture: [Gone Digital: How Has Digitalization Changed Archaeology?](#) Keynote lecture by Dr. [Jeremy Huggett](#) (Honorary Senior Research Fellow in Archaeology, School of Humanities, University of Glasgow) for the [Data and Technology Politics in Archaeology](#) Workshop.



Dr. Huggett delivering the keynote lecture Data and Technology Politics in Archaeology workshop at the NIA

Lecture Recording:

<https://youtu.be/OPqcBmLqrR4?si=mB8FTftNb9CXosP5>

30th Anniversary of the Nordic Library at Athens: The Nordic Library at Athens, established in 1995 through collaboration between the Danish, Finnish, Norwegian, and Swedish Institutes in Athens with support from the Nordic Council, is marking its [30th anniversary](#) as a landmark research resource and hub for international scholarly exchange in the fields of Greek archaeology, classics, ancient history, and related disciplines. To celebrate this milestone, a ceremony and exhibition were held at the Library in December 2025, followed by a colloquium titled “The Future of Research Libraries in a Digital World” at the Danish Institute at Athens, underscoring the Library’s pivotal role in facilitating Nordic–Greek academic collaboration and its continued significance for future research cooperation.

Upcoming Spring 2026 Activities

Lecture (28/1): [The Small Cycladic Islands Project: From Miniature Landscapes to Regional Histories](#). Lecture by Dr. [Alex Knodell](#) (Professor of Classics and Director of Archaeology, Carleton College) and Dr. [Demetris Athanasoulis](#) (Director of the Ephorate of Antiquities of the Cyclades, Hellenic Ministry of Culture).

Lecture (12/2): [Coloniality and Decoloniality in Greece and Cyprus](#). NIA-logues lecture Series. Lecture by Dr. [Theodoros Rakopoulos](#) (Professor, Department of Social Anthropology, University of Oslo) and Dr. [Konstantinos Kalantzis](#)

(Assistant Professor, Department of Culture and Creative Media, University of Thessaly).

Lecture (25/2): [Teaching Virtue Through the Past: Classical Narratives and Moral Formation in Anton Ræder’s Textbooks, 1894-1969](#). Lecture by [Annika Svendal Os](#) (PhD Candidate, Antiquity’s Effective History, Department of Archaeology, History, Cultural Studies and Religion, University of Bergen).

Annual Open Meeting (19/3): The Norwegian Institute at Athens 37th Annual Open Meeting. Presentations of the Institute’s activities for 2025 will be delivered by Dr. [Delia Tzortzaki](#) (Leader of the Norwegian Institute at Athens in Greece and University of Bergen Representative, The Norwegian Institute at Athens / University of Bergen). The keynote lecture will be given by Prof. [Håkon Glørstad](#) (Department of Archaeology, Museum of Cultural History, University of Oslo) on the topic “[The Making of Viking History – Vikings in Ancient and Contemporary History](#).” The 2026 Annual Open Meeting will be held at the Acropolis Museum.

The Athenæum Lecture Series (25/3): [Hellenistiske dronninger på reise fot – Kvinnelige maknettverk i det 3. og 2. århundret fvt](#) (Hellenistic Queens on the Move – Female Power Networks in the 3rd and 2nd Centuries BCE). Lecture by Assoc. Prof. [Marijn Visscher](#) (Department of Archaeology, History, Cultural Studies and Religion, University of Bergen). Please note that the lecture will take place at the University of Bergen and will be delivered in Norwegian.

Lecture (2/4): [What is life? An Aristotelian Solution](#). Lecture by [Yijing Yang](#) (Doctoral Research Fellow, Department of Philosophy, Classics, History of Art and Ideas, University of Oslo).

Workshop (28-29/4): [Resilience and Reconciliation: Democracy in Crisis and Repair Across History](#). International [roundtable](#) organized jointly by the Danish Institute at Athens, the Finnish Institute at Athens, the Netherlands Institute at Athens, the Norwegian Institute at Athens, and the Swedish Institute at Athens.

ENCOUNTERS Lecture Series (12/5): Title TBD. Lecture by Dr. [Christina Videbech](#) (Department of Archaeology, History, Cultural Studies and Religion, University of Bergen), marking the

second lecture in the joint series co-organized by the [Norwegian Institute in Rome](#) (DNiR-UiO) and the Norwegian Institute at Athens (NIA-UiB).

The Øivind Andersen Lecture Series (28/5): *Costal and high sea navigation in the Red Sea in the Hellenistic and Roman periods*. Lecture by Prof. [Eivind Heldaas Seland](#) (Department of Archaeology, History, Cultural Studies and Religion, University of Bergen). This lecture constitutes the second event in the annual [series](#) dedicated to celebrating the life and work of the Institute's founding director, Professor Emeritus Øivind Andersen.

Archaeological Projects (2025)

Following the successful completion of the Small Cycladic Islands Project (SCIP), the Norwegian Institute at Athens is currently engaged in two active archaeological endeavors in Greece: The Gourimadi Archaeological Project (GAP) and the Apidima Caves Excavation Project. This year, GAP marked eight years of excavation at the site, with the field season conducted from mid-June to mid-July, while the fieldwork campaign at the Apidima Cave Complex took place from late August through early October.

We are delighted to witness growing participation from students at Norwegian universities in these projects. These initiatives not only provide essential hands-on fieldwork experience but also equip students with valuable, transferable skills that are fundamental to the discipline of archaeology.

For more information on our [ongoing](#) and [completed](#) project, please check the relevant section on our website.

The Gourimadi Archaeological Project: GAP involves the systematic excavation of a Late Neolithic-Early Bronze Age site near Karystos in Southern Euboea. The project is directed by Dr. [Žarko Tankosić](#) (Center for Early Sapiens Behavior, Department of Archaeology, History, Cultural Studies and Religion, University of Bergen), and co-directed by Dr. [Paschalis](#)

[Zafeiriadis](#) (The Norwegian Institute at Athens / University of Bergen), and Dr. [Fanis Mavridis](#) (Ephorate for Palaeoanthropology and Speleology).

The 2025 field season extended over four weeks (16 June – 11 July) and combined the excavation of preexisting trenches with the opening of new exploratory ones. Work proceeded in Trenches 1, 2, 3, 4, 8, 9, 10, and 11, with particular emphasis on refining the stratigraphic sequence and clarifying the extent and character of the architectural remains there. At the same time, two new trenches, Trenches 12 and 13, were opened to the west of the summit plateau and on the southern slope, respectively, to broaden the spatial scope of investigation and to trace building activity and use of space beyond the core of the hilltop area.



Gourimadi: Drone photo of the site

By the end of the 2025 field season, the bedrock had been fully reached in the central sector of Trench 1, while the excavation of the previously opened areas produced new crucial evidence for the structural relationship of the architectural remains and successive building phases of the site, particularly those associated with its earliest prehistoric occupation. The results yielded from the new trenches further confirmed the wide spatial distribution of prehistoric habitation in different parts of the hill, with additional architectural remains brought to light both west of the summit plateau (Trench 12) and along the margins of the southern slope (Trench 13). In parallel with fieldwork, the study of movable finds, including ceramic assemblages and ground-stone tools, continued in the project's storage and lab facilities at the Environmental Study Center of Kalyvia Karystou, ensuring the integration of excavation data with ongoing artefact analysis.



Gourimadi: The 2025 team

Apidima Caves Excavation Project (late August–October): The project encompasses the archaeological and geological exploration of Apidima Caves in Laconia, Peloponnese. The excavations at Apidima are conducted under the co-direction of Professor [Katerina Harvati](#) (Director of the Senckenberg Center for Human Evolution and Paleoenvironment, University of Tübingen) and Dr. [Vangelis Tourloukis](#) (Assis. Professor, Department of History and Archaeology, University of Ioannina).



Drone photo of the Apidima Cave Complex

During the 2025 field season, excavation continued in Caves A, B, and C, focusing on both the further stratigraphical study and horizontal expansion of preexisting trenches, alongside the opening of new excavation squares aimed at refining existing research questions and addressing emerging ones. For the first time within the framework of the current project, fieldwork was also undertaken in Cave D, where systematic sampling was conducted from undisturbed stratigraphic deposits within the excavated areas.

Overall, the 2025 fieldwork season produced new and highly significant evidence for the interpretation of the use and diachronic occupation of the four caves in the Apidima karstic complex. The incorporation, for the first time,

of data from Cave D—likely attributable to the later phases of the last glacial period—has broadened the chronological and cultural framework represented at the site. The archaeological assemblages from Apidima now illuminate a substantial Middle and Upper Paleolithic sequence, contributing not only to the understanding of habitation patterns in the Mani Peninsula, but also to broader discussions of human presence and mobility across the Greek mainland and the southern Balkan peninsula.

* Further information on the progress of the Institute’s excavation projects will be presented in upcoming lectures during the second half of the current year. Recordings of previous lectures on current and completed projects are available on the [Institute’s YouTube](#) channel.

Norway – NIA – Greece

Annual Admin Trip to UiB and UiO

The Institute’s annual administrative visit to Norway took place during the last week of September 2025 and included meetings with administrative staff and academic colleagues at its home institution, the University of Bergen, as well as presentations of the Institute’s recent activities and meetings at the University of Oslo.

A key highlight of the Bergen visit was the Institute’s first introductory meeting with the newly elected Deans and Vice Deans of the University, which provided an opportunity for a constructive exchange and for the presentation of the Institute’s current initiatives and priorities. The program also included the regular in-person meeting with the Institute’s recently renewed Advisory Board, alongside consultations with UiB IT Services regarding the Institute’s integration into the University’s network infrastructure and the ongoing migration to the new institutional website. Additional meetings were held with the [Division of Research and Innovation](#) to explore ways of further supporting Norway-based research activity in Greece and of creating new collaborative opportunities.

Discussions with [Maria-Carme Torras-Calvo](#), Deputy Director General of the [University of Bergen Library](#), focused on the Institute’s book

collection in Athens and its integration into the University Library catalogue, as well as on the final coordination of the 30th Anniversary of the Nordic Library at Athens, in which the Library, through its Deputy Director, contributed with a presentation as part of the anniversary workshop. The Bergen program concluded with a meeting with Prof. [Teemu Sakari Ryymin](#), Head of the Department of Archaeology, History, Cultural Studies and Religion, during which prospects for closer academic cooperation were explored.

At the University of Oslo, meetings were held with Dr. [Aud Valborg Tønnessen](#), Director of the Museum of Cultural History, concerning the implementation steps of the Memorandum of Understanding between the Museum and the Greek Ministry of Culture, as well as with museum staff on matters related to the development of digital data infrastructure for the Institute's research projects. The Institute expresses particular appreciation to [Espen Uleberg](#) and [Hallvard Indgjerd](#) of the Museum's Digital Documentation Section for their continued guidance and technical expertise.

The Oslo visit concluded with an open orientation meeting for faculty and advanced-stage students of the Department of Philosophy, Classics, History of Art and Ideas, organized by Dr. [Eirik Welo](#) (Senior Lecturer at the department and member of the Institute's advisory board), focusing on research support and residency opportunities at the Institute's premises in Athens for scholars working on topics related to ancient and modern Greece.

The Institute extends its sincere thanks to colleagues at both the University of Bergen and the University of Oslo for their constructive engagement and ongoing support, and to its administration at the University of Bergen—especially Senior Advisor Ragna Valen—for coordinating the meetings and contacts throughout the visit.

The Institute's New Advisory Board Members

Established in March 2022, the Institute's Scientific Advisory Board serves to provide input on the Institute's activities and annual planning, including priorities related to excavation

projects, publications, and broader strategic directions. Recent changes in the Board's composition have taken place due to new appointments and professional obligations.

The Advisory Board currently comprises:

Professor [Eivind H. Seland](#) (AHKR/HF, UiB), Head of the Advisory Board, Senior Lecturer [Eirik Welo](#) (IFIKK/HF, UiO), Professor [Halvard Fossheim](#) (FoF/HF, UiB), Dr. [Zarko Tankosic](#) (Project Manager and Administrative Manager, AHKR/HF, UiB), and [Jonas Joel Joseph](#) (Student Representative, UiB)

The Institute extends its sincere gratitude to Prof. [Ole Thomassen Hjortland](#), previously Head of the Board, and to Dr. [Mathilde Skoie](#) for their dedicated service and valuable contributions during their tenure. Their engagement has been greatly appreciated.

Norwegian "Encounters" Abroad

In 2025, the [ENCOUNTERS Lecture Series](#) was launched as a collaborative initiative between the Norwegian Institutes in [Athens](#) and [Rome](#), conceived as a platform for scholarly exchange that bridges geographic and disciplinary boundaries. The series brings together early-career and established researchers from Norway, Italy, and Greece to present work that explores cultural, historical, and intellectual intersections between the Mediterranean and the Nordic world. Its alternating venues, hosted in turn at the Norwegian Institute at Athens and the Norwegian Institute in Rome, underscore a consciously transnational orientation and a shared institutional commitment to sustained academic dialogue.

The inaugural lecture, introduced jointly by Dr. [Han Lamers](#) and Dr. [Delia Tzortzaki](#), Directors of the two Institutes, took place in October 2025 and was delivered by Assoc. Prof. [Alessandro Palumbo](#) (Department of Linguistics and Scandinavian Studies, University of Oslo) under the title "[When Scandinavian Epigraphy Became Latinized](#)." The opening event set the conceptual tone for the series by examining processes of linguistic and cultural transformation through epigraphic evidence, illustrating how northern and southern European scholarly

traditions may be read in productive conversation with one another.



Dr. Alessandro Palumbo at the inauguration lecture
(Photo: Alida de Lange D'Agostino)

Overall, the Encounters Series functions as a structured yet flexible forum for comparative and cross-regional research, emphasizing the importance of institutional partnerships in cultivating new scholarly networks. By situating Nordic studies within broader Mediterranean frameworks, the initiative advances an interconnected perspective on the transmission of texts, material culture, and intellectual traditions across Europe.

Hybrid Workshops – Academic Networks

As part of its mission to disseminate and actively support research produced by Norway-based scholars working in Greece and beyond, while at the same time functioning as a reciprocal networking platform, the Institute's staff has established two long-term workshop series designed to complement and foreground areas of inquiry closely aligned with the interests of its academic partners in Norway.

The two ongoing series focus respectively on the multifaceted impact of digital technologies and processes on archaeological practice and theory, and on the historical role of religious traditions in shaping the political constitution of Greece and Norway. Both initiatives are organized in hybrid format, enabling remote participation while also encouraging in-person attendance. A significant number of colleagues from Norwegian institutions have chosen to travel to Athens to present their work, thereby strengthening institutional ties and fostering sustained scholarly exchange. Beyond their clear academic value, these workshops have considerably broadened the Institute's visibility among researchers previously less familiar with

its activities, while simultaneously expanding opportunities for collaboration, professional networking, and international outreach.

Data and Technology Politics in Archaeology:

The "[Exploring the Layers of Digital Archaeological Practice](#)" workshop series continues to establish itself as a key forum for examining the multifaceted intersections of digital technologies, data infrastructures, and archaeological theory and practice. Organized by a transnational scientific board—including [Paschalis Zafeiriadis](#) (Senior Advisor; Researcher, Norwegian Institute at Athens / University of Bergen), Assoc. Professor [Markos Katsianis](#), (Department of History and Archaeology, University of Patras), Prof. [Nicoló Dell'Unto](#) (Department of Archaeology and Ancient History, Lund University), Dr. [Björn Nilsson](#) (Head of Department, Department of Cultural History, University of Bergen), and Assoc. Professor [Søren Handberg](#) (Department of Archaeology, Conservation and History, University of Oslo)—the series brings together interdisciplinary perspectives from around the globe with an aim to interrogate how digital tools and methodologies are reshaping archaeological research agendas.

The second workshop in the series, "[Data and Technology Politics in Archaeology](#)", convened scholars from Norway and beyond to explore critical shifts in data practices, digital workflows, and the epistemological implications of digital transformation in the discipline. Norwegian participants played a prominent role in the discussions, offering insights into national and international projects at the intersection of digital documentation, archaeological fieldwork, and theoretical innovation. Through both in-person and remote contributions, the workshop highlighted how digitalization is challenging long-standing methodological assumptions and opening new avenues for comparative research.



The Data and Technology workshop in action

Building on the inaugural workshop, “[Digital Impacts on Archaeological Fieldwork: Advantages and Limitations](#),” which will soon be published as part of an edited volume arising from the series, this latest meeting reaffirmed the series’ commitment to fostering sustained dialogue across institutional and disciplinary boundaries. Together, these events emphasize the value of collaborative inquiry into the political, ethical, and practical dimensions of digital technologies in archaeology, and they continue to strengthen scholarly ties between Norway-based researchers and their international counterparts.

Cuius Regio (?) – How religion shaped the modern histories of Norway and Greece: On 12 November 2025, the Norwegian Institute at Athens inaugurated its new Religious Studies Series with a hybrid workshop entitled “[Cuius Regio \(?\) – How Religion Shaped the Modern Histories of Norway and Greece](#).” The event brought together six scholars from the two countries to examine the ways in which Lutheran and Orthodox Christian traditions have informed social ethics, political institutions, and broader trajectories of national development. A central feature of the program was the open [keynote lecture](#) by Dr. [Sven Thore Kloster](#) (Director of KIFO – Institute for Church, Religion, and Worldview Research, Norway), who proposed a comparative typology of European church–state relations and framed the long-term objective of the series, namely the establishment of a durable research network linking Nordic and Orthodox scholarly communities.

The scientific and organizing committee comprised [Costas Polyzos](#) (PhD Candidate, Department of Sociology, National and Kapodistrian

University of Athens; Graduate Assistant, Norwegian Institute at Athens), Dr. [Delia Tzortzaki](#) (Museum Studies; Leader of the Norwegian Institute at Athens in Greece and University of Bergen Representative), Dr. [Sven Thore Kloster](#) (Director, KIFO – Institute for Church, Religion, and Worldview Research), and [Christian Lomsdalen](#) (PhD Candidate in Religious Studies, University of Bergen).

Discussions throughout the workshop revolved around the parallel yet divergent processes of secularization and social inclusion in an increasingly globalized context. Contributors observed that, in Norway, Lutheranism has largely assumed the character of a cultural marker with limited direct policy impact, whereas in Greece the Orthodox Church continues to play a pronounced role in shaping public discourse and educational and legislative frameworks, notwithstanding sustained efforts since the 1970s to recalibrate church–state relations.

Building on the strong engagement and scholarly exchange generated by this inaugural meeting, the Institute intends to broaden the thematic and geographical scope of the series to include additional Nordic and Orthodox countries. Participants expressed a shared commitment to maintaining the dialogue, and preliminary plans are already in place for a more focused follow-up workshop scheduled for the autumn of 2026.



The Cuius Regio workshop in action

A Nordic “Umbrella” for Democracy

The Norwegian Institute at Athens, in collaboration with the [Netherlands Institute at Athens](#), the [Danish Institute at Athens](#), the [Swedish Institute at Athens](#), and the [Finnish Institute at](#)

[Athens](#), has launched a new international research venture (2026–2027) exploring diachronic questions related to democracy. Conceived as a multidisciplinary and cross-institutional platform, the initiative brings together scholars from diverse European contexts to examine historical and contemporary processes through which democratic systems respond to crisis, negotiate social fractures, and pursue forms of reconciliation. The project reflects a shared commitment among the participating institutes to foster sustained research cooperation on themes of global relevance, while strengthening scholarly networks that extend across Greece, Scandinavia, and Northern Europe.

Underpinning this collaborative framework—initiated by Dr. [Willem Ledebøer](#) (Deputy Director and Advisor on International Cooperation, Netherlands Institute at Athens)—is a shared interest in intersections of political theory, historical experience, and cultural practice, approached through a wide lens that encompasses ancient, medieval, and modern periods. The project aspires to engage historians, political theorists, sociologists, and specialists in cultural and intellectual history to trace how concepts of resilience and reconciliation have been articulated and enacted in diverse historical settings. By foregrounding comparative inquiry and dialogue across regional traditions, the venture aims to enrich understanding of how democratic cultures adapt, endure, and are reconstituted in the face of internal tensions and external pressures.



Workshop Logo (designed by Petra Pakkanen)

The first workshop in the series, titled [Resilience and Reconciliation: Democracy in Crisis and Repair across History](#), is scheduled for 28-

29 April 2026 at the Swedish Institute at Athens and will [focus](#) on conceptual and methodological perspectives concerning democratic responses to periods of crisis. Bringing together international participants from all partner countries, the workshop will examine how historical precedents may inform contemporary discussions on political repair and social cohesion. The event exemplifies the collaborative ethos of the initiative and inaugurates a sustained sequence of meetings intended to deepen interdisciplinary engagement with the challenges confronting democratic societies, both past and present.

Meeting the New Ambassador

The Institute had the honor of welcoming H.E. Ambassador Harriet Elisabeth Berg, accompanied by Deputy Head of Mission Geir Håkon Johansen and Cultural Affairs Advisor Christina Sordina, for an introductory visit marking the Ambassador's first official meeting with the Institute. The discussion was held in a constructive and cordial atmosphere and focused on the Institute's ongoing and forthcoming academic activities, as well as on avenues through which the [Embassy](#) may continue to support its scholarly mission in Greece. The meeting reaffirmed the shared commitment to sustained cooperation and the long-standing, positive collaboration between the Embassy and the Institute. The Institute extends its sincere thanks to the Ambassador and her colleagues for the honor of their visit and for their continued engagement with its work.

Miscellanea

A Placement in Athens

Over the past several years, the Institute has had the pleasure of welcoming students from the Department of Teacher Education and School Research at the University of Oslo who undertake their practice placement in Greece. Initiated by Dr. [Janne Thoraldsdatter Scheie](#) (Senior Lecturer) and facilitated by the Institute, the program enables students of the

Teacher Education Program to gain substantial experience in International Baccalaureate teaching practices and methodologies through classroom participation at Pierce College in Athens. In addition to their hands-on engagement at Pierce College, participating students visit the Institute's premises, are introduced to its history and activities, and attend open lectures taking place during their stay in Athens. Below, we share selected reflections on the students' placement experiences in Athens.



Students of the Placement Course

Oda Amalie Paulsrud (MA, Department of Teacher Education and School Research, University of Oslo)

I first visited Athens and the Norwegian Institute with the University of Oslo in the winter of 2024, and I had wanted to return ever since. Luckily, Athens was just as wonderful when I came back with the university this autumn. As part of the teacher education program, four fellow students and I completed our practice placement at Pierce College, where we taught history, English, math, and science in the IB program. This was an incredibly rewarding experience. We had the opportunity to observe differences between the Norwegian and Greek school systems up close, explore new teaching approaches, and meet many devoted and enthusiastic students.

Outside school, we had an entire city to discover. As a history student, I was especially drawn to Athens' remarkable past, but we also found time to walk through lively neighborhoods, visit several museums, and, of course, enjoy truly excellent food. Before leaving, we visited the Norwegian Institute at Athens. We were warmly welcomed by Delia, Paschalis, and Costas, and attended the lecture "Rethinking

the Neolithic Package: Monumentality, Mobility, and Maritime Economy at Selje, Western Norway." It was a real highlight of our stay and a wonderful reminder of the Institute's role as a meeting place for Norwegian and Greek academic communities.

We are deeply grateful to the University of Oslo for arranging an international placement, and even more so for the opportunity to spend it in Athens. We left inspired, full of new perspectives, and already looking forward to our next visit

Magnus Aasen Holan (MA, Department of Teacher Education and School Research, University of Oslo)

Going on exchange to Athens was an incredible and unique experience. As student teachers from Norway, we naturally know quite a bit about our own country's educational system and its inner workings. We also had some experience with the IB program in Norway. Being able to compare this with an IB program in Greece was very valuable for our own professional growth as teachers. Subject-wise, we found that Greek classes were more focused on details than those in Norway, as well as placing greater emphasis on having students "know their facts." On a more relational note, it was interesting to learn about Greek teenagers and how their lives, though quite different in some respects, were also in many ways similar to those of students we have taught in Norway. With the beauty of Athens as a perfect backdrop to this work, the exchange remains an experience I will remember for a long time

A Travelogue from Athens

By Helge Ask (PhD Student, New Testament Studies, Center of Mission and Global Studies (CMG), Faculty of Theology and Social Sciences (FTS), VID Specialized University)

From August 28 to October 28, I had a research stay at the Norwegian Institute at Athens (NIA). NIA is owned by the University of Bergen, and it hosts scholars and students working within a

variety of research fields related to ancient, Byzantine, and modern Greece, Nordic studies, Mediterranean and classical studies, New Testament studies, such as my own, and more. Its facilities, located just south of the Acropolis of Athens among coffee shops and cafés, are excellent for undertaking research as well as for hosting seminars and lectures.



Helge Ask (Research Affiliate - Fall 2025; Photo: VID)

Upon my arrival, Athens was rather warm and lively, at least compared to Jæren. Two months in an apartment by myself, kindly rented to me by Jorunn Økland, Professor at the University of Oslo, meant that I had to adapt to a more Athenian way of life. My Koiné Greek did not help me nearly as much as I had hoped, but in most cases English was more than sufficient to get by. Overall, I experienced Athens as a wonderful city, with friendly people, exquisite food, beautiful churches and cultural sites, and, needless to say, a great place to undertake New Testament research. I even had the opportunity to attend a couple of Orthodox services, namely the Divine Liturgy, which was a very rewarding experience.

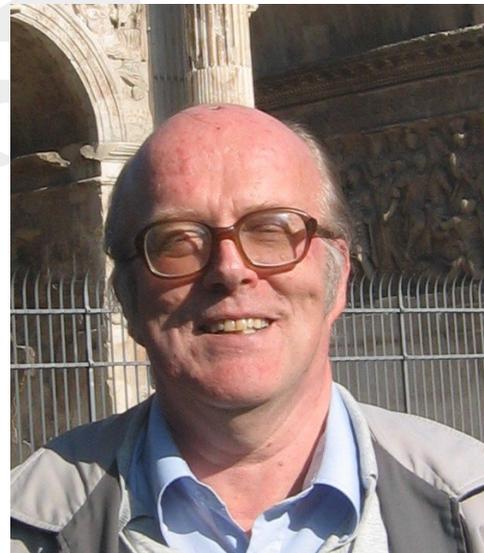
Two months pass quickly, but I managed to undertake more research and writing than anticipated. Success, however, is not merely measured in the number of words written. Visiting museums, archaeological sites, and monasteries, as well as getting to know colleagues at the NIA, the Nordic Library, and other foreign institutes in Athens, has meant a great deal to me both as a scholar and as a person. Although I have hardly covered everything there is to see in and around Athens, let alone Greece more

broadly, I now know where to continue when I return.

Special thanks are due to Dr. Delia Tzortzaki, Dr. Paschalis Zafeiriadis, and Costas Polyzos at the NIA for many wonderful conversations and scholarly discussions, for accommodating me with office space and necessary resources, and for providing countless recommendations for Athens and its surroundings. I also wish to express my gratitude to the Nordic Library for providing me with office space and access to its collections whenever needed, as well as to Birkeland's Legacy and the Centre for the Study of World Christianity's internationalization grant, without which this research stay would not have been possible.

In Memoriam: Erik Østby (1945-2025)

By Prof. [Knut Ødegård](#) (Department of Archaeology, Conservation and History, University of Oslo)



Erik Østby (Photo: Ingvar Brandvik Mæhle)

Erik Østby, the second director of the Norwegian Institute at Athens, passed away on December 3, 2025. With him, an essential part of the archaeological activities of the Norwegian institute has become history. Erik was a well-known figure in the scholarly environment in Athens, perhaps surprisingly, one might say, as

he was essentially a rather shy and reserved person. He was the type of scholar who preferred to speak through his scientific publications and lectures. He was, however, fond of company and had wider interests than many might have thought.

His contributions to archaeology in Greece and to Norwegian academia was not only important, for a Norwegian scholar like me, one might even say decisive. For the Athenian academic community, Erik was probably best known for his studies and publications on the Doric temple, and particularly for his meticulous and comprehensive publication on the excavations he directed at the sanctuary of Athena Alea and at other sites on the Peloponnese.

More about that later; but Erik's first important studies were conducted elsewhere, in Sicily. Based at the Norwegian Institute in Rome, his first degree, a magister artium in Classical Archaeology, was awarded for a study of the metopes of Temple C at Selinous in Sicily in 1972. He regularly returned to problems connected to the temples and sculpture of this westernmost Greek city in Sicily throughout his career, even as recently as 2025. Erik had a deep love for and fascination with Sicily and its Greek archaeology. As a fresh archaeology student attending a master course on Sicily in 1983, I vividly remember his introductions to the Doric architecture of the Archaic period, full of detail and reconstructions of the entire buildings and their mathematical proportions, even in cases where only a few blocks were actually still standing.

Already in the 1970s, however, Erik was looking east to the architecture of the Greek motherland. He first conducted measurements and studies of several smaller sites, often overlooked in previous research. One of the first sites that caught his attention was the almost forgotten Late Archaic temple of Athena at Karthaia on Kea. For Erik's scientific interests, the first task was to obtain precise measurements, as these were vital for understanding the logic and development of the Doric temple architecture. The year 1977 must have been an exciting and productive year for Østby. Not only did he begin his work at Kea, but he also visited sites

that would become important for his research in the decades that followed.

In later years, he often spoke about his first visit to the Sanctuary of Athena Alea at Tegea on a very chilly day in December in 1977. He already then became convinced that what the French excavators in the early twentieth century had interpreted as the remains of a Byzantine church was in fact the remains of a large late sixth-century Doric temple that preceded the fourth-century temple designed by Scopas of Paros. In the 1980s, Erik carried out thorough studies and measurements, not only of these remains at Tegea, but was also responsible for a project at the neighboring site of Pallantion together with the Italian Archaeological School at Athens, which had been active at the site immediately before the Second World War. Towards the end of the 1980s, Erik Østby had established a reputation as an important figure in the international academic environment in Greece, but there was still no Norwegian institute at Athens that could serve as his base for further fieldwork. This changed with the pioneering work of Øivind Andersen, who became the first director of the newly founded Norwegian Institute in 1989. This also gave Erik the opportunity to begin new fieldwork, finally under Norwegian flag, and he already had the plans prepared. In the summer of 1990, fieldwork began in the sanctuary of Athena Alea. Erik Østby assembled a highly international team, with American, Swedish, French and Italian collaborators, and he later described the following years as perhaps the most rewarding and interesting period of his active career. Erik was not a digging director; he was the organizer who drew up the main lines and aims, secured funding, and managed the entire organization. No small task, particularly as this was the first Norwegian excavation in Greece. I was fortunate to be a part of this wonderful experience and will always be grateful to Erik for bringing me in and introducing me to the challenges and opportunities in Greek archaeology.

As the excavation at Tegea approached its end, Østby was appointed in 1991 as the second director of the Norwegian Institute at Athens. He had been active at the institute from the start, teaching on student courses and providing Norwegian students with the opportunity to gain

experience through the excavations at Tegea. As director, Østby was instrumental in the establishment of the Nordic Library in Athens, inaugurated in 1995. He was also eager to inspire younger Norwegian scholars, such as myself, to continue the work at Tegea. During his directorship, plans for an archaeological survey of Tegea was formed, and he put his extensive contacts and network in the Greek environment to good use to provide the best possible start for the Norwegian Arcadia Survey in 1998. In 1999, Erik was finally appointed as the first Professor of Classical Archaeology at the University of Bergen, in fact his first permanent position in Norwegian academia. This required him to design courses and the entire progression of studies from scratch. As a result, he had less time for his own research and for preparing the final publications from the excavations at Tegea, although he returned to Greece and the libraries in Athens as often as he could. This was probably the main reason why the final publication of Tegea only came out in 2014. The two volumes, Tegea I and II, Papers and Monographs of the Norwegian Institute at Athens 3-4, will remain a monumental testament to his meticulous work at the site and to the archaeological fieldwork conducted under the auspices of the Norwegian Institute there.

Erik retired from his position in Bergen in 2011, as he wanted to dedicate more time to his research. And he was very productive during his first years as an emeritus. His final years, however, were marked by serious health issues, and he could no longer manage the long periods of study and writing in his beloved Athens. He nevertheless remained a steadfast researcher and, as he told me last year, continued his work, albeit at a slower pace than before. He was, however, able to hand over a finished manuscript on his work at Agios Elias to his good friend and colleague Björn Forsén last year.

Erik Østby was not only a great scholar. In spite of his natural shyness, he was also an inspiring lecturer who could deliver perfectly formed lectures on almost any topic from Antiquity with seemingly effortless command. It is difficult to describe in few words his importance for Classical archaeology, and particularly Greek

archaeology, for students, researchers and friends in Norway, as he led the way into what was virtually unknown territory when he began his career in the 1970s. For those of us who worked alongside him at Tegea, fond memories of his inspiration, as well as his very dry sense of humor will remain, as will his importance for the Norwegian Institute and his lasting contributions to Greek archaeology.

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