



Göttingen – a pleasant university town in Lower Saxony – was the venue of the meeting of the European association epiStoa in 2025. It took place on the third weekend of September (18th - 22nd).



Göttingen is surely not Syracuse or Kos, pearls of the Mediterranean and venues of previous epiStoa conferences. Nonetheless, it showed itself from its best side, in warm September sunshine inviting us to have breakfast outdoors.

Göttingen thrives of its once prestigious university – founded in 1734 by George II, King of Great Britain and Elector of Hanover – excelling by its impressive library. We visited the historic site located in the "Paulinerkirche" (St Paul's Church), with a guide who allowed us to admire its beauty and cultural significance.



The venue, the Institute of Archaeology with its marvellous, widely known cast gallery, was likewise impressive, as were the halls of the collection that we visited with Daniel Graepler being our guide.



In this ambiance, the discussion focused on projects and initiatives to be added to the existing ones (e.g. the epiStoa calendar, Atticus, epiStoa's multilingual publisher) and on how to establish contacts, direct and attract new audiences, and encourage participation. In addition, Johannes Wegener elucidated various possibilities how to bring classics contents and specifically material culture to school students.



The above figure shows the institute's lecture hall – being still in its original state as of 1912 – where the presentations for the general public were given. Dr. Dorotea Sotgiu presented here PhD thesis and Matthias Erbacher his recent experiences in the UK, specifically the revival of ancient Greek in Oxford university. The following talks given by Dietrich von der Pforten, Peter Kuhlmann and Gerhard Lauer addressed topics such as “human dignity”, “Happiness in Seneca”, and “Humboldt, the designer of formation and education”.



... and, of course, all this was accompanied by fervent discussions, over highly enjoyable meals.

The figures show a dinner in the “Kartoffelhaus” and ...

... the excellent restaurant of the hotel “Weender Hof” where the participants were staying.



Why epiStoa, after all? Because epiStoa strives to understand the ideational, linguistic and laws roots of the values that originated in ancient Greece and Rome. In ancient Greece, human beings were regarded, for the first time, as self-determined individuals rather than followers or group members; Roman jurisprudence, more than 2,000 years ago, coined the notion of *persona* (Latin for “person”), endowed with a certain dignity and legitimate rights. We owe Grekks and Romans democracy and law, the foundations of our ethical and political life.



epiStoa brings people from various European countries together (Greece, Spain, Germany, Italy, Switzerland, etc.) and can be found at www.epistoa.eu. Remarkably, the majority of epiStoa members are not professional scholars of antiquity; rather, they are scientists (e.g., physicists or chemists), medical doctors as well as teachers, musicians, lawyers, economists, philosophers, etc.. Being an expert in Greek or Latin philology or in archaeology is thus not required to appreciate, admire and love the creative thinking of the Greeks and Romans which has shaped the European way of life and thinking, as well as the ideological basis on which the USA was once founded.

Reconstruction of the statue of Epicurus in the cast collection of the Archaeological Institute of Göttingen.