

Archaeological Institute of America – Los Angeles Society



Founded in 1903 the AIA – LA society is one of the oldest AIA chapters in the USA.

Member Spotlight

This is part of an ongoing series of profiles presenting the many talented and diverse members of AIA-LA.

Paul Scotton

Paul is a well-respected professor of Classical archaeology and Classics at California State University, Long Beach, and was our president at AIA-LA just before Aaron Burke. His early fascination with architecture led him to spend four years at the American School of Classical Studies at Athens putting those skills to good use before finishing his PhD at the University of Pennsylvania.



One of the things Paul enjoys most about teaching is the way his students get excited about Classics and archaeology. It's even better when they decide to pursue that as their course of study. Outside the classroom, he takes pleasure in teaching an eight-week course in Greece every summer. Students earn college credit, so it draws young people from universities all across the USA. It's a wonderful mix of backgrounds, ideas and experiences.



Paul always encourages students to learn something well enough to trust themselves and stand up for their work, even when talking with advisors and professors. This may be due in part to his experience thirty years ago as a student under Charles Williams at Corinth. The venerable Director of Excavations trusted him to write a monograph on the work at their site. Paul has been paying it forward ever since.

He also had another memorable experience with Charles Williams that fell somewhere between agony and ecstasy. Paul excavated a trench at Corinth, and a friend followed with another trench one meter away. Paul was at lunch one day when Williams decided to remove the meter of earth and join the two trenches. That work uncovered an exquisite statue of Hermes holding the infant Dionysus. Paul had been so close to lifting the soil off that statue!

So he keeps looking for the next discovery, while continuing to make architectural drawings of finds in his excavations. Paul is one of those lucky people who loves what he does . . . and plans to keep doing it as long as possible.

— Interview by Sanford Holst