



# NATIONAL OBSERVATORY OF ATHENS

## ACTIVITIES

- **Morning tours:** Monday-Friday, from 9:30a.m. until 2:00p.m. Special programs for elementary, middle and high school students or other groups (in Greek and English) are available. Previous arrangement is required.
- **Night sky observations** for the general public of Athens throughout the year, often organised in collaboration with amateur astronomer clubs, weather permitting.
- **VIP night tours** for groups up to 70 persons upon appointment. These tours, which can also be offered in a language other than Greek or English, include observations of the night sky using the Doridis telescope, weather permitting.
- **Observations of rare astronomical phenomena**, such as eclipses of the Sun or the Moon, comets, etc.
- **Seminars** at schools, societies, and cultural centers. Public outreach and presentation of subjects related to Astronomy and Space in the media.

*The Visitor Center is easily accessible via public transport.  
Limited parking is available for organised groups.*



The Starke meridian telescope

VISITOR CENTER  
THISSIO



National Observatory of Athens

e-mail: [visitorcenter@noa.gr](mailto:visitorcenter@noa.gr)

Phone: 210-3490036, 210-3490160

<http://www.astro.noa.gr/en/visitorcenter>



SINAS BUILDING  
TWO CENTURIES OF ASTRONOMY

## THE NATIONAL OBSERVATORY OF ATHENS

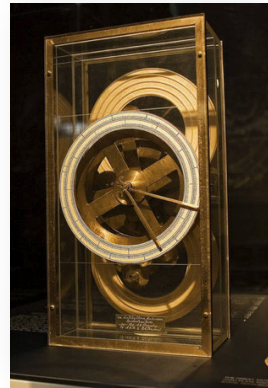
The National Observatory of Athens (NOA) was founded in 1842 as the first research center in Greece. The Institute for Astronomy, Astrophysics, Space Applications and Remote Sensing (IAASARS), which is supporting the activities of the Visitor Center in Thessio, is one of the three Institutes of NOA. The Visitor Center is housed in the historic Sinas building, situated on the hill of the Nymphs, just across from the Acropolis and next to the hill of Pnyx, where Meton built his heliotrope in order to perform the first astronomical observations during the classical Greek period (5th century BC). The goal of the Visitor Center is to inform the general public on a large number of astronomy related topics and at the same time to present the nearly two century-long history of Greek Astronomy at NOA, which has been shaped by the major transitional periods in the evolution of modern Greece.

## SINAS BUILDING - THE TELESCOPES DORIDIS AND SYGGROS

The construction of the Sinas building commenced in 1842, after a donation of the national benefactor George Sinas, a successful businessman and ambassador of Greece in Vienna. It was based on a design of the well known danish architect Theophil Hansen, who also designed several other classical buildings of the period, including the Academy of Athens and the National Library. On its ground floor one may closely inspect the 9cm Starke meridian telescope, which was acquired in 1846, soon after the Sinas building was completed. This first telescope of NOA was used to calculate the official time of Greece, until 1896 when it was replaced by the larger Syggros meridian telescope. The impressive dome of the Sinas building still houses a 16cm telescope, which was used by Julius Schmidt, the third Director of NOA (1858-1884), to sketch the most accurate map of the moon of the 19th century.



The historic library



Historic Scientific Instruments



The Doridis telescope

On the same premises one may visit the historic library of the Observatory, which includes a wealth of rare scientific books dating back to the 17th century, as well as admire a large number of unique and historic scientific instruments.

The refracting telescope of Doridis has a lens 40cm in diameter and was built by the French company of P.F. Gautier in 1902. It is housed in a building designed by Ernst Ziller, a short distance from the Sinas building, and its dome is 8m in diameter. It was purchased by NOA using funds from the endowment of Dimitrios Doridis, a member of the Greek Diaspora, who left his property to the Greek state when he passed away. It was the largest telescope in Greece up until 1959 when the University of Cambridge donated to NOA the 62.5cm diameter Newall telescope, which was installed in Penteli. In 2014, the Doridis telescope was completely renovated, thanks to a generous donation by OTE-COSMOTE, and it is now fully functional for observing the wonders of the Athens night sky by the public.

Discover the history of Greek Astronomy  
and the Athens night sky with us!

Photography: T. Matsopoulos

The Syggros meridian telescope was also built by P.F. Gautier in 1902, thanks to a donation of Andreas Syggros, a well known banker, politician, and national benefactor, and its building was also designed by E. Ziller. It has a lens 16cm in diameter and a focal length of 2.1m. It was used on a daily basis from 1900 until 1964 for the calculation of the official time of Greece.