

## Christian Archaeology at the University of Vienna

The study of Christian Archaeology at the Universities in the German speaking world developed in the core of theological studies, and Vienna University was not an exception. In fact, the first steps were made in 1887, following the efforts of the Biblicist Wilhelm Anton Neumann<sup>1</sup>. Neumann studied first at the Theological Institute of Heiligenkreuz Abbey, later, in 1874, at the University of Vienna. At that stage, Christian Archaeology was not considered as an independent discipline and did not have a specific identity, oscillating between the studies on Semitic languages and the exegesis of the Old Testament. The subject had no institutional connection to other disciplines, while remaining within the Catholic Theological Faculty, where Neumann was a full professor in 1887<sup>2</sup>. He, among others, was one of the most dynamic promoters of the 1<sup>st</sup> International Congress for Christian Archaeology in Split in 1894<sup>3</sup> (fig. 1).

His successor Heinrich Swoboda<sup>4</sup>, after his priestly ordination, studied Christian Archaeology at the *Campo Santo Teutonico* in Rome, where he had close contacts with Johann Peter Kirsch<sup>5</sup>, Giovanni Battista de Rossi<sup>6</sup> and Anton Maria de Waal<sup>7</sup>. In 1890, Swoboda obtained his habilitation for Christian Archaeology at the Catholic Theological Faculty and taught courses with a focus on ecclesiastic archaeology, liturgical and artistic traditions of the Roman catacombs. He organized excursions and exhibitions and promoted the knowledge and awareness of the archaeology of Early Christianity and of its most important places and monuments<sup>8</sup>.

Johannes Heinrich Emminghaus<sup>9</sup>, also a priest, contributed to shifting the attention towards liturgical space and its decoration; ecclesiastical architecture and baptism sites

<sup>1</sup> S. HEID, Art. Wilhelm Anton Neumann: ders. / Dennert, Personenlex. 958/60.

<sup>2</sup> From 1899 to 1901, Neumann served as Rector of the University of Vienna; see N. A. STIGLER, Wilhelm Anton Neumann 1837/1919 = Wiener Beiträge zur Theologie 46 (Wien 1978).

<sup>3</sup> W. A. NEUMANN, Relazione del I. Congresso internazionale degli archeologi cristiani, tenuto a Spalato-Salona nei giorni 20/22 Agosto 1894: Bulletino d'archeologia e storia dalmata 17 (1894) 115/240; see the detailed publications of Renate Pillinger, especially: R. PILLINGER, The Genesis of Early Christian Archaeology at the University of Vienna: MittChrArch 22 (2016) 68; also dies., Zur Genese der Christlichen Archäologie in Österreich: ebd. 5 (1999) 74/90; dies., Ausgewählte Persönlichkeiten zur Genese der Christlichen Archäologie in Österreich: ebd. 6 (2000) 72/86.

<sup>4</sup> J. LAICHNER, Art. Heinrich Swoboda: Heid / Dennert, Personenlex. 1215f.

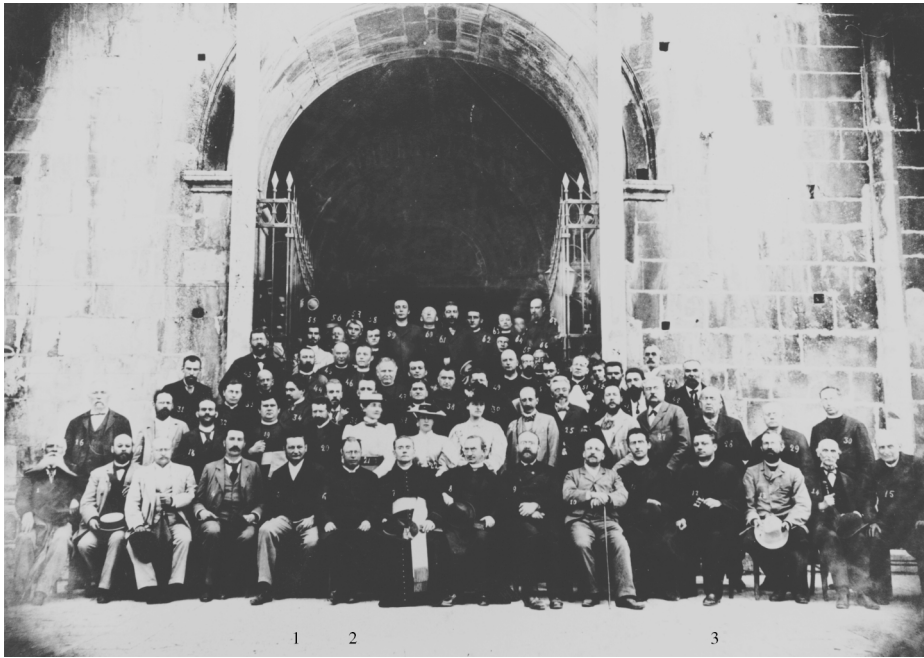
<sup>5</sup> S. HEID, Art. Johann Peter Kirsch: ebd. 732/5. For further information on Kirsch see the article of Manuela Studer-Karlen in this volume.

<sup>6</sup> C. SALVETTI, Storia degli studi di archeologia cristiana (Città del Vat. 2014) 34f; S. HEID, Art. Giovanni Battista de Rossi: ders. / Dennert, Personenlex. 400/5.

<sup>7</sup> SALVETTI, Storia aO. (Anm. 6) 39; S. HEID, Art. Anton Maria de Waal: ders. / Dennert, Personenlex. 410/2.

<sup>8</sup> PILLINGER, Genesis aO. (Anm. 3) 68.

<sup>9</sup> S. HEID, Art. Johannes Heinrich Emminghaus: ders. / Dennert, Personenlex. 462f.



1. Group photo of the participants of the 1<sup>st</sup> International Congress for Christian Archaeology in Split, 1894. — No. 2: Wilhelm Anton Neumann; no. 3: Heinrich Swoboda.

of Syria and Palestine became part of his scrutiny<sup>10</sup>. Alois Musil is also worth mentioning, who became *Ordinarius* and taught Biblical studies, Arabic language and literature at Vienna University in 1909. He travelled extensively in the Middle East, at least until 1917, year which marked the end of the Ottoman rule in Syria and Palestine. Some of his most important works on Qusair 'Amra, *Arabia Petraea* and the Middle East were published in Vienna<sup>11</sup>.

However, Biblical Archaeology was also at the core of interests of Ernst Sellin, professor for Old Testament exegesis and Archaeology at the Faculty of Protestant Theology from 1897 to 1908 and a pioneer in the field of Biblical Archaeology<sup>12</sup>. He soon established the Department for Church History, Christian Archaeology and Ecclesiastical Art, which demonstrated the interdisciplinary nature of the subject. Later, between 1971 and 1996, Alfred Raddatz served as full professor at the same department. He paid special attention to archaeological investigations and research of art historical themes and specifically to

<sup>10</sup> E. CH. SUTTNER (Hrsg.), *Die Kath.-Theologische Fakultät der Universität Wien 1884/1984, Festschr. zum 600-Jahr-Jubiläum* (Berlin 1984) 385.

<sup>11</sup> A. MUSIL, *Çuşejr 'Amra* 1/2 (Wien 1907); ders., *Arabia Petraea* 1. Moab. Topographischer Reisebericht (ebd. 1907); T. PETRACEK, *The Arabist and Explorer Alois Musil (1868/1944) and His Unfulfilled Career as a Biblical Scholar: Catholic Historical Review* 104 (2018) 92/112; see also K. J. BAUER, *Alois Musil. Wahrheitssucher in der Wüste = Perspektiven der Wissenschaftsgeschichte* 5 (Wien 1989).

<sup>12</sup> See H. M. NIEMANN, *Ernst Sellin. Powerful in His time. A Sketch of the Life and Work of an Old Testament Scholar and Pioneer in Biblical Archaeology from Mecklenburg: U. Palmer, Ernst Sellin. Alttestamentler und Archäologe = BeitrErforschATAntJud* 58 (Frankfurt a. M. 2012) 131.

the genesis and development of Christian iconographic themes<sup>13</sup>, yet again following a traditional setting.

Further development was triggered by the foundation of the Vienna School of Art History in 1891<sup>14</sup> thanks to the efforts of Franz Wickhoff<sup>15</sup> and Alois Riegl<sup>16</sup>. In 1901, the latter published an outstanding contribution to the investigation of art in Late Antiquity, in which he rightly emphasised the “*Kunstwollen*”<sup>17</sup>. Based on this tradition, the Vienna School’s scientific perspective once more focused on the *Oriens* with Josef Strzygowski, professor of Art History in Vienna 1909/33. Strzygowski devoted several studies to Asia Minor, Armenia, Syria and Iran, showing the centrality of the East in the formation of the tradition of late antique art, from which Christian art draws its roots, and how it inspires and mediates with the West. The concept was thoroughly explored in his monograph “Orient oder Rom. Beiträge zur Geschichte der spätantiken und frühchristlichen Kunst”, published in Leipzig in 1901<sup>18</sup>. Valuable insights were furthermore given by Otto Demus, who served at his return to Austria, after the end of World War II<sup>19</sup>, as president of the newly established *Bundesdenkmalamt* in 1946 and later held the position of full professor of Art History from 1963 to 1973<sup>20</sup>. His views and research questions, especially on mosaic studies, formed a whole generation of scholars. In his fundamental work on the mosaics of S. Marco in Venice, he thoroughly analysed style and technique *in situ* and thus demonstrated his outstanding knowledge of this medium.

In parallel, the involvement of the Department of Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies expanded the areas of interest. In fact, the first prominent scholar was Helmut Buschhausen<sup>21</sup>, who, during his university studies in Münster, joined the excavations of Ludwig Budde<sup>22</sup> in Misis/Mopsuestia<sup>23</sup>. As professor of Byzantine Art History from 1976 to 2002, Buschhausen was the first to teach at the Institute of Art History and the Institute of Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies. His work encompassed the archaeological

<sup>13</sup> S. HEID, Art. Alfred Raddatz: ders. / Dennert, *Personenlex.* 1053; PILLINGER, *Genesis aO.* (Anm. 3) 69.

<sup>14</sup> J. VON SCHLOSSER, *Die Wiener Schule der Kunstgeschichte. Rückblick auf ein Säkulum deutscher Gelehrtenarbeit in Österreich = Mitteilungen des Österreichischen Instituts für Geschichtsforschung*, ErgBd. 13, 2 (Innsbruck 1934).

<sup>15</sup> V. TSAMAKDA, Art. Franz Wickhoff: Heid / Dennert, *Personenlex.* 1316f.

<sup>16</sup> M. DENNERT, Art. Alois Riegl: ebd. 1079f.

<sup>17</sup> A. REICHENBERGER, Riegls „Kunstwollen“. Versuch einer Neubetrachtung = *Conceptus-Studien* 15 (St. Augustin 2003); G. L. TUSINI, *Il fronte della forma. Percorsi nel „Kunstwollen“ assieme a Riegl, Wölfflin, Panofsky, Worringer* (Bologna 2005).

<sup>18</sup> A. ZÄH, Art. Josef Rudolf Thomas Strzygowski: Heid / Dennert, *Personenlex.* 1200/5.

<sup>19</sup> Demus, as many other intellectuals, emigrated to Great Britain after the “*Anschluss*” in 1938. However, being an Austrian, he was interned briefly in 1940 in Canada. See E. KOCH, *Deemed Suspect. A Wartime Blunder* (Methuen 1980) 156.

<sup>20</sup> S. HEID, Art. Otto Demus: ebd. 397f; H. BELTING, *Otto Demus 1902/1990: DumbOPap* 45 (1991) vii/xi.

<sup>21</sup> M. SCHWARZ, Helmut Buschhausen als Forscher und Lehrer: *Kunsthistoriker aktuell* 19, 3 (2012) 4; PILLINGER, *Genesis aO.* (Anm. 3) 73.

<sup>22</sup> See M. DENNERT, Art. Ludwig Budde: Heid / Dennert, *Personenlex.* 239f.

<sup>23</sup> B. FEINER, *Das Arche Noach-Mosaik von Misis/Mopsuestia. Interpretationen und Hypothesen*, Diss. Wien (2010) (unpublished).

excavations of the Early Christian monastery in Abu Fana, Egypt, in 1987/92<sup>24</sup>. He examined mosaics, reliquaries<sup>25</sup> and sculpture of the Byzantine period as well.

Thanks to Otto Mazal, who was since 1977 director of the Collection of Manuscripts and Incunabula as well as professor of Byzantine Studies at the Faculty of Philological and Cultural Studies, a rich collection of manuscripts was brought to wide scholarly attention<sup>26</sup>. Archaeological investigations were also conducted by Ewald Kislinger, professor of Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies since 1992, with research projects and excavation in Sicily, e. g. at the site of S. Pietro di Deca (Torrenova Messina), which investigated the local Basilian monastic settlements<sup>27</sup>.

Oriental studies also made a positive contribution to the development of Christian Archaeology with Josef Maria von Karabacek, who held full professorship in History of the Orient and its auxiliary disciplines from 1885 to 1915<sup>28</sup>. As early as 1883, he already published a catalogue of Egyptian textiles which included Early Christian finds. Attention to Christian and Islamic architecture was given by the studies of Heinrich Glück, who habilitated in Art History of the Orient in 1920<sup>29</sup>.

This extremely brief account does not grant full justice to all the illustrious scholars who shaped the main lines of the discipline. One ought not overlook the importance of the Institute for Judaic Studies established under the initiative of Kurt Schubert, who emphasised the reciprocal influences between Jewish and Christian art<sup>30</sup>.

Significant impacts were those of the field archaeological school and the Institute of Classical Archaeology. Among the most prominent figures one can mention Hermann Junker, who, from 1909 to 1911, directed the excavation of the Early Christian monastery in El-Kubanieh and was full professor for Egyptology at the University of Vienna<sup>31</sup>.

<sup>24</sup> H. BUSCHHAUSEN, Die obere Kirche in Dayr Abu Fano in Mittelägypten. Probleme der Restaurierung und Wiederherstellung. *Steine sprechen: Zeitschrift der Österreichischen Gesellschaft für Denkmal- und Ortsbildpflege* 42 (2003) 1/20.

<sup>25</sup> H. BUSCHHAUSEN, Die spätrömischen Metallschreine und frühchristlichen Reliquiare 1. Katalog = *Wiener byzantinische Studien* 9 (Wien 1971).

<sup>26</sup> O. MAZAL, Wiener Genesis. Purpurpergamenthandschrift aus dem 6. Jahrhundert. Vollständiges Faksimile des Codex Theol. Gr. 31 der Österreichischen Nationalbibliothek in Wien (Frankfurt a. M. 1980).

<sup>27</sup> E. KISLINGER, Sizilien zwischen Vandalen und Römischem Reich im 5. Jahrhundert. Eine Insel in zentraler Randlage: *Millennium* 11 (2014) 237/60; CH. ANSORGE / E. KISLINGER / G. SCHARRER-LISKE, Il conventazzo (S. Pietro di Deca, Torrenova) nella luce di fonti storiche ed analisi computerizzate: R. Fachile (Hrsg.), *Monachesimo basiliano nei Nebrodi, Atti del Convegno, Nebrodi 2006 (Torrenova 2008)* 5/11; E. KISLINGER u. a., *Conventazzo (Torrenova/ME)*. *Archäologie und Geschichte (FWF-Projekt P14997): AnzWien* 139 (2004) 101/71.

<sup>28</sup> G. MAUTHE, Die Direktion Josef Karabaceks an der k.k. Hofbibliothek in Wien (1899/1917). Eine bibliothekswissenschaftliche und kulturhistorische Studie aus Quellen der k.k. Hofbibliothek in Wien. Mit einer biographischen Skizze von Josef Karabacek (1845/1918), *Diss. Wien* (2000) (unpublished).

<sup>29</sup> A. ZÄH, Art. Heinrich Glück: Heid / Dennert, *Personenlex.* 585f.

<sup>30</sup> U. SCHUBERT u. a., *Spätantikes Judentum und frühchristliche Kunst, Ausst.-Kat. Eisenstadt = Studia Judaica Austriaca* 2 (Wien 1974).

<sup>31</sup> J. BUDKA / C. JURMAN, Hermann Junker. Ein deutsch-österreichisches Forscherleben zwischen

The research of Early Christian churches in Austria was mainly conducted by Rudolf Egger<sup>32</sup>, e. g. at the sites of Aguntum, Duel near Feistritz, Grazerkogel near St. Michael, at Hemmaberg near Globasnitz, Hoischhügel near Maglern, in Teurnia near Spittal at the Drau, and at Ulrichsberg as well as in Salona near today's Split in Croatia. He published a study of church architecture in South Noricum and received his habilitation in 1917. In 1929 he was full professor of Roman History, Antiquities and Epigraphy at the Institute for Ancient History<sup>33</sup>. He served, with G. Bersu, as second director of the Roman-Germanic Commission in 1928/31 and led a training-excavation at Duel in Carinthia<sup>34</sup>.

Hermann Vetters<sup>35</sup>, who studied with Egger, was appointed in 1969 (until 1985) as full professor of Classical Archaeology, in which Field Archaeology and Antiquities had an important part. At the same time, Egger became director of the *Austrian Archaeological Institute* and *Obmann* of the Antiquarian Department of the *Balkan Commission of the Austrian Academy of Sciences*<sup>36</sup>. Vetters, who served as vice-president of the *Balkan Commission* for about a decade (1982/91), took over the management of the major Austrian project in Ephesos (1969/87). His academic work included lectures on Christian Archaeology as an integrant part of Classical Archaeology.

Rudolf Noll in 1963 became director of the *Antikensammlung* (ANSA) in the *Kunsthistorisches Museum*, he was honorary professor of Classical Archaeology with focus on Roman provincial archaeology, Roman and Early Christian monuments in Austria<sup>37</sup>. His successor was Lothar Eckhart, honorary professor from 1963 to 1983<sup>38</sup>, who was the former head of the Department for Roman Period and Early Christianity at the Upper Austrian *Landesmuseum* in Linz, although the excavation report on the Laurentius Church in Lorch was not published<sup>39</sup>.

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Pyramiden, Kreuz und Hakenkreuz: S. Bickel u. a. (Hrsg.), *Ägyptologen und Ägyptologien zwischen Kaiserreich und Gründung der beiden deutschen Staaten = Zeitschrift für ägyptische Sprache und Altertumskunde*, Beih. 1 (Berlin 2013) 299/331.

<sup>32</sup> S. HEID, Art. Rudolf Egger: ders. / Dennert, *Personenlex.* 454/6. — On Christian-archaeological investigations in Austria in general see also the contribution of Franz Glaser in this volume.

<sup>33</sup> The extensive work in Croatia was published in his monograph R. EGGER, *Der altchristliche Friedhof Manastirine. Nach dem Materiale Fr. Bulić = Forschungen in Salona 2* (Wien 1926); E. DYGGVE / R. EGGER, *Der altchristliche Friedhof von Marusinac = ebd.* 3 (1939).

<sup>34</sup> PILLINGER, *Genesis aO.* (Anm. 3) 80.

<sup>35</sup> M. DENNERT, Art. Hermann Vetters: Heid / Dennert, *Personenlex.* 1281; G. PICCOTTINI, Hermann Vetters (1915/1993) zum 100. Geburtstag: *Römisches Österreich 37/38* (2014/15) 7/9; PILLINGER, *Genesis aO.* (Anm. 3) 80.

<sup>36</sup> Ebd. 80. — See also the contribution of Andreas Pülz in this volume.

<sup>37</sup> R. NOLL, *Eugippius. Das Leben des heiligen Severin. Lateinisch und deutsch = Schriften und Quellen der Alten Welt 11* (Berlin 1963) (as a new edition of the 1947 publication); ders., *Frühes Christentum in Österreich. Von den Anfängen bis um 600 n. Chr.* (Wien 1954); ders., *Vom Altertum zum Mittelalter. Spätantike, altchristliche, völkerwanderungszeitliche und frühmittelalterliche Denkmäler der Antikensammlung = Führer durch das Kunsthistorische Museum 8* (Wien 1974).

<sup>38</sup> S. HEID, Art. Lothar Eckhart: ders. / Dennert, *Personenlex.* 453f.

<sup>39</sup> R. IGL, *Die Basilika St. Laurentius in Enns. Aufnahme und Neuinterpretation der Grabungsbefunde = Der römische Limes in Österreich 46* (Wien 2008).

In 1983, Jürgen Borchhardt was appointed as professor, his work was centred on Limyra (Lykien). The excavation projects (1986/88) included the church at Burgberg, followed in 1989 by the so-called Bishop's Palace in Oststadt, and the three-nave church in the vicinity of the Ptolemaion of Limyra<sup>40</sup>.

Christian Archaeology at the University of Vienna, following its initial beginnings in the context of theology, moved in a new direction under the influence of historical sciences, especially Classical Archaeology, Byzantine Studies, and Art History. While it originally focused on Rome, this perspective evolved with new research questions as well as through excavations not only in Austria. The knowledge and contacts with a wider public were also achieved through exhibitions, the establishment of collections, lectures and conferences.

In 1988, with the separation of Classical Archaeology from Ancient History, the department was moved to *Franz Klein-Gasse 1*, Wien (fig. 2). In 1991, the chair for Early



2. The building in *Franz Klein-Gasse 1* in Vienna.

Christian Archaeology was established by Renate Pillinger, who also founded an Association for the promotion of Christian Archaeology of Austria as well as the journal "Mitteilungen zur Christlichen Archäologie" (fig. 3). In 1999, Pillinger was actively involved in organizing the 14<sup>th</sup> International Congress for Christian Archaeology in Vienna<sup>41</sup>. Following the congress, a professorial chair for Early Christian Archaeology was established at the Institute of

Classical Archaeology in the Faculty of Historical and Cultural Studies. Particular attention was given to excavations and research projects as for example in the Balkans, e. g. in Albania<sup>42</sup>, Bosnia<sup>43</sup>, Bulgaria (Sandanski)<sup>44</sup>, as well as in Ephesos, in the so-called Cave of St. Paul on the ancient city's Bülbül dağ from 1994 to 2011, and besides, constant research on the development of Early Christian iconography.

Through the introduction of new BA and MA programs in 2008, Early Christian Archaeology became an integral part of various degree programs. In 2016, upon retire-

<sup>40</sup> A. PÜLZ, Die frühbyzantinische Kirche beim Ptolemaion von Limyra/Lykien: Forum Archaeologiae 25/XII/2002 (e-Veröff.: <http://farch.net>).

<sup>41</sup> R. HARREITHER u. a. (Hrsg.), Frühes Christentum zwischen Rom und Konstantinopel 1/2, Akten des XIV. Internationalen Kongresses für Christliche Archäologie, Wien 1999 = StudAntCrist 62 = Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, Philosophisch-historische Klasse, Archäologische Forschungen 14 (Città del Vat. 2006).

<sup>42</sup> H. HIDRI / S. HIDRI, Die frühchristliche Basilika in Arapaj/Durrës (Albanien) = DenkschrWien 420 / Archäologische Forschungen 20 (Wien 2011).

<sup>43</sup> Đ. BASLER, Spätantike und frühchristliche Architektur in Bosnien und der Herzegowina = Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, Schriften der Balkankommission 19 (Wien 1993).


<sup>44</sup> R. PILLINGER (Hrsg.), Corpus der spätantiken und frühchristlichen Wandmalereien Bulgariens = ebd. 21 (1999); dies., Die Stifterinschrift des Johannes in Sandanski (Bulgarien) und ihr monumentales Umfeld: MittChrArch 12 (2006) 65/72.

ment of Renate Pillinger, the chair received a broader chronological definition, in order to establish a strong continuity with the discipline of Roman Archaeology, with the denomination of late antique and Early Christian Archaeology.

These brief remarks are clearly important. They show how the Vienna school, since an early stage, paid specific attention not only to the investigation of Early Christian archaeological sites in Austria, but far most to sites set in the Mediterranean basin as a global field of research of Early Christian Archaeology. The approach of the Vienna school is that Christian Archaeology must not draw borders around itself but rather create its own structures to develop better forms of interdisciplinary communication on local, national and international levels. The main research questions concern continuity and change over time and are built upon a solid theoretical, methodological and practical approach, focusing on the unique set of field data collection techniques and related analytical interpretation. These are practiced through a trans- and interdisciplinary approach, with a constant and constructive dialogue with the *Austrian Academy of Sciences*, museums, universities, the Federal Monuments office of Austria and the National Library.

The chronological framework essentially covers the Mediterranean regions from ca. 300 to ca. 750, in order to trace the transformation of the Roman world, the emergence of the (Christian) Byzantine Empire, the interaction of various social groups, the Christianisation and movements of various tribal groups, their impact on the areas they settled, and the formation of new identities. This process is indeed interesting when viewed in the context of the *longue durée* of Late Antiquity, in which a parallel with the rise of Islam is extremely important. Current research focuses on the topography and the evolution of rural, monastic, proto-urban and urban settlements (including material and visual cultures), beliefs and socio-political history of the late antique, Byzantine and, to a lesser extent, Islamic worlds. To conclude, the main goal is to provide students with an enriching experience that combines research and fieldwork within a committed academic institution, and to sensitise them to the fact that awareness of our past is the best investment for the future of our discipline and the University itself.

ORCID<sup>®</sup>

Basema Hamarneh  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4163-1787>



3. Some issues of “Mitteilungen zur Christlichen Archäologie”.

*Abbildungsnachweis:*

1. E. MARIN (Hrsg.), *Acta primi Congressus Internationalis Archaeologiae Christianae, Spalati-Salonis 1894* = *StudAntCrist* 50 (Città del Vat. 1993) 332 Tav. II; 2/3. Photo: K. Klein.