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## JOSEF STRZYGOWSKI AND AVGUŠTIN STEGENŠEK

### SOME REMARKS ON THEIR JERUSALEM STUDIES

In 2005, on the occasion of the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the publication of the first art topography written in Slovenian, a symposium was held in Maribor focusing on its author.<sup>1</sup> The topography was written by Avguštin Stegenšek (1875–1920), art historian and theologian, born in Slovenian Styria, about 100 kilometres south of Graz.<sup>2</sup> Stegenšek completed his doctorate on early Christian wall painting in Rome at the University of Graz under the supervision of Josef Strzygowski (1862–1941) in 1905,<sup>3</sup> in the same year his first topography was published.<sup>4</sup> The inquiry into Stegenšek's personality and research has, among other insights, demonstrated the importance of his studies on the Early Modern period, particularly Baroque, which stems from his topographical work. Stegenšek's most significant contribution to the art history of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was his 1912 treatise on the history, and especially the iconography, of the Via

Crucis in Styria.<sup>5</sup> His book is closely related to his research on early Christian art, including the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem.

Since Stegenšek declined an invitation to become the first professor of art history at the newly founded University of Ljubljana in 1919, his role in the institutionalisation of art history in Central Europe has been largely overlooked. Furthermore, his contribution to the study of early Christian art in what Strzygowski called the 'Orient', and its reception in the Habsburg Monarchy and German-speaking scientific discourse, has remained unexplored. Stegenšek's focus on Jerusalem studies shortly before the First World War (initially in the context of his topographical work in Styria) brought him closer to the subject, which remained an interest of Strzygowski after the latter took up a professorship in Vienna in 1909. Along with Strzygowski, Stegenšek represents a minority in Austrian art history that around 1900, who looked beyond Rome and Western Europe.

Jerusalem studies were increasingly carried out from the middle of the nineteenth century, mainly by archaeologists, theologians, Byzantinists and orientalists, such as Conrad Schick (1822–1901) and Philipp Wolff (1810–1894),<sup>6</sup> who aimed to combine philological and theological Bible studies with the scientific exploration of the biblical Lands, and therefore Palestine. This approach, motivated by a search for a biblical truth, changed with the

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<sup>1</sup> We would like to thank Charlotte Whiting and Gerhard Wolf for their readings and comments. We are grateful to Karin Šmid for her help with photos from the Regional Archives in Maribor. The conference proceedings were published as a double issue of *Studia Historica Slovenica* in 2007.

<sup>2</sup> S. KRAJNC, 'Osebnost in poslanstvo Avguština Stegenška (1875–1920)' [Personality and Mission of Avguštin Stegenšek (1875–1920)], *Studia Historica Slovenica*, 7, 2007, pp. 489–511.

<sup>3</sup> A. STEGENŠEK, *Studien über die kirchliche Wandmalerei in Rom und Umgebung von V. bis zum XIII. Jht.*, PhD, Graz 1905 (manuscript in the archives of the University of Graz, also available online: <https://unipub.uni-graz.at/download/pdf/1639884.pdf>, access: 1.10.2024).

<sup>4</sup> Idem, *Cerkveni spomeniki Lavantinske škofije. 1: Dekanija gornjegrajska*, Maribor 1905. The first of two books of ecclesiastical monuments of the Lavantine diocese, dedicated to the deanery of Gornji grad (in German: Oberburg).

<sup>5</sup> Idem, *Zgodovina pobožnosti sv. križevega pota* [History of the Devotion to the Holy Way of the Cross], Maribor 1912.

<sup>6</sup> The literature on this topic is vast, cf. e.g. H. GOREN, „Zieht hin und erforscht das Land“. *Die deutsche Palästinaforschung im 19. Jahrhundert*, Göttingen 2003 [=Schriftenreihe des Instituts für Deutsche Geschichte der Universität Tel-Aviv, 23].

establishment of art history as a discipline in its own right. Actually, around 1900 one of the major issues that was discussed in the context of Jerusalem studies was the architectural reconstruction of the Constantinian Holy Sepulchre Church, and one of the first art historians who was concerned with this question was Stegenšek's professor, Strzygowski.<sup>7</sup> He indeed not only dealt with the Byzantine 'Orient', Armenia, Persia and Mesopotamia, but several times with the Holy Land too.<sup>8</sup> In 1899, Strzygowski reviewed the monograph *Die Heilige Grabeskirche zu Jerusalem in ihrem ursprünglichen Zustande*, which had been published a year before by the theologian Carl Mommert (1840–1910).<sup>9</sup> In 1901, Strzygowski's essay on the newly discovered Orpheus mosaic in Jerusalem appeared.<sup>10</sup> In the same year Strzygowski also published his book *Orient oder Rom*, with its much-debated hypothesis on the emergence of early Christian art. Its final chapter is dedicated to the Constantinian Holy Sepulchre Church.<sup>11</sup>

Although Strzygowski has recently been the subject of numerous publications, especially in Central Europe,<sup>12</sup> the fundamental importance of his studies on the Church of the Holy Sepulchre for his theory of an oriental origin of Christian art has not yet been considered sufficiently. In the façade of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, Strzygowski saw a confirmation of 'Europe's dependence on Oriental forms' as well as 'the superior historical value of material over textual evidence'.<sup>13</sup> His argumentation was mainly concentrated on the south façade and based upon

two inconsistent assumptions. Firstly, he was concerned with proving that the (probably medieval) cornices of the façade are ancient and,<sup>14</sup> since they are *in situ*, that they have remained from the construction of Constantine.<sup>15</sup> Secondly he conceded that the cornices lack 'everything that makes the Roman style special'. According to him, all analogies were offered by Egypt, 'the country in which Roman art has found less of a permanent home than in Syria and Asia Minor'.<sup>16</sup>

Strzygowski's studies on the Church of the Holy Sepulchre were comprehensively appreciated in 1908 by the Byzantinist August Heisenberg (1869–1930), at that time a private lecturer at the University of Würzburg, and then, from 1910, professor of Byzantine studies in Munich and editor of the *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*.<sup>17</sup> In the introduction to his first volume on the two Constantinian Churches of the Holy Sepulchre and of the Apostles, Heisenberg writes that Strzygowski has taken the decisive step towards solving the reconstruction of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. Moreover, he states that the question 'Orient or Rome?' will be decided in line with Strzygowski's position.<sup>18</sup> However, a year after its publication, the art-historical assessment from Vienna was quite different: Max Dvořák (1874–1921) strongly criticised the book and denied any relevance to the question posed in the title.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Strzygowski taught art history in Graz from 1892 to 1909; for his biography cf. e.g. L. SORENSEN, 'Strzygowski, Josef Rudolf Thomas', in *Dictionary of Art Historians*; <https://arthistorians.info/strzygowski/> (access: 12.02.2024); W. J. GRUBER, 'Der Fabrikantensohn Josef Strzygowski (1862–1941) auf dem Weg vom Tuchmacher zum Kunsthistoriker', *Mitteilungen der Gesellschaft für vergleichende Kunstforschung in Wien*, 74, 2022, no. 3, pp. 1–13.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. also A. ZÄH, 'Josef Strzygowski als Initiator der christlich-kunsthistorischen Orientforschung und Visionär der Kunstwissenschaft', *Römische Quartalschrift für christliche Altertumskunde und Kirchengeschichte*, 107, 2013, no. 3/4, pp. 249–292.

<sup>9</sup> J. STRZYGOWSKI, 'Carl Mommert, Die hl. Grabeskirche zu Jerusalem in ihrem ursprünglichen Zustand, 1898', *Deutsche Literaturzeitung*, 20, 1899, no. 19, pp. 753–754.

<sup>10</sup> J. STRZYGOWSKI, P. J. DASHIAN, 'Das neugefundene Orpheus-Mosaik in Jerusalem', *Zeitschrift des Deutschen Palästina-Vereins*, 24, 1901, pp. 139–171.

<sup>11</sup> J. STRZYGOWSKI, *Orient oder Rom. Beiträge zur Geschichte der spätantiken und frühchristlichen Kunst*, Leipzig 1901, pp. 127–150.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. e.g. the collected essays published on the occasion of Strzygowski's 150<sup>th</sup> birthday *Von Biala nach Wien. Josef Strzygowski und die Kunstwissenschaften*, eds. P.O. SCHOLZ, M.A. DŁUGOSZ, Vienna 2015; *Orient oder Rom? History and Reception of a Historiographical Myth*, eds. I. FOLETTI, F. LOVINO, Rome 2018.

<sup>13</sup> S. L. MARCHAND, 'The Rhetoric of Artifacts and the Decline of Classical Humanism. The Case of Josef Strzygowski', *History and Theory*, 33, 1994, no. 4 (thematic issue: *Proof and Persuasion in History*), pp. 106–130, here p. 106.

<sup>14</sup> 'Ich denke, man wird der Detailaufnahme gegenüber nicht schwanken können: dieses Kranzgesims ist antik. [...] Unser Kranzgesims ist unzweifelhaft antik, das beweist der tiefe, exakte Schnitt, besonders der Blattrippen und die dadurch erzielte kräftige Licht- und Schattenwirkung [...]; J. STRZYGOWSKI, *Orient oder Rom*, p. 129 (as in note 11).

<sup>15</sup> 'Ich habe im Vorstehenden zuerst an der Hand von Aufnahmen nach den Gesimsen der Südfassade der Grabeskirche gezeigt, dass dieselben antik und, da sie *in situ* liegen, offenbar vom Bau des grossen Konstantin bis auf unsere Tage stehen geblieben sind', *ibidem*, p. 147.

<sup>16</sup> 'Im Gegenteil, es fehlt alles, was den römischen Stil im besonderen ausmacht [...] Was die Gesimse der Grabeskirche auszeichnet und anziehend macht, ist gerade der Mangel der strengen römischen Gesetzmässigkeit. [...] Was ich bis jetzt an Analogien nachweisen kann, das bietet Ägypten, das Land, in dem römische Kunst weniger als in Syrien und Kleinasien dauernd Eingang gefunden hat', *ibidem*, p. 147.

<sup>17</sup> On Heisenberg see most recently U. MOENNIG, 'August Heisenberg als (Gründungs-)Vorsitzender der Deutsch-Griechischen Gesellschaft', in *Anekdoten Byzantina. Studien zur byzantinischen Geschichte und Kultur*, eds. I. GRIMM-STADELMANN et al., Berlin 2023 [=Byzantinisches Archiv, 41], pp. 457–468.

<sup>18</sup> 'Eines aber ist wohl jetzt schon sicher: die große Frage "Orient oder Rom?" wird sich wesentlich im Sinne Strzygowskis entscheiden', A. HEISENBERG, *Grabeskirche und Apostelkirche, zwei Basiliken Konstantins. Untersuchungen zur Kunst und Literatur des ausgehenden Altertums*, vol. 1, Leipzig 1908, p. V.

<sup>19</sup> 'Die summarisch gestellte Frage *Orient oder Rom* hat keine thatsächliche und wissenschaftliche Bedeutung [...] ein Apologet des Ostens dieser Zeit läuft Gefahr wie der unsterbliche Held

Despite Dvořák's negative judgment, Strzygowski in his lecture *The Origins of Christian Art*, delivered in London and Oxford in 1911 and published shortly afterwards in the *Burlington Magazine*, considered (in support of his thesis which had been endorsed by Heisenberg) Jerusalem as 'a focus of the Christian world' and as, from the fourth century onwards, 'a new capital beside Rome and Byzantium'.<sup>20</sup> He stated that Jerusalem 'superseded Alexandria and Antioch as the centre of art'.<sup>21</sup> In the same year, 1911, Anton Baumstark (1872-1948), a philologist, orientalist and literary scholar who received his doctorate in Leipzig, habilitated in Heidelberg and was a private scholar at the Campo Santo Teutonico in Rome from 1899 to 1905,<sup>22</sup> published a critical review of Heisenberg's book in the journal *Oriens Christianus*, which he founded in 1901.<sup>23</sup> Four years after this review, in 1915, Baumstark's own monograph on the Church of the Holy Sepulchre appeared, in which he refuted Heisenberg's reconstruction in detail and critically wrote that Strzygowski, who had praised it, was unable to escape the impression of the captivating aspects of Heisenberg's work which, for its part, maintained an attitude of unconditional allegiance to Strzygowski and the ideas he advocated.<sup>24</sup> This harsh assessment seems all the more remarkable because Strzygowski and Baumstark were in constant dialogue with each other.<sup>25</sup> On the other hand, however, Baumstark's views also show that the debate over 'Orient or Rome' ul-

timately flared up with the reconstruction attempts of the Constantinian building and the southern façade of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.

The great studies regarding the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in the first and second decades of the twentieth century were apparently also formative for Avguštin Stegenšek's Jerusalem studies. Before studying art history with Josef Strzygowski in Graz, however, Stegenšek had been ordained a priest in 1898 and was sent by the Bishop of Lavantiner, Michael Napotnik (1850-1922), to Rome, where he stayed from 1899 until 1902. There he lived and studied at the Römische Institut der Görres-Gesellschaft on the Campo Santo Teutonico, where he dedicated himself to archaeology and early Christian art, at the same time that Baumstark was a private scholar there. The rector of the Campo Santo was Anton de Waal (1837-1917),<sup>26</sup> and his closest collaborator was Josef Wilpert (1857-1944), who represented de Waal during periods of absence. Stegenšek, Baumstark and Wilpert may have been in active contact in the Roman circle of Christian archaeologists; Stegenšek and Baumstark both took part in Wilpert's seminar 'Übungen des Archäologischen Institutes' in 1901,<sup>27</sup> i.e. the year when Strzygowski's book *Orient oder Rom* was published. In that period, Wilpert became one of the greatest advocates of Roman primacy and later one of the most determined opponents of Strzygowski's theses. It is illuminating to locate Stegenšek's work between these two opposite positions.

Following his return from Rome, and preparing the Styrian topographies, Stegenšek began to study Western ecclesiastical art as copies of the spaces and buildings of Christ's passion. He focused in particular on architectural copies of Calvary and the Holy Sepulchre and summarised his findings in his book on the Via Crucis, published in 1912. However, it was not until 1913 that his efforts to visit the Holy Land would be fulfilled, so the analyses are based on literature.<sup>28</sup> In his archive there is

Cervantes gegen Windmühlen zu kämpfen', M. DVOŘÁK, 'Strzygowski, Josef, Orient oder Rom', *Göttingische gelehrte Anzeigen*, 164, 1902, pp. 693-711, here 711. In 1901, Alois Riegl's *Die spätromische Kunst-Industrie nach den Funden in Österreich-Ungarn* was also published in Vienna, which Dvořák, who in his review defended Franz Wickhoff's theses on Roman art, did not mention.

<sup>20</sup> J. STRZYGOWSKI, 'The Origin of Christian Art', *The Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs*, 20, 1911, no. 105, pp. 149-153, here 146.

<sup>21</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>22</sup> Cf. H. KAUFHOLD, 'Josef Strzygowski, der „Oriens Christianus“ und Anton Baumstark', in *Von Biala nach Wien*, pp. 70-96, in particular pp. 70-71 (as in note 12).

<sup>23</sup> A. BAUMSTARK, 'Besprechungen', *Oriens Christianus*, n.s. 1, 1911, pp. 349-353.

<sup>24</sup> 'Es hat, wie allem verblüffenden Neuen, der Heisenbergschen These an rascher Zustimmung nicht gefehlt. Insbesondere hat kein Geringerer als unser aller Lehrer und Führer in der Erkenntnis der kunstgeschichtlichen Bedeutung des christlichen Ostens J. Strzygowski zunächst dem Eindruck der bestechenden Seiten einer Arbeit sich nicht zu entziehen vermocht, die ihm selbst und den von ihm vertretenen Gedanken gegenüber ihrerseits die Haltung einer unbedingten Gefolgschaft wahrte', idem, *Die Modestianischen und die Konstantinischen Bauten am Heiligen Grabe zu Jerusalem. Eine Nachprüfung der Forschungsergebnisse von A. Heisenberg, Grabeskirche und Apostelkirche. Zwei Basiliken Konstantins*, Paderborn 1915, p. 5.

<sup>25</sup> Strzygowski had already written two essays for Baumstark's first edition of *Oriens Christianus* in 1901, followed by five more in the

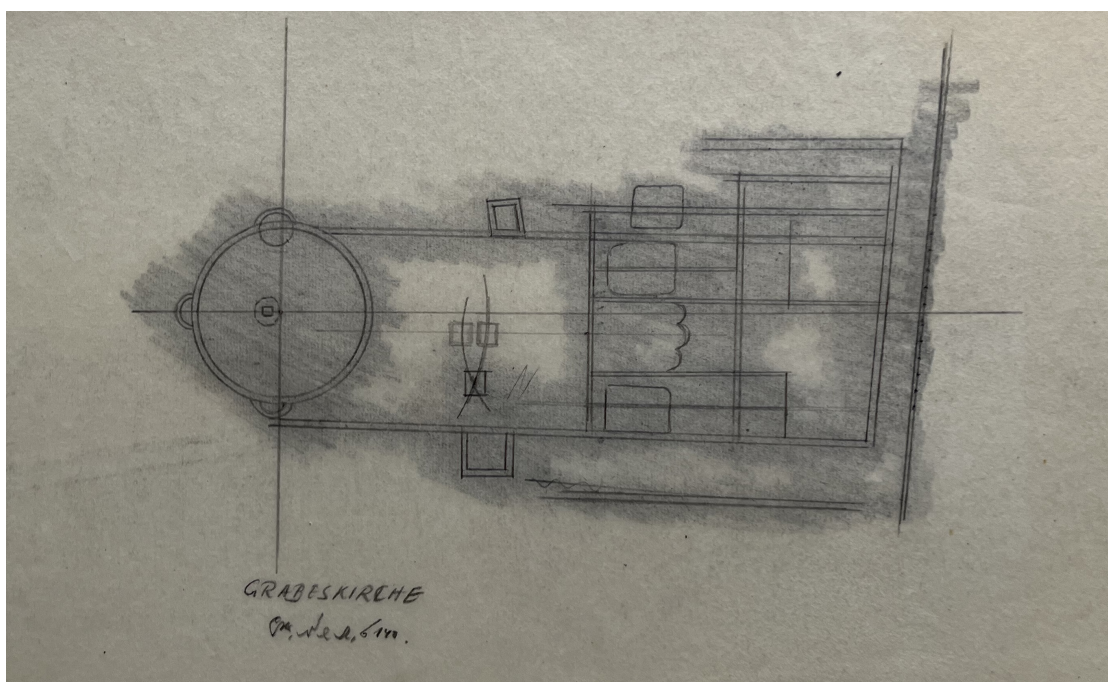
following years. Cf. also H. KAUFHOLD, 'Josef Strzygowski', p. 71 (as in note 22).

<sup>26</sup> On Anton de Waal in Rome, see: T. BRECHENMACHER, 'Ultramontanismus in Rom. Anton de Waal und vier Päpste', in *Päpstlichkeit und Patriotismus. Der Campo Santo Teutonico. Ort der Deutschen in Rom zwischen Risorgimento und Erstem Weltkrieg (1870-1918)*, eds. S. HEID, K.-J. HUMMEL, Freiburg-Basel-Wien 2018, pp. 233-262.

<sup>27</sup> S. HEID, 'Der christliche Archäologe Joseph Wilpert und das Römische Institut der Görres-Gesellschaft', *Römische Quartalschrift für christliche Altertumskunde und Kirchengeschichte*, 101, 2006, no. 1/2, pp. 4-49; cf. also B. MUROVEC, 'Drobci za zgodovino in metodologijo slovenske umetnostne zgodovine. Avguštin Stegenšek in baročno stropno slikarstvo' [Fragments for the History and Methodology of Slovenian Art History. Avguštin Stegenšek and Baroque Ceiling Painting], *Studia Historica Slovenica*, 7, 2007, no. 3/4, pp. 893-908.

<sup>28</sup> For Stegenšek's journey to Jerusalem, see F. K. LUKMAN, 'Zadnjih deset let dr. Avguština Stegenška' [The Last Ten Years of Dr.





1. Stegenšek's drawing of a reconstruction of the Constantinian Holy Sepulchre Church in Jerusalem, Regional Archives Maribor. Phot. Karin Šmid

a folder on Jerusalem and a folder on the Church of the Holy Sepulchre with several plans of the Holy Sepulchre and its surroundings,<sup>29</sup> as well as numerous tracing papers on which he drew various reconstructed ground plans of the Church [Fig. 1].<sup>30</sup> There are also maps of Jerusalem, for instance those from the Baedeker guidebook,<sup>31</sup> tracings of the city walls, and collage papers with a wide variety of drawn image comparisons. Stegenšek collected, analysed and prepared the material for his publication for almost two decades; however, he published almost nothing before his early death in 1920.

An insight into the early phase (before his visit to the Holy Land) of Stegenšek's Jerusalem studies is given by his little-known article on Jerusalem's church buildings of the fourth century in pictorial representations. It was published in the *Oriens Christianus* in 1911,<sup>32</sup> the same

year as Strzygowski's *The Origins of Christian Art*. In it, Stegenšek also addressed the question of the reconstruction of the Constantinian building of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. However, unlike his teacher Strzygowski, his approach was not based on a comparative examination of stylistic features in the Church, but – presumably still under the impression of Wilpert and his Roman experiences – he focused on its architectural representation on a Roman sarcophagus.

The sarcophagus, a column sarcophagus with the representation of the *Traditio Legis* on the front, shows on its small left side the denial of Peter, and on the right side the healings of the blind and the bleeding woman.<sup>33</sup> All scenes are set against architectural backgrounds. In his article, Stegenšek compared the depicted buildings in the reliefs with descriptions of Eusebius and Aetheria (Egeria), and assumed that they can be identified as the Constantinian Nēa Ierusalim on Golgotha, the Martyrium, the Chapel *Ad Crucem* and the Anastasis. To visualize the complex grouping of the buildings, he also drew a ground plan of it.<sup>34</sup> He furthermore believed in the existence of an independent domed building above the Golgotha rock,<sup>35</sup> a thesis that was rejected by Baumstark in the same volume.<sup>36</sup>

Nevertheless, the sarcophagus became an important object in Stegenšek's later research, with which he tried to

Avguštin Stegenšek], *Zbornik za umetnostno zgodovino*, n.s. 3, 1955, pp. 197–224, here pp. 205–206.

<sup>29</sup> Among others there is for instance a groundplan of the Holy Sepulchre Church published by Conrad Schick and Carl Mommert in 1898 as well as that published by August Heisenberg in his monograph: A. HEISENBERG, *Grabeskirche und Apostelkirche*, s.p. (as in note 18).

<sup>30</sup> Regional Archives Maribor, SI\_PAM/1624, Stegenšek's legacy. With the exception of his article in *Oriens Christianus*, Stegenšek's research has remained in manuscript and some of the archival material was lost during the Second World War or later.

<sup>31</sup> K. BAEDECKER, *Palestina und Syrien*, Leipzig 1880.

<sup>32</sup> A. STEGENŠEK, 'Die Kirchenbauten Jerusalems im vierten Jahrhundert in bildlicher Darstellung', *Oriens Christianus*, n.s. 1, 1911, pp. 272–285.

<sup>33</sup> On this sarcophagus see also H.-G. SEVERIN, 'Oströmische Plastik unter Valens und Theodosius I', *Jahrbuch der Berliner Museen*, 12, 1970, pp. 211–252, at pp. 243–247, fig. 22.

<sup>34</sup> A. STEGENŠEK, 'Die Kirchenbauten Jerusalems', p. 277 (as in note 32).

<sup>35</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 280.

<sup>36</sup> A. BAUMSTARK, 'Besprechungen', p. 352 (as in note 23).

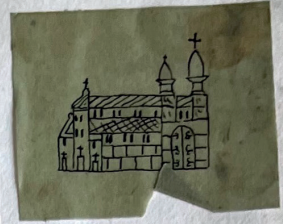




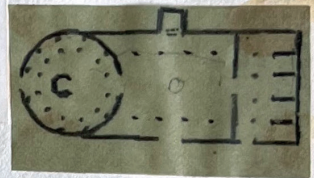
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Aus Sybel, Christliche Antike, Bd. II.



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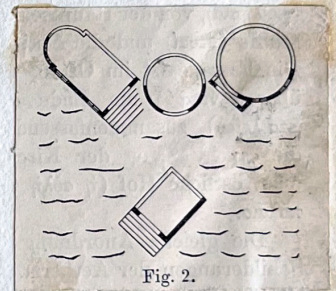


Fig. 2.



G. 533



XV. Kad. B, Pos



h. 2,40 (2 x 2 x)

2. Collage with the reproduction of the sarcophagus from Stegenšek's article in *Oriens Christianus* and his drawings of depictions of the Holy Sepulchre, Regional Archives Maribor. Phot. Karin Šmid



further strengthen his theses. It is a fortunate coincidence that some collages on cardboard, which illustrate his research process, are still preserved in his archive. There Stegenšek associated the images of the sarcophagus, which he cut out from his own printed article, with drawings he made of numerous Holy Sepulchre representations, such as those from the mosaic of Santa Pudenziana in Rome, the Trivulzio ivory, and that of the Sancta Sanctorum reliquary [Fig. 2]. In his collages there are also depictions of Zion, among them the map of Mount Zion made by Marino Sanudo in 1310,<sup>37</sup> in which Stegenšek added the names of the represented buildings in red pen [Fig. 3].

Stegenšek's analysis of the other side of the sarcophagus, which represents Peter's denial, is, in fact, focussed on Mount Zion's topography. At first, he points to three buildings in the background connected by a crenellated wall. He identified them as, on the left, a round building, perhaps the House of Mary or the gate, through which Peter is said to have been led by an angel; in the centre, the old Church of the Apostles (later replaced by the Sancta Maria in Monte Zion of the Crusaders) with a circular Upper Room; and on the right, the House of Caiaphas. In front of the latter, however, a fourth building is represented. Stegenšek identified it as the Grotto of Peter's Repentance, situated on the eastern slope of Zion, in front of the city wall, and first mentioned by Sæwulf only in 1102.<sup>38</sup> Stegenšek concluded from this that Peter's Grotto as a memorial site was already fixed outside the city wall (towards the pool of Siloam) in the fourth century, the time of its depiction on the sarcophagus.<sup>39</sup>

Even if Stegenšek's research has found little to no resonance, what remains intriguing about his study on Jerusalem, and which differs from that of Strzygowski, is his topographical approach. From the beginning, Stegenšek was interested not only in a reconstruction of the buildings, but especially in the topographical localisation of the biblical events in the urban space. The identification of the original sites was certainly crucial for his research. In this, he followed a tradition of theologians (and pilgrims), for instance Johann Nepomuk Sepp (1816–1909), who in the nineteenth century almost rapturously pursued research in the life of Jesus in order to determine the true holy sites of the New Testament.<sup>40</sup> However,

Stegenšek speaks explicitly of biblical sites of remembrance (*Erinnerungsstätten*), and, although, he believed that a free invention of biblical memorials without the foundation of a tradition was impossible, he acknowledges that, because of the unstable history of the city, traditions – and therefore the topography of the sites of commemoration – could have changed over time.<sup>41</sup> He is, thus, also concerned with the tradition of remembrance and not, ostensibly, with authenticity. In this respect, he points ahead not least to the studies of the Holy Land by Maurice Halbwachs (1877–1945), and his concept of collective memory.<sup>42</sup>

As mentioned, Stegenšek began his research on the Via Crucis in Jerusalem when he was preparing the ecclesiastical topography of the Slovenian part of Styria. He contextualised the architecture and furnishings, mainly Baroque, by comparing how closely the buildings followed the originals in the Holy Land. A lack of knowledge of these 'originals' led him to research individual buildings and ultimately to the Jerusalem topography. He wrote both his topographies on Styrian church monuments in Slovenian. However, the Jerusalem studies he planned to publish in German under the title *Jerusalemische Entdeckungen*, since 'criticism, in order to be valid, needs counter-critics, which it is difficult to expect to be able to obtain among one's own compatriots'.<sup>43</sup>

Before publishing his scientific hypotheses, however, he aimed to verify them in Jerusalem. On 5 August 1912, in search of financial support, he wrote to Max Hussarek von Heinlein (1865–1935) in the latter's capacity as K.&K. (Imperial and Royal) Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs, about his interest in researching in Jerusalem.<sup>44</sup> He listed his original scientific contribution to Jerusalem topography, in particular, the corrections to the position of individual churches, such as St Mary's and St Sophia's.<sup>45</sup>

<sup>37</sup> Stegenšek quotes Sanudo's image from an essay written by Mommert on the Dormitio on Zion, see C. MOMMERT, 'Die Dormitio und das deutsche Grundstück auf dem traditionellen Zion', *Zeitschrift des Deutschen Palästina-Vereins*, 21, 1898, pp. 149–183, here p. 179.

<sup>38</sup> A. STEGENŠEK, 'Die Kirchenbauten Jerusalems', pp. 274–276 (as in note 32).

<sup>39</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 275.

<sup>40</sup> On the figure of Johann Nepomuk Sepp, see M. FINK-LANG, "Dem Geiste nach verpflichtet". Die Görres-Schüler Johann Nepomuk Sepp und Michael Strodl, in *Schule, Universität und Bildung. Festschrift für Harald Dickerhof zum 65. Geburtstag*, eds. H. FLACHENECKER, D. GRYPÄ, Regensburg 2007, pp. 243–293.

<sup>41</sup> 'Daß in Jerusalem einzelne kirchliche Traditionen wegen der verschiedenen Wechselfälle, die die Stadt und deren Heiligtümer getroffen haben, ihren Platz öfters verändert, geben wir gerne zu, [...], aber eine freie Erfindung von biblischen Erinnerungsstätten ohne Grundlage einer Tradition scheint uns ausgeschlossen. Außerhalb der Stadtmauer, gegen den Siloateich zu lag also der Ort der Reue Petri und in dieser Gegend ist er auch auf unserem Relief wiedergegeben', A. STEGENŠEK, 'Die Kirchenbauten Jerusalems', p. 276 (as in note 32).

<sup>42</sup> M. HALBWACHS, *La topographie légendaire des évangiles en Terre sainte* (1941), Paris 1942; German translation: *Stätten der Verkündigung im Heiligen Land. Eine Studie zum kollektiven Gedächtnis*, Konstanz 2003.

<sup>43</sup> F. K. LUKMAN, 'Zadnjih deset let', p. 197 (as in note 28). In the last years of his life, following the research in France (by Dominicans Louis-Hugues Vincent (1872–1960) and Félix-Marie Abel [1878–1953]), he even considered publishing his study in French (*ibidem*, pp. 206, 214).

<sup>44</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 197. For Hussarek cf. *Österreichisches Biographisches Lexikon 1815–1950*, vol. 3, Wien 1965, pp. 16–17.

<sup>45</sup> F. K. LUKMAN, 'Zadnjih deset let', p. 197 (as in note 28).





1. Rom. Sarkophag Lat. n. 174, linke Schmalseite.



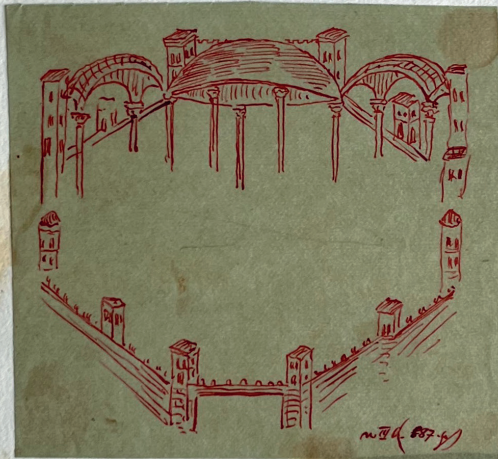
2. 257-1143



320 194/53.



Van. E 726



nr 4 (857-6)



Sept 11/1927, 649. 18.1.1928. XI.

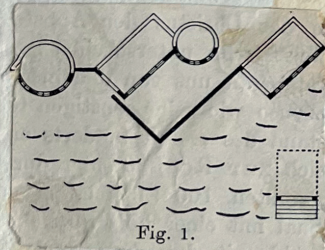
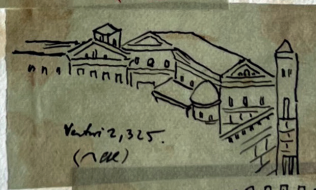
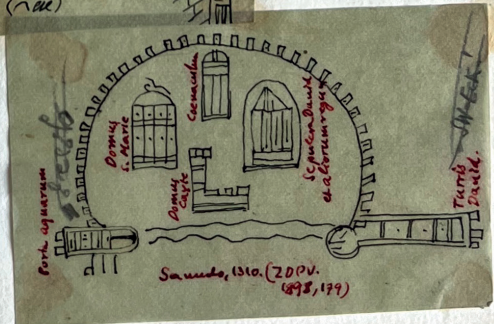


Fig. 1.



Vahr 2, 325. (AK)



Sauwdo, 1310. (ZDPV. 1898, 179)

3. Collage with the reproduction of the sarcophagus from Stegenšek's article in *Oriens Christianus* and his drawings of depictions of Jerusalem and Mount Zion, Regional Archives Maribor. Phot. Karin Šmid



And he expressed the hope 'that the Austrian state will want to compete with other nations in the discovery of early Christian monuments as eagerly as it competes in the investigation of classical antiquities'.<sup>46</sup>

However, Hussarek did not reply to the letter, but left Stegenšek's request to the assessment of Strzygowski, then professor in Vienna. Strzygowski immediately wrote to Stegenšek, criticising him for not approaching him directly and asking him about the scientific evidence.<sup>47</sup> As Stegenšek delayed his visit to Vienna to report his research in detail, Strzygowski travelled to Maribor (then Marburg an der Drau), to which he returned also around Easter of the same year, 1913. The correspondence that followed and continued over several years cannot, however, be described as a collaboration between the two researchers. Strzygowski supported Stegenšek, invited him to give a lecture at the Institute of Art History at the University of Vienna, and offered him a scholarship from his Institute and the possibility of publishing in the *Österreichische Monatsschrift für den Orient*. Stegenšek thanked his professor for his interest and support, especially for enabling him to stay for two months in the Austrian hospice in Jerusalem; he wrote to Strzygowski about the timetable of his plans and the concept, but basically, he distrusted him and shared very few of his insights and findings with him.<sup>48</sup>

After exploring the Holy Land in autumn 1913, Stegenšek was even more convinced of the validity of his methods and discoveries, while largely abandoning his preparations for archaeological research. The change in Stegenšek's approach throughout the years is also evidenced by the fact that he never referred to his article in *Oriens Christianus*, while repeatedly citing the topographical study of the Via Crucis as a reference.<sup>49</sup> In the last years of his life his topography was becoming increasingly speculative and would ultimately be based solely on the interpretation of biblical texts. He approached an interdisciplinary community of university professors, Church authorities and colleagues from Rome for (financial) support,<sup>50</sup> finally writing in October 1919 to the theologian and archaeologist Johann Peter Kirsch (1861–1941), then a professor in Fribourg, Switzerland, who replied in January 1920 (just two months before Stegenšek passed away) that his Jerusalem topography would be of interest to the Görres Society.<sup>51</sup>

<sup>46</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>47</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>48</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>49</sup> Cf. ibidem, p. 197.

<sup>50</sup> For example, correspondence with Joseph Sauer (1872–1949) in 1918, also a former student at Campo Santo Teutonico, then professor of church history, Christian archaeology and art history at the University of Freiburg im Breisgau, and constant contact with Alois Musil (1868–1944), from 1909 full professor of Oriental studies in Vienna; cf. ibidem, pp. 202, 212.

<sup>51</sup> Ibidem, pp. 217–218.

For his Jerusalem studies, Strzygowski was criticised by both the interdisciplinary research community (archaeologists, Byzantinists, etc.) and the Vienna School of Art History. Stegenšek's interest from 1912 onwards, at least in Strzygowski's view, most probably represented the gain of an ally in support of his arguments, and the institutionalisation of art-historical research on the Holy Land and the 'Orient' at the University of Vienna. However, Stegenšek did not meet the expectations of his Graz teacher. His art-historical work remained closely connected to Church authorities and institutions in Maribor and limited to the institutionalisation of art history on a local level, as a Slovenian national science, including the launching of the art journal *Ljubitelj krščanske umetnosti* [The Christian Art Amateur].

After the end of the First World War and with the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the process of establishing art history studies at the newly founded University of Ljubljana began.<sup>52</sup> Stegenšek declined to become the first professor and later, unsuccessfully, offered to lecture on the history of Byzantine art.<sup>53</sup> Strzygowski was no longer an authority to whom he had to report. However, his aspiration – that the new State of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes would be more supportive of his Jerusalem studies and would be willing to finance them, even though the results might be contrary to Church dogma – remained unfulfilled.

Stegenšek's work is marked, on the one hand, by an international interdisciplinary research perspective, and, on the other, by the construction of a national art history in Slovenian. It is difficult to assess whether or not Stegenšek's research contribution has been overlooked (also) because of the nationalist-socialist stigma of his Graz professor Strzygowski. Post-Second-World-War borders and ideologies have strongly shaped the narration on individual art historians and the historiography of the region until the present day. By 1945, Stegenšek had been dead for 25 years. His involvement in Church institutions and his Christian perspective were politically highly problematic, and in opposition to the new doctrine of education and research. However, art history at the University in Ljubljana, established in the Interwar Period by former Viennese students, especially Izidor Cankar (1886–1958), France Stele (1886–1972) and Vojeslav Molè (1886–1973), built its methodology on the foundations of the Vienna School of Art History.<sup>54</sup> It was Molè who, as professor in Ljubljana and Cracow, contributed greatly to the continuation in how to

<sup>52</sup> Cf. F. STELE, 'Slowenische Kunstgeschichte seit 1920', *Jahrbuch des Kunsthistorischen Institutes der Universität Graz*, 3/4, 1968/1969, pp. 1–18.

<sup>53</sup> F. K. LUKMAN, 'Zadnjih deset let', p. 216 (as in note 28).

<sup>54</sup> B. MUROVEC, 'Zwischen Methodologie und Ideologie. Slowenische Kunsthistoriker der Wiener Schule nach 1945', *RIHA Journal*, 2015, article no. 117 (<https://doi.org/10.11588/riha.2015.0.70067>, access: 1.10.2024).



understand and teach the ‘Orient’.<sup>55</sup> The model of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, in which Byzantine research (in contrast to German art history) was focused on Balkan and the South Slavic lands, as a direct territorial interest of the Monarchy (‘the Orient closest to us’),<sup>56</sup> was continued.

## SUMMARY

Annette Hoffmann, Barbara Kristina Murovec  
JOSEF STRZYGOWSKI AND AVGUŠTIN  
STEGENŠEK. SOME REMARKS ON THEIR  
JERUSALEM STUDIES

Josef Strzygowski and Avguštin Stegenšek, his student at the University of Graz, made a decisive contribution to the institutionalisation of art history in the Styrian province of the Habsburg Monarchy around 1900. At the time, research in Vienna focused on antiquity and the Renaissance, while very few art historians in the German-speaking world devoted themselves to the study of the ‘Orient’, and even fewer to Jerusalem studies. Strzygowski dedicated the last chapter of his book *Orient oder Rom* (1901), in which he argued for Europe’s dependence on Oriental forms, to the Constantinian Church of the Holy Sepulchre, thus embarking on an interdisciplinary research project that was mainly carried out by archaeologists, theologians, Byzantinists and orientalists. Strzygowski’s book was severely criticised by Max Dvořák, his colleague and rival at the University of Vienna from 1909 onwards, and other scholars, such as Anton Baumstark.

Between 1899 and 1902, Stegenšek was a student at the Roman Institute of the Görres Society on the Campo Santo Teutonico, where he listened to Josef Wilpert’s lectures and came into contact with many other German intellectuals who supported the primacy of Rome. Stegenšek’s research was based on his topographical work in southern Styria, in which he traced how the ‘originals’ of Jerusalem were copied in the Calvaries of Europe and in the Stations of the Cross. A forgotten text on the pictorial representation of church buildings in Jerusalem in the fourth century, published by Stegenšek in *Oriens Christianus* in 1911, reveals his method which is based on a comparative study. Stegenšek, moreover, was interested not only in reconstructing holy sites, but above all in topographically locating the biblical events within the urban space. In the idea of memorial sites (*Erinnerungsstätten*) Stegenšek points ahead not least to the studies of the Holy Land by Maurice Halbwachs.

After 1912, when Stegenšek attempted to obtain funding from the Imperial and Royal Ministry of Education and Culture for a trip to Jerusalem, his path became more closely linked with Strzygowski’s again. However, as Stegenšek did not trust his former professor from Graz, he travelled to Jerusalem at his own expense in 1913. With the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the process of establishing art-historical studies at the newly founded University of Ljubljana began; Stegenšek declined to become the first professor and later unsuccessfully offered to teach the history of Byzantine art. Due to his early death, his research has remained largely unpublished and overlooked.

<sup>55</sup> Cf. W. BAŁUS, ‘The Place of the Vienna School of Art History in Polish Art Historiography of the Interwar Period’, *Journal of Art Historiography*, 21, 2019, pp. 1–15, here p. 2.

<sup>56</sup> ‘Das uns am nächsten liegende Gebiet des Orient’, Hans Sedlmayr to Ernst Diez, 22 September 1937, University of Vienna, Department of Art History Archives, Sedlmayr Folders, Vienna, quoted after Z. TONBUL, ‘From Strzygowski’s ‘Orient oder Rom’ to Hans Sedlmayr’s ‘Closest Orient’’, *Journal of Art Historiography*, 23, 2020, pp. 1–15, here p. 2.