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**Josef Strzygowski and Josef Wilpert: two faces of the same science**

Abstract

These two art historians and archaeologists were almost of the same age: Strzygowski (1862-1941) and Wilpert (1857-1944), both born in Silesia: Strzygowski in Biala (today Bielsko-Biała) and Wilpert in Eglau (today Dzielów/voivodeship of Opole/Opeln) lying not even 100 km each other. They both left their native towns forever to study: Strzygowski (classics in Berlin, Munich and Vienna) and Wilpert (theology as a catholic priest in Innsbruck, Rome and Vatican). Strzygowski journeyed a lot, farther away in the East, Wilpert on the contrary always stayed in Rom. However, they both became archaeologists and finely have gained an international fame as known experts of the Early Christian art. However their point of view - concerning the monuments of this art, but above all about its origins - has been totally different. Their attitude can be qualified shortly: on the one hand by the title of the famous Strzygowski's book: *Orient oder Rom* and on the other hand by the motto: *Rom über alles*, as beloved and consequently followed by Wilpert. They did not and could not understand each other, they did not like and estimate each other either. Their only meeting point and platform could be contributions to the same volumes offered to a common colleague, as for example a book about Constantine presented in 1913 to Anton de Waal, the Rector of the Campo Santo Teutonico. The present paper demonstrates the background of their different formation, mentality and scientific approach, as well as it tries to answer who of them finally won this battle of judging the past and of interpreting the monuments, if it is at all possible to declare anyone a winner in such a competition.