

Universalmuseum Joanneum Presse

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Archaeology and Coin Cabinet History of the Department

Archaeology has been a firm component of this museum ever since the founding of the Joanneum in 1811. Initially it was part of the History Department – the “Archive” – collecting prehistoric and early historical sources relating to the history of the country. In 1865, an archaeology cabinet was installed at Graz University, its head (Friedrich Pichler) later also being in charge of the Coin and Antiquities Cabinet founded as a separate department at the Joanneum in 1869. There were thus already close contacts between the Joanneum and archaeology experts at the university until finally, in 1877, Classical Art Archaeology was introduced as a full subject at Graz University. In 1887, a Prehistoric Collection, Antiquities and Coin Cabinet was set up by statute at the Joanneum. In 1890, the same year he became of full professor at the university, Wilhelm Gurlitt took over as head of this department.

Until the appointment of an archaeologist to the Styrian Conservatory Department at the Federal Historic Monuments Office in 1986, responsibility for the practical care of archaeological monuments was in the hands of archaeologists at the Styrian Landesmuseum and the Historischer Verein für Innerösterreich (founded 1843), which became independent in 1850 as the Historischer Verein für Steiermark, and was closely associated with the Joanneum. The Verein carried on an extensive independent programme of excavations, and in 1859 ceded its extensive collection of archaeological objects to the Joanneum. Among these was the Strettweg Chariot. Every year from 1859 until the cessation of the Verein’s autonomous collecting activity, finds collected in the previous reporting year were handed over to the museum. With the appointment of Karl Haas in 1855, the Verein appointed the first professional Styrian archaeologist.

The 20th-century brought specializations of individual disciplines such as prehistory and early history, Roman provincial archaeology and numismatics, leading to the founding of independent departments. These specialist areas are now reunited in one department called Archaeology and Coin Cabinet.

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