

Peter Grossmann, 1933–2021

We mourn the passing of Peter Grossmann, who left an indelible mark on the field of Christian archaeology and architecture, especially as a result of a lifetime devoted to Egypt. His fieldwork activity and his publications inspired—and will continue to inspire—countless scholars and students. His numerous and wide-ranging publications, from his entries in *The Coptic Encyclopedia* (1991) and articles in scholarly journals (prominent among them his beloved *Bulletin de la Société d'archéologie copte*) to his seminal *Christliche Architektur in Ägypten* (2002), attest to a life spent in a quest for knowledge about the earliest and most important developments in Christian architecture in Egypt and their relationship to developments in the rest of the late antique Mediterranean world. His monumental and decades-long work at the vast pilgrimage center of St. Menas to the west of Alexandria, in its time one of the most popular anywhere, is especially noteworthy, but his work encompassed the entire country from the remote Kharga Oasis to the Sinai peninsula. It is thanks to his ground-breaking efforts that Egypt is now known as a region gifted with an exceptionally large and rich body of archaeological evidence on early Christianity.

Born in Potsdam, near Berlin, in 1933, Dr. Grossmann studied architecture and the history of architecture in Karlsruhe. He began his career working for the German Institute of Archaeology in 1962, first in Rome and Athens, then in Cairo (1965–1998). Even after his retirement, he remained active in fieldwork in Egypt, where he worked tirelessly to document endangered and in many cases now vanished architecture. Without his passion and stamina, our knowledge of this great heritage would be sadly impoverished. Undoubtedly, he was a remarkably prolific scholar of vast erudition; however, and just as exceptional to those of us who had the privilege of knowing and working with him, he was a man gifted with extraordinary sensitivity, kindness, and generosity, as well as with infectious good humour. Whether one was an untried doctoral student, a senior scholar, a Coptic monk, or an antiquities official, he offered to share information and documentation, facilitated access to the great library at the Deutsches Archäologisches Institut Kairo, and collaborated with unbounded enthusiasm.

Peter participated in the “First International Congress of Coptology,” which was held in Cairo in 1976, and in 1977 he became a founding member of the International Association for Coptic Studies (IACS). He was elected to the IACS Board as a Member at Large in 1980 and served in that capacity for four years. In 1984 the IACS established its “Cairo Center” in cooperation with the Société d'archéologie copte / Society for Coptic Archaeology and its then president, Mirrit Boutros Ghali, based in the grounds of the Boutrossiya adjacent to the Coptic Patriarchate in Abbassiya, Cairo. Peter Grossmann became the first (and only) Director of the IACS's Cairo Center, holding that post for 37 years. His services to the IACS were immense, and he will be missed.

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