

insights

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Archives and people in the digital age

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The new ICARUS4all team

editorial



Dear colleagues,

This year we have been celebrating the 50th anniversary of the first moon landing. “That’s one small step for a man, one giant leap for mankind” – these were the famous words spoken by astronaut Neil Armstrong when he first set foot on the moon on July 21, 1969. All over the world the media and scientists have been putting special focus on the significance of this “step” this year.

What was then the moon for the people who lived 50 years ago could in the future well be the mass digitisation of historical documents. For many, this seems unimaginable, almost like a look upon the stars; for ICARUS, it is the next logical step that is just around the corner. In this year’s month of May, the Time Machine Organisation was founded, also known by its abbreviation TMO. The organisation headquartered in Vienna aims at making the European archives accessible across the continent to everyone. Two months after its foundation, TMO already has 400 members from all over Europe.

This edition presents some of the pioneers from the world of archives who have accompanied TMO right since the beginning. Look forward to Vlatka Lemić who is currently setting up the new archive of the University of Zagreb as well as to the three people behind ICARUS4all, Elisabeth Kultscher, Christina Eggeling and Otto Amon. And who knows – maybe we will be celebrating the 100th anniversary of the first moon landing side by side with the 50th anniversary of TMO in the year 2069!

I wish you pleasant reading!

Dagmar Weidinger

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insights provides information about the international archival community today, including archival institutions as well as the related user groups.

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Portrait: Vlatka Lemić | Archives of the University of Zagreb

Dissident, pioneer, ambassador

As head of the Croatian State Archives, Vlatka Lemić started a fight with the government and lost her position. Now she is setting up the archives of the University of Zagreb. An interview with a woman of conviction.

by Saskia Blatakes

Fotos: Damir Humski

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Vlatka Lemić and ICARUS share many successes. At her instigation, [Patriarch Louis Raphaël I Sako](#) and [Father Michael Najeeb](#) from Iraq came to the ICARUS Convention in St. Pölten in 2015. The subsequently founded [Chaldean Heritage Taskforce](#) continues to support Father Najeeb in his digitisation activities of Christian-Chaldean manuscripts in Iraq.

Looking back from where she is today, she calls herself a dissident and “enemy number 1” of the official establishment. In 2013, Vlatka Lemić became head of the Croatian State Archives and was faced with the situation that archival work was outsourced to ten private companies. She involved auditors who confirmed irregularities of this practice. The Ministry of Culture subsequently ruled that the outsourcing was unlawful. She therefore cancelled the contracts with these companies – who threatened to sue her. The situation was tricky because one of the companies was connected to the brother of the Prime Minister of that time (in Austria, the daily newspaper *Der Standard* reported on the story). But nothing happened. Except for the fact that Vlatka Lemić was removed from her position in 2016 and that she had to leave the State Ar-

chives, where she had been working since 1998, at the beginning of 2019. Since then, some time has passed. But the situation between herself and the Ministry of Culture has not yet been sorted out. Meeting for a talk with Vlatka Lemić now – even if the talk is only a virtual meeting on video chat – does not show that there have been any hard feelings. She seems relaxed and agile while saying sarcastically: “I have learned to make the best of it. Things go their own way. After all it is a fact that in my country, there is a conflict between public and private interests. And archives are no exception in this matter.”

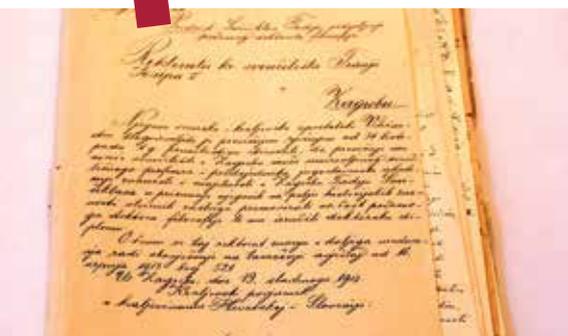
Even some changes to regulations in recent years as well as new archival laws that took effect in 2018 couldn't resolve the issues of outsourcing to private companies in general and have not made much of a change.

“The system was modernised on paper, but practice remains the same as it was”, she says and adds with some bitterness: “There is no professional organisation on the national level.” Experiences like these could make somebody depressed or even give up. With Vlatka Lemić it is quite the contrary, she seems to draw stubborn strength from what she has been going through. She will certainly need it while facing her new challenge: Setting up the University archives in Zagreb.

The archives that do not yet exist

In January 2019, the 47-year-old was appointed head of the University Office for archives. But there is one detail that might make her new job a little bit harder: The archives do not even exist yet. Unlike other European countries, Croatia has so far not had any specialised archives but only a network of

This document records the **first honorary doctorate** at the University of Zagreb. It was awarded in 1913 to professor **Tadja Smičiklas**, historian, distinguished public, official and full professor, dean, rector, president of Matica hrvatska and of the Yugoslav Academy of Sciences and Arts. Collection: University Archives



State archives. Vlatka Lemić must therefore start from scratch. In practice, this means that she first needs to find the right location, obtain funding and hire employees. Next, the new University archivists will be facing kilometres of documents from 35 faculties which have not even been listed.

other academic disciplines and employees of Universities, museums and cultural institutions.

A workaholic, even on vacation

Vlatka Lemić is also teaching archival sciences at the University of Zagreb and is currently writing her second book. Furthermore, she supports the ICARUS projects Time Machine and the topotheque. She particularly cares for the latter project as it includes the public. The

"It feels good to set up something new."

But Lemić enjoys the challenge of this pioneering work: "Something big is about to be created here, something good. And it feels great to set up something new." In ICARUS she has found the perfect framework for her ambitious endeavour. Vlatka Lemić has been one of its Vice Presidents since 2008 and is highly appreciative of the association. International collaboration is the most important inspiration in her work. She is therefore particularly proud of the "ICARUS Days Croatia" which took place for the fifth time in March 2019, this time in Pula on the peninsula of Istria. 200 participants from 23 countries came to Croatia – archivists as well as scientists of

topotheque is Croatia's largest archival digitisation project. Side by side with other institutions, participants are primary schools, museums and many academic institutions. In 2019, the number of collections reached twenty. Vlatka Lemić has been highly successful in winning history teachers for the project who will now bring it into their classrooms.

Even during her vacation, she is dedicated to the topotheque. While travelling through Croatia she visits schools to promote it. How does she succeed in achieving all of this? "I don't sleep much", she laughs. And

portrait

First name, last name:

Vlatka Lemić

My favourite memories from my professional life:

Feedback from people who are discovering archives as well as collaborative projects that bring together good people and ideas.

When I am alone at the archive ...

I go through archival documents, work on descriptions and publishing, check online material to update data and search for new information on archives in general.

Coffee or tea?

Coffee at work, tea at home.

I am impressed with...

good ideas and engaged associates, dedicated professionals and enthusiastic people in all spheres of life.

I am good at...

doing too many things and having too many ideas at the same time, which often makes planned activities challenging to realise in practice.

My "favourite object" at the archive:

The series of inaugural speeches made by rectors in the course of the University's history. They are inspiring and relevant at all times.

Three things I love about archives:

A multitude of stories, a wealth of information and being of service to the people.

My connection with ICARUS:

Ten years of collaboration and support with outstanding friendships, new ideas and innovative activities ... Invaluable.

From the team's point of view

Zlatko Draganović (Head of Sector for legal, international and EU affairs, Ministry of the sea, transport and infrastructure): "Once Vlatka has set her mind on something, she knows how to engage with the right people, creates a network and facilitates communication and cooperation. She is proud of her work which she pursues with dedication."

Anne Gilliland (Professor and Director of the Archival Studies specialization in the Department of Information Studies at the University of California Los Angeles | UCLA): "Vlatka has an unbelievable amount of energy. By taking the lead in the development of ICARUS HRVATSKA she has been a major force in ensuring that Croatia is an integral player in European cultural initiatives."

Tamara Štefanac (Archivist at the National and University Library in Zagreb): "Vlatka's efforts in teaching at the faculty of philosophy in Zagreb are particularly noticeable whenever theory gets tested in day-to-day archival routine. In her work Vlatka reaches out to a great number of archivists that primarily focus on practical archival issues. She guides them into understanding how archivists differ from historians and digital humanists, highlighting their specific expertise and how synergies can be achieved."

apart from her dog Leo, she has no further hobbies. Her parents are helping her with her two children when she turns night into day for her job or her vocation, or when she travels through Croatia and Europe as an ambassador for archival matters. Maybe the strength she needs for her tireless commitment is based on an experience she made as a student: In her hometown of Zagreb, Vlatka Lemić first studied archaeology and later on museology and archival sciences. Together with her professor Josip Kolanović she visited the State Archives in the course of a lecture. She still remembers the feeling of awe she had on entering the impressive building in the style of Croatian Secession, and her thoughts that would guide her way: "Every single document on the history of my country is here, in this place."

Burnt books

This was in the 1990s. The Homeland War had just ended in Croatia, and many documents were lost forever. "We were a young state, something in-between. It seemed important to me to present our identity and to show that we were a part of the European history. Seeing those burnt books and those destroyed documents awakened a strong desire inside of me to restore objects, and particularly to present them to the public."

"Collaboration gives a clearer view on your own work."

In her capacity as a professor, her most beautiful moments are "hearing my students say with amazement that I had just told them something new which they had not known. This gives me the strong feeling of having contributed something important to society. It is incredibly rewarding."

In a certain way, the situation was better in the 1990s than it is today. Kolanović, the former head of the archives, was very progressive and had an excellent international network. Her former mentor is still her role model. He was the one who recognised her talent and passion and hired her for the State Archives while she was still a student.

Not least because of her own experiences, international and interdisciplinary collaboration have been extremely important to her until today. This is why she also attends conferences of other academic disciplines such as fine arts or linguistics to explain tirelessly how archives are functioning and why they are so important. She does not go there to preach. Quite to the contrary – she wants to remain inspired: "Collaboration gives a clearer view on your own work. It also shows me the direction I want to take. I gain so many good ideas from my colleagues from other countries. We all help each other in terms of resources."

On her own authority

When she was removed from her office as the leader of the State Archives as well as any other professional duties, her bilateral projects were also stopped. But she continued them on her own authority, held presentations, submitted proposals – and founded "ICARUS Hrvatska". She also launched "@rhivi", a Croatian version of "insights".

But now her new job at the University and the setup of the archives are waiting for her. And with the University of Zagreb celebrating its 350th anniversary this year, there is enough to do for the newly installed University archivist who looks back in order to look ahead. ■

Name of the institution:

Archives of the University of Zagreb

Web address:

www.unizig.hr

Oldest collection:

University of Zagreb fond (1866 - ...)

Oldest object/best-known archival item:

The University Annual Calendar 1874/1875, denoting the beginning of the modern period of the University of Zagreb. It contains a list of professors, faculties, courses, lectures schedules and other information.

Most loyal visitors of the reading room:

University professors and academic researchers

Alphabetical directory of registered listeners of University programmes covering the period 1874-1918.
Collection: University Archives

Saskia Blatakes studied Political Science at the University of Vienna and the Institute for Advanced Studies. She works as a freelance journalist, presenter and editor.

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It's all about the people!

One of the main projects of the National Archives of Malta is called MEMORJA. It aims at recording Malta's "private" history – the personal stories of the people, those that cannot be found in public records.

Starting in January 2017, a team of five took the first steps towards creating MEMORJA. The main objective of the project has been to employ innovative research methodologies, theoretical and archival approaches and techniques to record, transcribe, preserve and make available all deposited material detailing the history of the Maltese islands. In doing so, the archives have fundamentally changed their role – from a memory-capturing institution whose traditional task has been to preserve government records to one that now creates its own, new records in the form of oral history interviews, personal photographs, documents and other ephemera.

At the beginning of the project, one of the main intellectual challenges was to select a certain number of precise research themes. The following five topics seemed particularly relevant: Maltese emigration; Experiencing war: survival, shelter and food; British expatriates in Malta; Public administration; and Bell ringing/campanian culture.

Protecting the bus drivers' feelings

The available oral testimonies – of which there is still a substantial number – strive to preserve daily experiences as felt by the people. Whether it is the war veterans, fishermen, fireworks enthusiasts, bell ringers or hawkers – they are all providing individual narrative experiences that are often overlooked in official documentation. A case in point is the history of the Maltese buses. Whoever visited Malta in the past got an idea of its unique old buses – all extremely colourful (both literally and metaphorically!). These days they are no longer around! A reform carried out eight years ago led to a change of buses, which caused the bus drivers a lot of pain. Historically, their passion for their job was completely overlooked – until today. With MEMORJA, their perspective is making its way into the public records, side by side with the official version already archived, filling a gap in the nation's collective memory.

The incoming material is very diverse and not restricted to traditional docu-



One of the protagonists of the interviews with bus drivers, Michael Cutajar known as 'iz-Zinnu', interviewed in front of his bus.

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ments. We have received all kinds of artefacts, from knives to medals and artefacts of clothing. Even though we have been restricting the amount and typology of artefacts (as they bring about new challenges of storage) we are still departing from the traditional focus on public records. There is a need to discuss these new realities and build bridges to other professions in order to rise to the challenge of a more pro-active approach – from the passive archivist to the archivist as a creator of records. This is also what we are doing at conferences and through journals and other publications.

If you have similar experiences to share, feel free to contact the colleagues from Malta at customer-care.archives@gov.mt

Links:

nationalarchives.gov.mt

facebook.com/NationalArchivesMalta

Ms Teresa Cachia Zammit, one of the interviewees, pictured with her 'ancestors', July 2017.



Charles J. Farrugia is chairperson of EURBICA, Malta's national archivist and serves on the executive board of ACARM. Farrugia is a lecturer in Archives and Records Management at the Department of Library Information & Archive Sciences at the Faculty of Media & Knowledge Sciences, University of Malta.



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The challenging implications of inconsistent data

aiming at higher efficiency in the digital search of historical persons and places, the Swiss project histHub is working on the linking and standardising of data to complement existing infrastructures and services in the area of digital humanities.

In the 14th and 15th centuries, the dynasty of the counts of Werdenberg-Sargans was very influential in today's Canton of Graubünden. In 1388, for example, Hartmann IV was elected Bishop of Chur. While the date of his election is clearly documented, the conditions surrounding it are not. Hartmann IV's year of birth is also ambiguous, his day of death, however, is considered verified to be September 6, 1416. It is quite typical for historical persons from the late Middle Ages or the early Modern Period to show a mix of clearly documented and unclear or even contradictory dates side by side. A variety of different spellings, bynames, surnames and names of places or functions is also characteristically coexisting. Hartmann IV von Werdenberg-Sargans is for example also known as Hartmann de Sanegans or, making the danger of confusion significantly higher, as Hartmann II von Chur.

Unique and linked

This example highlights a problem that typically arises within the context of historical data on persons: It is frequently very difficult to make a unique identification. In addition, many persons have been entered into various different databases. Multiple existences of database entries equally concern data on places, organisations or keywords. Linking exist-

ing information to the maximum extent would therefore make it possible to compare data across suppliers as well as increase the visibility of the databases.

histHub is currently working on a solution which allows to uniquely assign and link data. The platform thereby pursues two strategies complementing each other. On the one hand, the portal supplies standard data on historical persons, places, organisations and concepts. This is achieved on the basis of typologies and controlled vocabularies. The entities are modelled in a way as to make it possible to enter even the slightest historical differences with their respective sources. Permanent IDs ensure that the data is unique for IT processing.

From Switzerland into the world

The second strategy pursued by histHub is aimed at linking existing databases in an automatic or semi-automatic way. Concordances are stored, making it possible to link "like with like". All the while, data sovereignty remains entirely with the supplier. By using innovative technologies, histHub can search and link a large number of data from third parties. The histHub linking tool for place indications for example currently generates links from more than ten international suppliers for "Sargans". Even though the project currently focuses on data pertaining to the history of

Switzerland, the tools, data models and ontologies developed by histHub are certainly of interest to the international community. ■

histHub is a cooperation project carried out by Diplomatic Documents of Switzerland, the Historical Dictionary of Switzerland, the *ortsnamen.ch* project of the Swiss *idioticon* as well as the Law Sources Foundation of the Swiss Lawyers Society. Additional financing is provided by *swissuniversities*.

Link:

histhub.ch

dodis.ch

hls-dhs-dss.ch

idiotikon.ch

ortsnamen.ch

ssrq-sds-fds.ch

Alban Frei is a historian and research manager. He acquired a doctorate from ETH Zurich and has been Managing Director of histHub since 2017.



How to set up an archive from scratch

The documents held by the Secular Franciscan Order (Ordo Franciscanus Saecularis, O.F.S.) have so far been stored in five different regions in Austria and South Tyrol. This is about to change with the foundation of a dedicated archive at the Franciscan monastery of Puppung in Upper Austria. A brief look at an archive's genesis.

The idea to set up a central archive for OFS Österreich, the Austrian branch of the Secular Franciscan Order (Ordo Franciscanus Saecularis), was born in 2017. Such an archive had never existed before. It was therefore necessary to start from scratch, since neither a concept nor the necessary infrastructure or the required budget were there.

This was to change in December 2017 when I was officially appointed the first archivist, when the rules of usage were decided and financial support for the years 2018 and 2019 was supplied from the current budget. The most important tasks could now be started. In the future, financing will have to be met on the basis of donations and sponsorships which have yet to be obtained. P. Fritz Wenigwieser, Vicar Provincial and Guardian of the Franciscan monastery of Puppung, provided us with our first archive room and also supplied us with further infrastructure in the form of cabinets and tables.

Scattered documents

Our first task consisted of drawing up a list of all the places that were holding analogous or digital archival material in order to be able to bring everything together. Given the fact that OFS does not have any dedicated monastic homes, the archival material is moving around together with the ministers of the regional and local fraternities. In addition, some material is held by the Austrian diocesan archives and the diocesan archive of Bolzano-Brixen, the Austrian provincial archives, the Austrian State Archives, several monastery and parish archives, municipal archives as well as by the provincial or house archives of the Minorites, the Franciscans or the Capuchins.

In a first step, only the archival material that is available digitally will therefore be consolidated. Moving the analogous OFS archival material from those other archives to the central OFS archive will only be pos-

sible if we succeed in establishing the necessary conservatory requirements. While the entire archival material will be described on the basis of the archival standard ISAD(G), archivis pro will be used as the archival information system.

Scientific work and public presentations

In 2021, the archive will be particularly brought to the attention of the public as that year will mark the 800th anniversary of the Order's first rule (1221, "Memoriale Propositi"). To that purpose and going beyond, new publications on the history of orders in Austria will be released and events on specific topics will be held. Already, a cooperation with Prof. Dr. Ines Weber, Institute of Church History at the Catholic Private University Linz, has been established. The new archive is an exciting assignment, and its story is about to be written! ■

Link:

archivofsat.hypotheses.org

ofs-oesterreich.at

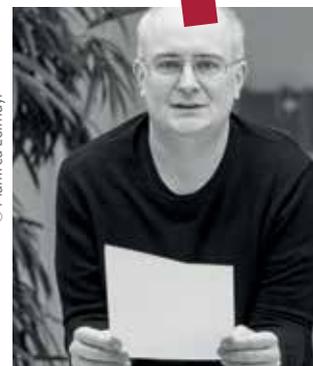
info

Behind the cloistered skylight in the middle lies the new OFS Central Archive.



© Br. Johannes OFS

Armin Bernauer (Br. Johannes, OFS) is living in Eferding, Upper Austria, and works among others at the monastery archives of the Sisters of the Cross in Linz. He is currently doing two master's studies in parallel and is also very interested in archival matters, history, music, theatre, swimming and museums.



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We support you to simplify the access to digitisation



Why is it important to capture documents in good quality?

This topic is important at the moment when the paper based documents are very old and the quality of the print, the printing ink and the paper are getting worse and worse every decade. It is necessary to scan these documents in the best possible way to archive it for the future. Image Quality is also important if there is no need of a physical archive and the documents can be destroyed after digitisation. The captured and digitised document is the only existing one and if the quality is not good enough it is not possible to check the document on paper again.

Therefore we have developed guidelines to capture, control and ensure image quality. By using these guidelines, documents are captured with the best possible quality for every situation.

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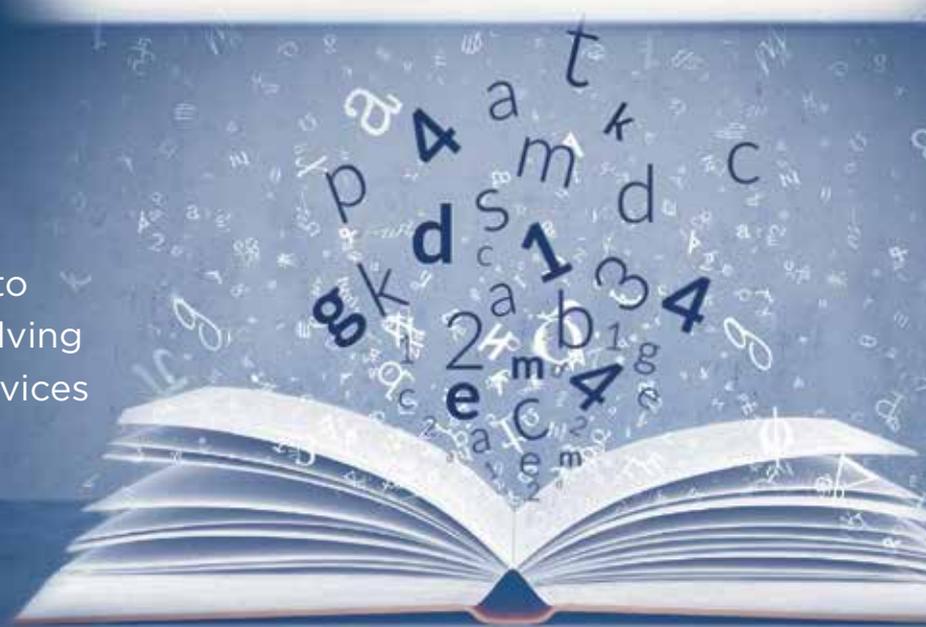
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Attention!

Something is going on at ICARUS4all!

Since the beginning of 2019, ICARUS4all has three new team members who recently took over the task of taking care of the organisational matters of the Friends' Association. All three may be new in their role at ICARUS4all, but in fact all three are well-known faces in the community. Behind the scenes they have been actively involved in the Friends' Association for some time. Now they are the official contact persons for all matters concerning ICARUS4all. But now it's time to let the three speak for themselves!



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Christina Eggeling is a visual artist, art historian and historian. Alongside her work for the Vienna Instituto Cervantes she is an honorary board member of ICARUS4all and a member of the research team of historians with regard to the former Benedictine monastery of Mariazell im Wienerwald.

during my first term of studying history at the University of Vienna I already came to know about Monasterium. Later on, this virtual archive became a companion I would not want to miss in any of my historical research activities. Until today, my work has focused on topics covering the Middle Ages, in particular patron saints and relics. Some time later I met Thomas Aigner at a scientific conference where I learned about his work and came to appreciate it. Out of that emerged an inspiring and friendly collaboration, in particular at various conferences for historians and genealogists. In this way I also gained new insights into the world of family researchers and met with so many nice people! I particularly like to think back to my volunteering at the Late Summer Meeting at the monastery of Geras in Lower Austria in 2015. Since then I have also been a member of the ICARUS4all community.

It is a great honour for me that I am now also a board member of ICARUS4all. Together with Otto Amon I am responsible for meetings and events. Our tasks include the organisation of general assemblies and board meetings as well as the keeping of the meetings' minutes. We are also responsible for the preparations of excursions, visits and festivities. Together with the finance and member administration team we take care of our activities with a lot of enthusiasm, engage in lively discussions on potential optimisations and come up with new ideas.

I first learned about Matricula in July 2013 and instantly came to appreciate it. This coincided with the death of my father at the age of almost 90. I often told my mother about the discoveries I had made in the church registers, but she would follow my father in November of the same year. Suffering from Alzheimer, she enjoyed listening to what I told her but could no longer remember anything. I have inherited my passion for family research from my parents who both came from the same village. He was the son of a farmer and became a vet, she was the daughter of an innkeeper. They had known most people from their place for three of four generations back. My research allowed me to “solve” some of the “puzzles” from the sixth or seventh generations, but unfortunately, I could no longer tell my parents about them.

And how did I find my way to ICARUS4all? Out of gratitude! The information I gained from Matricula-online not only enlarged my pedigree enormously, it also extended my circle of friends and family and recently motivated me to study history. It is incredible how we all seem to be directly or indirectly related with each other. As an atheist, this gives me a feeling of security despite the awareness of our transience as single, short-lived individuals.

In 2015 I was offered the opportunity of presenting my findings at the Late Summer Meeting at the monastery of Geras. From then on, I was invited to participate time and again, most recently by Thomas Aigner asking me to join the board. It is very exciting to see the cross-country cooperation of archives that ranges from “Big Data

of the Past” up to the “Time Machine”. And I appreciate being able to somewhat participate in a “missionising” capacity.



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Otto Amon is working as an independent IT consultant and is studying history at the University of Vienna. In December 2018 he started to organise regular meetings on the research of the history of his home town.



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Elisabeth Kultscher is the archivist of Wilhelmsburg in Lower Austria and is an enthusiastic family and local history researcher. Besides her work as a board member of ICARUS4all she is also organising the monthly meetings of genealogists from the Mostviertel region and is also part of a small team that operates the topotheque of Wilhelmsburg.

I originally joined ICARUS4all to express my enthusiasm and appreciation for the digitisation of church records and documents. My glowing passion turned into a long and intimate relationship that was deepened by the considerable efforts that were taken for the members, the excursions that were offered, the Late Summer Meetings and the network that developed. When I was asked whether I would like to actively participate there was only one possible answer: Yes, I do!

I am responsible for member administration as well as for the entering of incoming payments. At the moment we are heavily involved in finding the perfect way of managing our files in order to organise our workflows as easily and efficiently as possible. I am honestly happy whenever a new member joins ICARUS4all, and it is a pleasure to see the community constantly grow bit by bit. The friendly cooperation among the “administration team”, the commitment, the new ideas, the nice sharing of thoughts and the pleasure of working together are particularly motivating. I am happy that I may be a part of it.

