THE
NOBLEST
PLEASURE
IS THE JOY OF
UNDERSTANDING
Ms. Beck, Mr. Buhr, imagine you have been invited to a dinner and the person sitting between you has never heard of De Gruyter. How would you explain to him or her what your publishing company does?

Anke Beck: I would say that we are a hardcore academic publisher. And that would probably be the end of the conversation. (Laughs.) However, if the person then still wants to know more, I would go on to say that we offer the full spectrum of specialist literature for the natural sciences and humanities. Excellent researchers from all over the world publish with us.

Carsten Buhr: And we offer every product in both printed and electronic form as a matter of policy, and in the area of sales and distribution we work together with bookstores, library suppliers and aggregators. Of course, you can also read our books and journals on your tablet or smartphone.

De Gruyter’s subject areas cover pretty much every field that a researcher could possibly work in – ranging from ancient studies to linguistics, and from mathematics to cytology. Do researchers who publish themselves form your target group? Do you even refer to them as “readers”?

Anke Beck: Yes, of course. Maybe one could put it like this: researchers publish specialist information with us for other researchers.

Carsten Buhr: Or for up-and-coming researchers, i.e. students. We also publish literature for specialist users such as legal experts. Legal commentaries are of course theoretical, but they are written with a practical application in mind, too.

Ms. Beck, you studied three different African languages in Germany and Great Britain and you worked in Africa and the United States. Mr. Buhr, you studied in the United States and worked in India. Is internationality a basic requirement at De Gruyter?

Carsten Buhr: Yes, I think it is. We are very much a global organization and have branches or representative offices in places like Boston, Beijing and Warsaw. In terms of
locations alone, we are thus very active outside of the anglophone world. For example, alongside the United States the Asian markets are very important for us.

Anke Beck: We have to be open-minded in a broad sense, as our employees have very different international and cultural backgrounds. And of course it is important to be aware of and respect cultural differences and customs during negotiations. In this regard, I always recount what I learnt from one of our Chinese colleagues who heads the office in Beijing. The first time I traveled to Beijing, I presented her with an agenda for the upcoming negotiations, but she just smiled and said: “There is no agenda for first meetings. First we have to get to know each other.” I found it very difficult to be comfortable with this. With my usual German thoroughness, I wanted to work through the items I had prepared, but this was not possible and I regarded my visit as a wasted journey. However, when I saw the results, I knew that my time had been well spent.

How do you position yourself to compete successfully for the best minds in the business? Can you ask researchers out for a cup of coffee? How does this work? Anke Beck: With charm and intelligence. There are indeed smart minds, academic specialists and generally very well educated people working at De Gruyter. A direct link to the academic community and knowing what is important in research activity are essential. Here too, a global outlook on subject areas and a mastery of technical requirements are important prerequisites for ensuring a good range of products.

Carsten Buhr: Our authors come to us primarily through personal contacts that have been built up over a long period. These personal contacts have helped us to continue growing. We have also acquired not just excellent publishing companies, but their networks too.

About the only thing that is more boundless and global than research activity is the Internet itself. How has the digital revolution changed your publishing company? Carsten Buhr: Digitalization has affected the company in a positive manner. In 2008, De Gruyter decided to offer every product in digital form too and the company was prepared to invest in the necessary infrastructure for this. At a very early stage, we were thus able to offer our journals in digital form—going right back to their first year of publication. The range of products available on our platform is growing continuously and our backlist is now available for purchase from our ‘on demand’ retro-digitalization program, including publications dating back to 1749. In 2012, De Gruyter acquired the publisher Versita, a Polish company that operates a purely Open Access business. We took over around 250 journals at the time, and this figure now stands at 450 and is continuing to grow. It can safely be said that we are now one of the biggest Open Access publishers in the world.

Anke Beck: And our strategic sales partnerships—with internationally renowned university publishers, for example—should not be forgotten either. These include the University Presses at Harvard, Princeton and Columbia. As part of these cooperations, we are also digitizing their publications and marketing them together with De Gruyter content.

Carsten Buhr: We are very flexible when it comes to trying out new business models and are also quick to implement them thanks to the size of our company.

Do researchers love books or data? Anke Beck: They love both. I don’t think it is necessary to differentiate between the two. If I want to read a longer article in its overall context or if the image quality has to be 100% perfect, then many people, including students, like to have a printed copy. Digital offers the advantage that you can quickly search a document, provide links to other content and include multi-media elements.

Carsten Buhr: This is also a generational issue. It can be seen that usage is moving away from printed books and towards digital formats.

And how do you deal with the issue of plagiarism? Anke Beck: Quality is everything in our area of activity. Every publication is first subject to double-blind reviewing, which means that two independent reviewers read each manuscript—regardless of whether it is a book or a journal article—and give the author subject-specific feedback. The responsibility of course lies primarily with the reviewers and editors. They check whether content could possibly have been plagiarized or not. Subsequently, the manuscript is again checked using plagiarism-checking software, which identifies plagiarized sections that were not previously flagged as such.

You publish bestsellers such as the “Pschyrembel Klinisches Wörterbuch”, which has a very high print run, as well as items that are printed in much smaller numbers. Are publications with small print runs profitable? Carsten Buhr: We don’t just produce books that are profitable; we also publish books that are important and that enrich our portfolio.

How do you decide on prices and print runs? Carsten Buhr: 70 per cent of our publications form part of series. This provides us with useful statistics on past performance that we can use to estimate future sales potential in a relatively accurate manner.

How many publications do you produce each year? Anke Beck: We publish over 1,300 books each year. And they all land on my desk at some stage. (Laughs.) However, there are a lot of routine projects. Then I just have to say: “Yes, that’s fine”. If, for example, the question arises whether the next book with the Institute of Contemporary
History should be in some series or other—then the decision is quite straightforward. Of course, we also work together closely with Sales, Marketing and Production, and our publications are evaluated in our so-called project conferences according to the following criteria: Is the title suitable? Are the print run and the price appropriate? What is the profit margin? And other criteria are considered too.

Is speed important when publishing research findings? Is there a point in time when you think, oh dear, if I don’t publish this now, somebody else is going to be first to report their discovery?

Carsten Buhr: Things can move very quickly in the natural sciences. In mathematics and in the humanities in general, you don’t have to think in terms of days, as academic findings don’t tend to come as quickly in these fields.

Anke Beck: We have already had a book project that took 110 years—the “Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum”, an Academy of Sciences project that aimed to document all Latin inscriptions. This project passed through the hands of three generations of researchers. The results of their work will probably hold for another 110 years. In the natural sciences and technology, things are as Carsten has already described: “publish or perish”. Things have to proceed very quickly here.

And just how quickly is that?

Anke Beck: This can be overnight in electronic form once we have a positive review, or six weeks in printed form.

Carsten Buhr: A larger book project generally takes three years—from the initial idea, through to the signing of contracts, reviewing, revision and publication. Things move significantly more quickly in the case of journal articles.

Anke Beck: Some things can of course not be planned. If something new has been discovered in a particular research area or if another researcher publishes on a particular subject, this also has to be taken into account. Nonetheless, we have to insist that deadlines are kept to. For this reason, an editor must display a lot of psychological sensitivity. Researchers are not primarily motivated by money. Instead, they are concerned with the importance of their findings and with questions such as: “Am I making a new contribution to this area?”, “Will people read my article?”, and “Will I be cited?”.

What are the economic objectives of your publishing company?

Carsten Buhr: We want to grow the company significantly. We also want to make it more profitable than it is currently. De Gruyter is doing well, but we think the company should expand overall. It makes no difference in terms of workflows whether you publish ten or twenty books, but it is more profitable to publish twenty. For this reason, it would be beneficial if the company grew. However, you have to find the right balance between growth, consolidation and streamlining.

What motivates a highly qualified researcher to publish research results with you?

Anke Beck: Good service and expertise in all areas, starting with editing and going right through to the departments of Information and Publication Technology, Production, Marketing, and Sales. We have a very good international reach through our globally organized sales team alone, and also as a result of our good online findability, our visibility in abstracting and indexing services, and the ability to use data for research purposes thanks to research-friendly user licenses.

Carsten Buhr: Excellent researchers publish with us because we regard ourselves as partners for the academic community—that is the core issue here.

If each of you had to pick two particularly interesting publications from your company that capture the full range of its products, what would they be?

Carsten Buhr: On the one hand, Crelle’s “Journal für die reine und angewandte Mathematik”, a very well-known mathematics journal. Hardcore mathematics, to use the term that Anke introduced earlier. And, at the other end of the spectrum, perhaps “Pschyrembel”, which laypeople also have at home on their bookshelves. One is very specialized, while the other is very general.

And a tip for a present published by your company?

Anke Beck: I would choose “Variantenwörterbuch des Deutschen”. I like to take this book with me if I am on business in Switzerland, for example. It is a dictionary of regional variations used in German. Søren Kierkegaard’s “Journals and Notebooks” would also be of interest to a lot of people. They are full of pearls of wisdom and are enjoyable to read. On the other hand, “Sonographische Pränataldiagnostik” (i.e. Sonographic Prenatal Diagnosis) is not exactly an ideal birthday present.

Carsten Buhr: We also publish “Das Fußballstrafrecht des Deutschen Fußball-Bundes”, i.e. the Football Criminal Law of the German Football Association. That might be a good present for some people.

What do you do to relax outside of your work?

Anke Beck: I have a husband and a daughter, and they keep me on my toes, and I also have a large, active circle of friends. I also make the most of everything Berlin has to offer as the cultural capital of Germany—whether by going to a concert, the opera or an exhibition.

Carsten Buhr: I exercise quite a lot, and I like to cook at the weekends.

Anke Beck: I can’t cook. I prefer to eat what others have cooked and then I do the washing-up. (Laughs.)
The founder of the publishing company, the graduate philologist Walter de Gruyter, showed considerable foresight when he combined five academic publishing companies into one publishing house in 1918. He carried out this fusion “in order to be financially resilient and to be productive for the academic community”. Almost 100 years and numerous publisher acquisitions later, the success of De Gruyter has demonstrated the correctness of his original concept.

The company’s long tradition of publishing first-class academic information and literature dates back to 1749. The company’s backlist is not just a collection of theoretical knowledge, but also a living, tangible history. At the company’s headquarters on Genthiner Strasse in Berlin, both of these elements—tradition and the future, the twin poles that define the company’s range and aims—are visible: library bookcases that are several meters high from the early 20th century coexist with spacious modern offices. Thin volumes, weighty encyclopedias, bound journals and editions from three centuries characterize the appearance of our headquarters just as much as the attractive, modernized architecture of this Wilhelminian era building. The seating arrangements in the inner courtyard encourage employees to sit down and exchange information in an informal manner. International, experienced and highly qualified staff lend a colorful, modern face to our academic literature both externally and internally.

In the last ten years in particular, De Gruyter has actively helped to shape the future of academic publishing. For example, since 2008, De Gruyter has made every printed book available as a digital e-book too. Thanks to comprehensive retro-digitalization projects, works that were previously unavailable can now be accessed again. Every book in De Gruyter’s backlist, which dates back to 1749, is now available for purchase again on demand. In total, 50,000 titles from over 260 years of publishing history are available.

In the promising market of Open Access publications, De Gruyter became the third-largest international Open Access publisher thanks to the acquisition of Versita in 2012. In the area of Open Access publications, De Gruyter thus also publishes excellent, quality-assured information that is freely available to researchers across all boundaries.

A total of 50,000 titles are available, going back over 260 years of the publishing house’s history.

With its newly opened offices in Beijing, De Gruyter is responding to the global demands of internationalization and change. The office in the US has been relocated from New York City to Boston and is now close to the renowned universities of MIT and Harvard. Cooperation and direct exchange with researchers and authors, providers of ideas and stimuli and the engineers and visionaries of our time are the foundations of a modern publishing house.

De Gruyter is committed to the communication of valuable research content. To achieve this, systematic brand management, optimal service, innovative solutions, efficiency and global identification and promotion of academic ideas for the benefit of all customers are necessary. Our employees, who will tell in the following pages of their daily work and their enthusiasm for research, are dedicated to attaining these goals.

The De Gruyter group publishes around 1,300 new titles each year in the areas of humanities, economics and social sciences, natural sciences, medicine and law, as well as over 800 subscription and Open Access specialist journals and a range of digital products. Titles from strategic sales partnerships with internationally renowned academic publishers add to our range of products.

De Gruyter’s program is conceived, created, produced and marketed by dedicated people: by subject-specialist editors who ensure first-class, innovative publications with their ideas, concepts and contacts and who provide reliable guidance to authors along the path from manuscript through to publication; by keen calculators, thorough employees who never lose sight of the financial side of things; by helpful service staff who always have an answer to every question; and by marketing and sales experts who ensure that our valuable contents are visible and can be used all around the world.

Our mission is the dissemination of valuable scientific content.

“We are the people in the background. We further improve the work of our authors and always give them a reason to publish with us. The next time too.” This is how Alex Greene, Senior Editorial Director at De Gruyter in Boston, puts it. This brochure focuses on twelve of these people. In their daily work, however, they are always concerned primarily with research content.
Ulrike Engel completed a degree as a librarian at Freie Universität Berlin in 1994 with a final thesis entitled: “Auswahlkriterien für den Einsatz eines integrierten EDV-Systems in öffentlichen Bibliotheken (Selection criteria for the use of an integrated IT system in public libraries)”. Ulrike Engel currently manages the De Gruyter website and all digital De Gruyter products, databases, apps and other new developments.

“I have always been very interested in information—what it is, how it is communicated, what you can do with it. These issues were one of my motivations when deciding what to study. When I started my degree as a librarian, the whole area of online research in databases was just taking off and the new potential of digital tools was fascinating right from the start.

I am now responsible for databases at De Gruyter and for the De Gruyter Online platform. When we developed this website in 2010, our strategy was clear: the user should be able to visit us at a single location on the Internet and find everything that De Gruyter publishes—regardless of the product type—along with further information and service topics. Essentially, my work still concerns the issues of how to structure and provide information in such a way that it can be used by students, researchers, librarians or other end users. For example, one great thing about online databases is that you can create content-related interdependencies that were previously unthought of—since the data can be searched using given criteria, very different sources can be placed in a common context.

What I find particularly fascinating at De Gruyter is the number of different subject areas that I can come into contact with. Consider the example of databases once again: we have developed products in the areas of linguistics, philosophy, law and ancient studies here in recent years. In each case, you have to adapt to the approach of the specific subject area and discuss the contents, particular features and methods of each area with specialists, authors and editors in order to create an innovative product that is useful and user-friendly for researchers in each area.

The main prerequisite for my work at De Gruyter is an ability to think in a problem-oriented manner and to search independently for creative solution approaches to the diverse range of challenges presented every day in my working area. Goal-oriented, efficient organization combined with teamwork skills, broad-mindedness, empathy and flexibility are useful assets in my job.”

A De Gruyter recommendation for everyone: Der Literarische Expressionismus Online (Datenbank)
Alex Greene’s career started in college textbook sales, followed by editorial positions starting as Editor and progressing through Editorial Director at various renowned academic publishers in the United States and Europe before joining De Gruyter in 2013. Alex is based in Boston and was initially responsible for the STM program for the Americas. Since 2014, he has been head of Journal Business Development at De Gruyter.

“I love science. All of my private magazine subscriptions are from the area of science and technology. I like being current about what research is new and developing, and I like knowing what researchers think will be important 15 to 20 years in the future. Some of the prerequisites for my work and that of my colleagues are: enthusiasm, understanding markets in which we publish, being curious about research, and having the capacity to learn from the many scientists and researchers we interact with.

Part of my job is to find and publish the results of those working on the frontiers of science. For example, I was once the only representative from a publishing house invited to a conference at Berkeley — I think this was around the turn of the millennium. I listened to the presentations and the subsequent discussions. A researcher from MIT spoke about harvesting energy from the body to power medical devices, for example. From this point on I followed developments in this area and, years later, I had an opportunity to get to know a distinguished individual in the field who wanted to start a journal on this topic.

This is where my role came into play. This person had great ideas for the journal but they needed a little tweaking in order to broaden the potential of the journal. Thanks to my experience, I as a publisher was able to identify other closely related subjects, sound out market opportunities, suggest other individuals from related areas for the editorial board, and turn an initial idea into a larger, more relevant concept.

This idea, which had its origins back at Berkeley, ultimately resulted in my first journal at De Gruyter, which is entitled ‘Energy Harvesting and Systems: Materials, Mechanisms, Circuits & Storage’.

In today’s world, it is important to be aware of multi-disciplinary research areas. More researchers collaborate across fields than previously. Journals are the bridges that connect researcher to researcher, and bring overlapping fields together.

When I have time, I enjoy playing chess and keeping active — mainly by practicing yoga, exercising or going running. I also like to swing dance with my wife.”

A De Gruyter recommendation for everyone: Information Technology for Patient Empowerment in Healthcare; Hrsg. v. Grando, Maria Adela / Rozenblum, Ronen / Bates, David
Jennifer Mand grew up in the United States surrounded by books—after all, her mother was a librarian! Her university education demonstrated that she feels at home in more than one culture: she first completed a bachelor’s degree in German and psychology at St. Norbert College in De Pere, Wisconsin, USA, and then went to study at WWU Münster in Germany. Her first professional challenge was to organize a conference with 120 biophysicists from all over the world at the university. As a result, she already knew what it is like to work with leading international researchers when she joined De Gruyter in 2000.

“At De Gruyter, I organize the processes in Editorial. I cooperate very closely with other departments such as Production and Data Quality on the analysis, optimization and—ultimately—implementation of workflows. In practice, this means that I am often a troubleshooting who intervenes when processes are not running as smoothly as they should. I am also involved in many projects that deal with processes that affect a number of departments. For example, we are currently working very hard on what we call the book workflow, which concerns the lifecycle of a given publication from acquisition right through to inventory management. Who needs what information by when, and who is responsible for this? How can we organize ourselves in such a way that all departments have the information they require at a given point in time, and how can we structure the overall workflow in an efficient manner?

During my time at De Gruyter, I have been learning new things and developing on a continuous basis—particularly because the publishing industry has been undergoing profound transformations for a number of years now. My job remains an exciting one: every project is different and presents new challenges. Very important to me are change and the developments that I have experienced in our sector and, in particular, with other people. To me, not losing your sense of humor is an essential part of everyday work.

When I came to Germany from the USA, I only intended to stay for two months. However, those two months have turned into 20 years. Living in another country opens up a lot of new prospects, particularly in this academic environment. Topics that you never thought much about before or that appear self-evident—such as your native dialect—become the subject of research publications at De Gruyter. The contents (books, journals) that form part of the workflow in my job are also the results of a researcher’s passion and are of major intellectual value. It is important not to lose sight of this.”

A De Gruyter recommendation for everyone:

"14 Grafikerinnen im Wien des 20. Jahrhunderts — Exaktheit der Zeichnung und Farbe mit echt wienerischem Charme ..."; Resch, Heidelinde
Franziska Bühring, who has a degree in publishing production, has been responsible for the preparation of technical standards for books, journals and e-products at De Gruyter since 2010. In her spare time, Franziska Bühring is a keen photographer and also writes for a Berlin music magazine.

“I like to compare my job to a building. We define the basic structure, specify how the entry and exit will look, design the access routes between them, and decide what will be placed in the building. When applied to our business, this means that my team creates standards for books and journals in both printed and electronic formats. We specify uniform rules for the various processes and formats. We define layout rules, digital formats, and identify the information required for each publication and the form this information must be provided in. Our De Gruyter products are standardized to a large extent. There are only three different book formats and two formats for journals. This helps us to optimize the production conditions and, at the same time, to maintain high quality levels. We also have to ensure that digital products remain accessible and usable in the context of continuous technological development. We achieve this by using medium-neutral formats with a high level of compatibility for users worldwide.

In the case of academic publications, the aim is not just to produce a well-designed book; instead, the focus here is on a suitable method of communicating the contents, which are often very complex. Ultimately, the difference between an esthetically pleasing and a highly intelligent product lies in the conveying of complexity using content-related structures. I find it exciting that there are always new challenges. Currently, for example, a journal becomes more useful and valuable if the main authors are listed in digital form. For this reason, we have to develop a standard for the use of this information. Thus, we ensure that these and other requirements are implemented by adapting the relevant guidelines. Currently, we are developing a workflow for e-only products in cooperation with other departments. The combination of our products and our technological challenges is a perfect match for me. When I was a child, I read a lot, and I had a library card before I could read at all. At the same time, I was always fascinated by technology. I wanted access to the Internet as soon as I understood what it was. I was always very good at computer science. I don’t have to do a lot of programming, but it is important for our work that we understand how things work and interact in principle.”

A De Gruyter recommendation for everyone: „We Are Not Amused – Failed Humor in Interaction”; Bell, Nancy
Christopher Radloff, born in Neubrandenburg, felt it was time to return closer to his beloved Baltic Sea after studying industrial engineering in Basel and Santa Barbara and working for a few years in Frankfurt. Since 2014, he has been living on the outskirts of Berlin with his family and has been the head of Finance at De Gruyter.

“At De Gruyter, my team and I are responsible for providing information to the company so that it can take decisions that are backed up by numerical data. For example, we are responsible for budget planning and reporting to management, specialist departments, the Advisory Board and banks. In general, I would say that we ‘number crunchers’ have to make sure that we earn enough money with ‘academic activity’ and that the publishing company remains profitable and competitive in the long term. Even though I work with numbers every day, theoretical mathematics is too complicated and far removed from reality for me. Coming up with ways to structure reporting in such a way that it is informative and easy to understand is also a creative task, in my opinion. I really enjoy doing this. However, I don’t just get my ideas when sitting at my desk; they also come to me when I am out jogging, cycling, playing tennis or training for long-distance runs or triathlons. This activity helps keep me in balance—psychologically, and physically too. You also get to practice self-discipline, and I definitely need that! After all, finance is a type of endurance sport, in which you might also do an extra round.

Thanks to my work at De Gruyter, I have also got back into reading. I spend two hours in commuting by train every day and I use this time to read. This is something I had previously neglected for years. This is also a nice side effect of my work at De Gruyter.”

A De Gruyter recommendation for everyone: Pschyrembel Klinisches Wörterbuch; Founded by Pschyrembel, Willibald
After training in book retailing, as a nurse and studying to become a teacher, Martina Näkel joined De Gruyter in 2007. Since 2012, she has been the head of the sales team for Germany/Austria/Switzerland, which is De Gruyter’s biggest market in terms of turnover.

“Over the last years, I have been a part of the exciting developments that have seen our company grow from being a publishing house with a proud history to become a supplier of electronic media. We have managed to find our feet in this very fast-moving market and to establish a reputation as an innovative and ground-breaking provider in the area of humanities with our digital content and business models. Nobody is able to say for sure just how academic media and purchasing structures will change in the coming years. Alongside our primary task of marketing our products, it is also very important for the sales team to have our ‘ears wide open’ towards the marketplace through good, long-standing contacts with our customers. We also act as intermediaries between libraries and publisher and, in this way, can report back to the company on trends and developments that could affect our strategic focus. It is a great job to visit libraries, trade fairs and congresses and market our products as a representative—in the truest sense of the word—of a publishing house with such a long, illustrious history. It is also a great honor to be accepted as a respected partner in professional discussions with customers. In my opinion, continuity in terms of relationships and dependability as regards the services we offer are the cornerstones of success in my work. My team and I try to put this theory into practice.

In my free time, I like to travel, particularly in Italy, and my favorite place in Berlin is our allotment garden—although I don’t get to spend as much time there as I would like. For this reason, the plants there have to be a little like me: robust and not too demanding.

I am looking forward to the developments that will occur in academic publishing in the years to come. I think it is fair to assume that there will be far-reaching changes. I find this very exciting. When I went to school, we still used slates, so I am not really afraid of or shocked by anything when it comes to progress. (Laughs)

A De Gruyter recommendation for everyone: Handbücher zur Sprach- und Kommunikationswissenschaft (Handbooks of Linguistics and Communication)
After training in book selling, Tanja Schneider studied literature in Bonn and worked part-time as a bookseller. She started as an intern at De Gruyter in 2005 and was subsequently taken on as a permanent employee in the marketing department. Today, Tanja Schneider is the Marketing Manager in the Campaign Team, with a focus on trade and practical books.

“When I was young, I used to spend all my pocket money on books. Collecting books was my major passion for a long time, particularly when I was working in bookstores. I now prefer to borrow books from libraries, as my bookshelves at home are simply too full! Sometimes, I even give books that I have bought and read to libraries. In this way, someone else can enjoy the book too!

I think it is a very logical step to move from book selling into marketing at a publishing house. After all, selling content, no matter in which format, is still the name of the game. I find the diversity of subjects and the internationality at De Gruyter very exciting. The demands made of a marketing department are very varied. For example, the Staudinger legal commentaries with almost 100 volumes still have to be sold the same way that smaller specialist publications do. In the Campaign Team, we work with De Gruyter’s entire portfolio every day—from print editions, e-books and journals, right through to online databases. We develop campaigns that are adapted for the relevant target audiences and that have to work on the appropriate media and channels, both online and offline. When I joined the company, De Gruyter had 250 new publications each year, 60 specialist journals, and three or four digital media. The corresponding figures today are: 1,300 new publications, over 800 specialist journals and more than 50 databases.

This job is incredibly stimulating, and we get to move from one subject area to the next – from medicine or architecture to law, for example. When I pick up my children after work and my son gets excited about a bird or a garbage collection truck, then it’s nice to pause for a moment and get back into life’s slow lane.”

A De Gruyter recommendation for everyone:
Osterer, Heidrun + Stamm, Philipp / Adrian Frutiger Schriften, Das Gesamtwerk; Edited by Schweizerische Stiftung Schrift und Typographie / Birkhäuser
Michiel Klein-Swormink, whose background is in classical studies, is based in Boston and is responsible for De Gruyter’s range in Ancient Studies. In addition, he oversees the entire editorial team in Humanities and Social Sciences. Since his youth, he has kept his mind keen by practicing martial arts: to him, karate is not just a matter of physical fitness, but an attitude to life too.

“I regard myself very much as a publisher. In my work, I let our excellent editors and researchers take care of the contents of our publications. What is important to me is the overarching idea: to find the successful publication formats for challenging intellectual concepts and contents. One example that I am very proud of is the encyclopedia of Latin that we are currently working on. It will be the first comprehensive reference work that organizes and indexes the contents of publications such as grammar books, handbooks and monographs. Today, we are increasingly concerned with organizing and rendering accessible the entire knowledge of single subject areas. For example, I am currently working on a type of academic Wikipedia or information service for ancient studies. A digital platform like this would be enormously helpful for academics and students in this field worldwide. There is also the idea of an online forum for academic articles instead of a set publication form such as a journal with a defined number of issues and pages. These are the directions that my ideas for the future are going in.

Maybe this is also a potential way of getting young people interested in ancient studies: by opening up the ancient for the new! Even back when I was an eleven-year-old schoolboy, I found it incredibly fascinating that you can get to know an entire culture, history, philosophy, art, and—in short—another world through the medium of a language. My gifted teacher at the time made Caesar so vivid to us that we read about the Gallic Wars as if we were reading an adventure novel.

At home, we try to pass on a lot of culture to our children. My wife is Russian and an archaeologist, I am Dutch, and our children are growing up in America, but in a home where there is great emphasis on European culture.”

A De Gruyter recommendation for everyone: Liebesgedichte / Amores; Edited by Holzberg, Niklas, Series: Sammlung Tusculum
Agata Morka studied art history in Lodz, Poland, and art management in Lille, France. The title of her doctoral thesis at the University of Washington, Seattle, was “Brief Encounters and Lasting Impressions: Place and Placelessness in Postwar French Railroad Architecture”. Since 2011 she has been working at Versita in Warsaw, an Open Access publisher that has been part of the De Gruyter group since 2012. Today, all Open Access content is published under the imprint De Gruyter Open.

“My enthusiasm for architecture can be easily explained. I love beautiful things. And I like things that work, that are real, and that you can touch and understand. I am also fascinated by cities and by big, sometimes crazy ideas. You can find all this in architecture. I am particularly drawn to train stations. I am always interested in the question: ‘What defines a given location?’ Is it just the architecture? On the one hand, train stations are very permanent, monumental buildings while, on the other, they are very open and permeable. I am fascinated by this hybrid function, positioned somewhere between solidity and fluidity. I have a great urge to move around. The thought of having to sit in a library all the time during my studies wouldn’t have been very attractive. Field research and traveling—that was my ideal combination. I love traveling by train. If I had to recommend a train journey, it would be the line between Perpignan in France and Barcelona because of the spectacular scenery. I also find it fascinating to take the night train from Paris to Berlin. Not for the beautiful scenery this time, but for the interesting late night conversations and sharing stories with fellow travelers.

I am responsible for the book program at De Gruyter Open. Every book is available as a digital Open Access product or in print-on-demand form. In my opinion, Open Access is the future. My education is a perfect example of the significance of Open Access. I studied in Poland and completed my master’s thesis on the Brazilian architect Oscar Niemeyer. It was very difficult to obtain specialist literature about him. Anybody who wishes to carry out research and study and publish in a country that does not have a well-funded library structure is dependent upon Open Access. This is almost a mission for me: to provide information with no limits on access. Open Access opens up communication and includes people who would otherwise be denied information. This potential to share will change all academic activity.”

A De Gruyter recommendation for everyone: Architectural Journal 1960 – 1975; Krier, Rob
Before joining De Gruyter in 1993, Harald Hoffmann first studied German and history and then tourism management, and had also worked for two years in an editorial capacity for the Travel and Leisure section of the ‘Berliner Morgenpost’ newspaper. During the same period, he also got a taste of theater life as a member of the ‘State Theater Company Berlin’ both as an extra and as an assistant to the director. Having initially worked at De Gruyter in the editorial department for Linguistics and Literary Studies for a number of years, he has been the head of Dispatch since 1996.

“I have an almost family-like relationship with our publishing company. This might be because I have been with the company so long! When I started, my first boss was the grandson of Walter de Gruyter. Initially, I was responsible for the editorial office and administrative affairs with authors in the newly founded area of Linguistics and Literary Studies. After two years, I switched to the Sales department—a move from upstream into downstream services, if you like. Editorial work is an example of upstream services here, while downstream refers the departments of Production, Sales and Dispatch. Twenty years on, I am still working in the latter area!

My baptism of fire was as project head for the introduction of external publishing company software and the associated outsourcing of our dispatch services. In retrospect, the technological and organizational changes and the subsequent acquisitions of national and international publishers over the last decade have had something of the nature of a cultural revolution for De Gruyter. When integrating newly acquired publishers, the challenges to be faced don’t just stop with logistical issues. Every publisher has its own particular character. This represents not just growth in terms of our range of publications; it is also exciting and stimulating to welcome new personnel on board. I feel like a bit of an entertainer and mediator here, which is hardly surprising for someone who spent 13 seasons at theaters in Berlin!

We are an academic publisher that has always faced up to the challenges of a rapidly changing media environment in a courageous and creative manner, while remaining true to the traditions established during over 260 years of publishing activity. For example, we have serial publications that have been in existence for over 150 years, and in this case ten years or more is a relatively insignificant period of time in the context of a given series. I am reminded here of a volume from the ‘Altertümer von Pergamon’ series that dealt with the city layout in Roman times. Shortly before the volume was supposed to go to press, fragments of a water pipeline were discovered during a dig. One result of this find was that publishing of the volume was delayed by almost three years. However, this is precisely the type of publication that our customers need and can wait for.”

A De Gruyter recommendation for everyone:
Bildkatalog der Skulpturen des Vatikanischen Museums, Museo Chiaramonti, 3 volumes
A PREOCCUPATION WITH ONE’S OWN IDENTITY.

Xingguo Shi

DIRECTOR OF REPRESENTATIVE OFFICE CHINA

Shi Xingguo grew up in southern China, studied German in Nanjing and Beijing, and worked as a proofreader and license manager for a number of Chinese publishers before becoming the head of the De Gruyter office in China in 2011.

“I chose German and German studies because I wanted to be able to speak a second foreign language alongside English. German culture is very well-regarded in China and I wanted to find out what was behind this culture. In 2001, I traveled to Germany for the first time to attend the Frankfurt Book Fair for a Chinese publisher. I met Anke Beck, who is now a Managing Director of De Gruyter, at the Beijing International Book Fair in 2010. A year later, she told me about De Gruyter’s plans to open an office in China. When she asked me if I knew anyone who would be interested in helping De Gruyter to establish its business in China, I had a very simple answer: ‘me!’ This is how I joined De Gruyter in 2011.

Initially, almost nobody in China was aware of De Gruyter. Together with colleagues from Berlin, I began by researching the academic community in China to find out which areas the market was growing in most quickly and where we could get involved. I then started to build up a network, to initiate cooperation projects with institutes and researchers, and to develop a strategy together with other staff members. Our first projects were linguistic projects with the China Academy of Social Sciences and the Commercial Press. The publishing brand De Gruyter Mouton — a successor of Mouton Publishers, which was taken over in 1977 — is very well-known in China. This provided me with a stepping stone, and we have now completed numerous projects in a variety of specialist areas. Our office in China has expanded and now has seven employees.

To me, my work is also a way of reflecting on my own identity. Very deliberate reflection on Chinese culture—particularly in comparison with another culture, such as German culture—is very useful in a country that is made up of so many different groups. What does the term Chinese mean? What makes us different? A lot of Chinese ask themselves these questions. Historical documents and all the sources available to us now give us access to our long history in a way that was denied to us for a long time. I really enjoy traveling, and you can learn a lot about yourself and the world in this way. My trip to Tibet was a particularly moving experience. This inaccessible and often not beautiful, but simply empty mountain landscape teaches us modesty and makes you very aware of your own fragility when compared with nature’s power.”

A De Gruyter recommendation for everyone: Geschichte Chinas 1279-1949 (The History of China, 1279-1949), Series: Oldenbourg Grundriss der Geschichte 35; Dabringhaus, Sabine
Urí Tadmor came to De Gruyter having previously taught linguistics and Indonesian language at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa, the University of Delaware, and Atma Jaya University in Jakarta, Indonesia. He was also coordinator of the Jakarta Field Station of the Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology. Since 2010, Uri Tadmor has been Editorial Director of the imprint at De Gruyter Mouton.

“I’ve been surrounded by various languages since my childhood. My parents and grandparents came from various parts of Europe. When we had lunch at my grandmother’s place she used to speak Serbian with my father, German with my mother, Hungarian with her sister, and Hebrew with us grandchildren. I was born in the United States, grew up in Israel, learnt French at school, and can understand German thanks to my grandmother. Somehow it was natural that I would work with languages. After studying linguistics in Israel, I wanted to work on contact languages such as pidgins and creoles. That’s why I chose the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa. For various reasons this didn’t work out, so I decided to study Indonesian instead, simply because it sounded exotic. This decision determined the course of the rest of my life. After finishing my PhD I taught Indonesian at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa and then I moved to Indonesia to establish and run the Jakarta Field Station of the Max Planck Institute. In this way, I became an expert on a language that I had decided to study on a whim.

An unintended bridge between my work as a linguist and as an editorial was a handbook entitled Loanwords in the World’s Languages that I edited with my colleague at Max Planck Institute, Martin Haspelmath. Martin had contacted Mouton when we were looking for a publisher. The book was published in December 2009, and two weeks later I started working at De Gruyter Mouton. This was an unusual but pretty cool coincidence.

During my term as Editorial Director at De Gruyter Mouton the number of our publications has tripled. This had to do with the organic growth of existing series and De Gruyter’s acquisitions of other publishers. But it’s also thanks to the contacts that I have been able to establish over the course of my career and that were now resulting in many great new projects. Our latest major publication is a grammar database for linguists called Enhanced Electronic Grammars or EEG. Previously, a researcher working on a linguistic feature—for example relative clauses or aspirated consonants—had to look up individual grammars of many languages. With the new EEG database the researcher can now simply do a search on ‘relative clauses’ or ‘aspirated consonants’ and instantly see how they are represented in numerous languages, complete with analyzed examples taken from actual corpora. The database contains information on small and endangered languages, so it is a dream-come-true tool for many linguists.”

A De Gruyter recommendation for everyone:

„The Amazing World of Englishes / A Practical Introduction” Series: Mouton Textbook; Siemund, Peter / Davydova, Julia / Maier, Georg
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DE GRUYTER OLDENBOURG publishes books, primarily monographs and textbooks, in the areas of history, business/economics, information technology and engineering. Oldenbourg can look back on 150 years of publishing history, and it has been part of the De Gruyter group since 2013.

DE GRUYTER OPEN is a leading publisher of Open Access academic content. It publishes over 450 journals and over 100 books every year in all disciplines. This imprint’s range is supported by the international academic community, including several Nobel Prize winners. De Gruyter Open aims to make the most important research findings freely accessible to researchers and the general public.

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