

Serving Libraries since 1872

- 1872** July 1: Otto Harrassowitz and Oscar Richter founded the company of Richter & Harrassowitz, Antiquariats- und Verlagsbuchhandlung, in Leipzig/Germany.
- 1874** Antiquariatskatalog 14 is issued, the first catalog entirely devoted to Asian and Oriental Studies.
- 1875** The partners separate. Otto Harrassowitz assumes single control of the company, now named OTTO HARRASSOWITZ.
- 1880** The export business to Scandinavia, Italy, the Balkan States is in full swing, covering largely German antiquarian books and imports from the Near East.
- 1882** On December 5, 1882, Justin Winsor, the Librarian of the Harvard College Library, writes to ask whether HARRASSOWITZ is ready to supply new German scholarly publications to the Widener Library. Otto Harrassowitz responds by return of mail and outlines his terms. This exchange develops into a close business association that is maintained to this day.
- 1884** In the wake of the purchase of the second-hand stock of Koehler's Antiquarium, the HARRASSOWITZ antiquarian activities concentrate on the Humanities and Social Sciences.
- 1884** HARRASSOWITZ publishes the newly founded "Zentralblatt fuer Bibliothekswesen". Beginning of the publishing activities in the subject of Books and Librarianship.
- 1885** A major increase of the contacts with North American libraries results in the foundation of an American Department at HARRASSOWITZ.
- 1897** At the 25th anniversary of the firm, more than 40 of the leading US research libraries have chosen HARRASSOWITZ as their supplier for current and antiquarian German publications. Our old coding system permits us to identify this group of "founding customers" of the HARRASSOWITZ Library Agency.

- 1901** HARRASSOWITZ first distributes, then publishes, the journal "Oriens Christianus". Asian and Oriental Studies are established as the major publishing activity.
- 1902** HARRASSOWITZ begins to publish the "Jahrbuch der deutschen Bibliotheken". Library Science becomes another key subject of the Publishing Section.
- 1908** Hans Harrassowitz, son of Otto, is the first representative of the firm to work and travel in the United States.
- 1915** Hans Harrassowitz takes over the directorship of the company from his father.
- 1915** When war actions block shipments from reaching North America, the standing order and journal issues for North American libraries are collected and stored until the end of the war.
- 1916** The University of Chicago Library entrusts a Blanket Order to HARRASSOWITZ to collect war materials, pamphlets, propaganda, ephemeral and fugitive materials. The Blanket Order concept is discussed controversially with the History Department on campus: "to give blanket orders to booksellers, as we have done in the case of Sotheran and Harrassowitz, is only safe where we have absolute faith in the good judgement and the absolute honesty of the dealer " (letter of J.C.M. Hanson, the Associate Librarian to the History Department of the University of Chicago, dated May 17, 1917).
- 1922** Antiquarian Catalog #392 (Tausend alte Drucke aus drei Jahrhunderten 1468-1772) is issued on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the company, at the height of inflation: The insert announces a 50% price increase for the items offered since the release of the catalog from the printers.
- 1923** Hans Harrassowitz travels to the United States to renew personal contacts and to negotiate new pricing policies for German books in the wake of the post-war economic situation in Germany.
- 1931** Publication of the first volume of the standard work: "Handbuch der Bibliothekswissenschaft", edited by Fritz Milkau and completed with the third volume by Georg Leyh in 1940 (2nd rev. edition, ed. by G. Leyh, 3 volumes in 4 parts, plus index volume, Wiesbaden 1955-1961).
- 1933** Karl Markert is forced to close his Slavica and Judaica Antiquariat Markert & Petters, joins HARRASSOWITZ, and becomes head of the Second-Hand Department. With his expertise, Slavic Studies turns into another key subject area in the HARRASSOWITZ antiquarian and publishing activities.

- 1936** A Richard W. Dorn joins the company as head of the department serving libraries in China.
- 1939** After the outbreak of World War II shipments go to libraries overseas as long as loopholes via Switzerland, Portugal, and Bermuda can be used. Once the embargo tightens, standing order and subscription materials are again collected and stored in countryside locations through the end of the war.
- 1941** HARRASSOWITZ shipments are screened by the authorities. Hans Harrassowitz receives an official reprimand for having distributed catalogs (Aschehoug/Oslo & Munksgard/Kopenhagen) that advertise works of Jewish authors, such as Vicky Baum, Lion Feuchtwanger, Hermann Kesten, Franz Werfel, Stefan Zweig, and Jakob Wassermann (letter of the Reichsschrifttumskammer of 30.10.41, copy to the Staatssicherheitsdienst).
- 1943** The offices of the company are totally destroyed in the air raid of the night of December 4, and so is the entire antiquarian and publisher's stock of close to a million volumes. Hans Harrassowitz continues to operate the firm out of his private apartment.
- 1945** Immediately after World War II, the Library of Congress Mission takes over the war-time stock of standing orders and subscriptions and, as part of the LC Cooperative Acquisitions Project, arranges for redistribution of the materials to research libraries in the USA.
- 1947** Hans Harrassowitz commissions Richard W. Dorn to establish a branch of the company in Wiesbaden in the American Zone after it became apparent that international trading arrangements could not be maintained from the Leipzig location.
- 1947** Otto Albrecht of the Music Faculty of the University of Pennsylvania, in his capacity as Cultural Officer of the US Military Branch in the American Zone, authorizes the establishment of HARRASSOWITZ in Wiesbaden.
- 1948** The word gets around. The first letter from the States reaches Wiesbaden even before the opening of the office has been announced, signed by Mr. John Fall, Chief of the Acquisitions Division of the New York Public Library (letter of Jan. 29, 1948).
- 1949** The Wiesbaden Office gains momentum fast. Felix O. Weigel joins Richard W. Dorn and revives the antiquarian and the Asian/Oriental Studies activities.

- 1950** Mr. Keyes Metcalf, Harvard Librarian, visits Wiesbaden and assigns the German Farmington Plan to HARRASSOWITZ. Other American Research libraries immediately contract individualized Secondary Subject Assignments with HARRASSOWITZ, including return privileges, thus, in effect, creating the first approval plans for German publications with HARRASSOWITZ.
- 1951** The East German authorities in Leipzig use a legal excuse to close and expropriate the company. The sections of the company are incorporated into newly established state controlled firms, such as Buch Export, Zentralantiquariat, VEB Bibliographisches Institut, and Verlag Enzyklopädie. The name of HARRASSOWITZ disappears in Leipzig in 1955. The legal decision was only revoked after unification in 1996.
- 1953** Richard W. Dorn makes his first trip to North America to reestablish the personal contacts with U.S. and Canadian libraries.
- 1954** Wilfred Becker Jr. joins the company and assumes the responsibility for the financial management.
- 1955** Wilfred Becker Sr. joins the company as partner and managing director.
- 1958** Richard W. Dorn travels to Australia as the first European bookseller to do so. All Australian university libraries become customers of HARRASSOWITZ. The same happens with New Zealand libraries a couple of years later.
- 1959** The German Government Foundation, Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft, initiates the long-term project by which an inventory is drawn up of the manuscript and incunabula holdings of German libraries. The Publishing House of HARRASSOWITZ is assigned the responsibility for these catalogs.
- 1960** Throughout the 1960s, additional Approval Plan contracts are negotiated with U.S. libraries for publications from Germany, Austria, and Switzerland, beyond the original Farmington Plan assignments.
- 1964** Knut Dorn joins the company for Customer Services and Marketing. He upgrades and refines cooperation with U.S. libraries in the areas of Approval Plans and Collection Development.
- 1964** After the death of Hans Harrassowitz, his wife, Gertrud Harrassowitz, inherits his share of the company. The company is restructured to form a partnership with Gertrud Harrassowitz, Wilfred Becker Sr., Richard W. Dorn, and Felix O. Weigel as partners and managing directors.
- 1965** Wilfred Becker Jr. is accepted into the partnership.

- 1966** The Library of Congress assigns the Title II responsibility for German publications to HARRASSOWITZ and establishes a Field Office in Wiesbaden to organize the Shared Cataloging Project between LC, the Deutsche Bibliothek in Frankfurt, and HARRASSOWITZ. Current German books are supplied to LC with the cataloging information established in the Wiesbaden Field Office.
- 1966** Antiquarian Catalog 500 is released: "Orientalische Handschriften: Türkische, Persische und Arabische MSS des 14.-19. Jahrhunderts".
- 1970** HARRASSOWITZ extends its library services to include full coverage of European research publications, books and journals, in all fields.
- 1971** The Music Department, established in 1968, receives the first approval orders for European music scores from SUNY Buffalo and Northwestern University. Many other music libraries in North America join in on the program.
- 1972** Knut Dorn is accepted into the partnership and assumes the responsibility for the Library Services.
- 1978** HARRASSOWITZ establishes a service and contact office in the United States.
- 1980** A decade begins in which HARRASSOWITZ extends its role of a Subscription Agency servicing European SCI/TECH/MED journals to Academic and Research Libraries all over the world.
- 1982** The 100th anniversary of the business relationship between HARVARD and HARRASSOWITZ is celebrated in the Widener Library.
- 1983** Mrs. Gertrud Harrassowitz, the last bearer of the name of the company founder, passes away.
- 1984** The Publishing Department of HARRASSOWITZ and the Herzog August Bibliothek in Wolfenbüttel initiate a cooperative venture by which HARRASSOWITZ is entrusted with the distribution of the library's research publications on Baroque and Renaissance Studies.
- 1986** The archives of the Newberry Library identify the exact date (September 24, 1887) when the first order was placed with HARRASSOWITZ very shortly after the foundation of the library. The first two European booksellers of the Newberry, Stevens & Brown and HARRASSOWITZ, celebrate the 100th anniversary with the library staff in Chicago.
- 1986** Friedemann Weigel joins the company as partner, assuming the responsibility of the Information Systems Director.

- 1990** Ruth Becker joins the company as partner, assuming the responsibility of the Accounting Director.
- 1990** A decade begins in which HARRASSOWITZ extends its subscription services to include North American journals and journals published anywhere in the world. HARRASSOWITZ successfully moves from a European agent to a truly globally operating subscription agent.
- 1992** As a full project member of EDILIBE (Electronic Data Interchange for Libraries and Booksellers in Europe), HARRASSOWITZ actively participates in the design and development of UN/EDIFACT based standards for book EDI transactions between libraries and booksellers.
- 1994** OttoSerials, the HARRASSOWITZ online serials program is introduced. Through OttoSerials, free user-friendly access is provided to the entire HARRASSOWITZ serials database and to the customer service module for the library standing orders and subscriptions.
- 1995** In close cooperation with EDItEUR, the EDI standards for the complete cycle of monograph transactions are implemented by HARRASSOWITZ.
- 1996** The City Court of Leipzig officially declares that the expropriation and dissolution of the company of HARRASSOWITZ / Leipzig enforced by the former East German authorities in 1951 has not had any legal base.
- 1996** HARRASSOWITZ creates the company's Home Page.
- 1997** HARRASSOWITZ partners with HighWire Press, the Internet Imprint of the Stanford University Libraries, with the common aim in mind to employ web-based technologies to improve scholarly communication.
- 1997** HARRASSOWITZ celebrates the 125th anniversary and releases the announcement on E-journal Services.
- 1997** In a festive commemoration, Harvard remembers the year 1872: The 125 year anniversary of HARRASSOWITZ which coincides with their 115 year association with our company, as well as the establishing of the first formal Chair of German Language and Literature at Harvard 125 years ago.
- 1999** OCLC accepts HARRASSOWITZ records for inclusion in WorldCat.

- 2000** HARRASSOWITZ releases the first version of OttoEditions, the online database for monographs and music scores, launched with web based searching, library ordering, and claiming functions.
- 2000** A decade begins in which HARRASSOWITZ extends its subscription services to include electronic journals on a comprehensive basis. The company is accepted by libraries as a reliable partner in matters of e-resources management issues.
- 2001** RLG accepts HARRASSOWITZ records into the RLIN database.
- 2003** As part of a long-term business perspective, HARRASSOWITZ moves to a new custom-designed building complex on Kreuzberger Ring in the suburb of Wiesbaden-Erbenheim.
- 2005** OttoSerials, the HARRASSOWITZ online database for serials and continuations has been upgraded. OttoSerials is entirely webbased and represents HARRASSOWITZ' online management system for periodicals and standing orders.
- 2005** HARRASSOWITZ defines its service lines for the management of electronic resources by collecting and bundling the targeted features in HERMIS 4.0, the agenda for HARRASSOWITZ Electronic Resources Management and Information Solutions.
- 2007** HARRASSOWITZ is ISO 9001:2000 certified in regard to its Quality Management System. This enables us to develop our entire range of library services for scholarly books and periodicals to university and research libraries worldwide according to strict quality and service orientated guidelines.
- 2009** HARRASSOWITZ is entrusted with the world wide distribution of Parker Library on the Web, an interactive, web-based workspace designed to support the use and study of the manuscripts in the historic Parker Library at Corpus Christi College, Cambridge. It is a foundation funded cooperative enterprise for which Cambridge University did the scanning of the images and provided the scholarly research and Stanford University developed the technology and the business model. Parker Library on the Web is a live project that is committed to the continuing update of the bibliography and the ongoing upgrade of functionalities to keep pace with new database technology developments.
- 2010** After a decade of successful handling of e-journals HARRASSOWITZ has included e-books into its portfolio. The HARRASSOWITZ database OttoEditions provides the underpinning for e-book work processes such as bibliographical searching, identification of aggregators as well as firm order and approval plan acquisition options.



HARRASSOWITZ

service | quality | integrity

- 2011** Nadja Dorn-Lange is accepted into the partnership of HARRASSOWITZ and assumes the responsibility for the book departments and the personnel management of the Library Service Departments.
- 2016** Fokus, the next-generation management system for subscriptions and standing orders, replaces OttoSerials. The new system utilizes graphical displays and a state-of-the-art search engine in a workflow-driven, intuitive user environment.
- 2020** HARRASSOWITZ integrates OttoEditions with Fokus and enhances features in order to provide our customers with one interface for Monographs, Music Scores, Standing Orders, and Subscriptions.
- 2022** Established in 1872, HARRASSOWITZ has been serving libraries around the world for 150 years.
- 2025** HARRASSOWITZ introduces the integration of OA Switchboard data into *Fokus*.