The Dragon’s dilemmas
Moderation: Maximilian G. Burkhart und Martin Thurau

When will China overtake the West? Economist Dalia Marin and sinologist Hans van Ess discuss the limits to growth in a country with 1.3 billion inhabitants and the serious problems China now faces. For the complete article, see www.en.lmu.de/news/insightlmu/2013/03_01.pdf

“What’s inside

Research

The Dragon’s dilemmas 1
Making sense of digital information 3
Playing it by ear 3
Candidate vaccine passes first test 3

People

The career path of a contemporary eclectic 4
Echoes of Hogwarts at LMU 5

In Short

New openings for graduate medical research 6
Research award for Professor Viatcheslav Mukhanov 6
LMU student helps secure European title 6

Summer School in “The Movement’s Capital” by Kathrin Bilgeri

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The career path of a contemporary eclectic by Elizabeth Willoughby

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He spent his early years with gorillas in the jungle, then he and his friend Harry Potter battled Lord Voldemort, and he lost Bella, the love of his life, to a vampire. LMU student Max Felder has inhabited all of these characters, giving each his own distinctive voice. continued on page 5

More news on LMU Munich at www.en.lmu.de/news
Summer School in “The Movement’s Capital”

by Kathrin Bilgeri

Munich was a bastion of National Socialism, and the city’s archives possess rich holdings of documentary material relating to the Holocaust. Twenty-five history students from European countries, the US and Israel spent their summer in Munich to learn how to use and interpret these sources.

In the faded photograph one sees about 10 people gathered in front of the Dammtor railway station in Hamburg. All have lots of luggage, and are obviously about to set off on a journey. The photo, taken at the end of October 1941, was at first interpreted as showing victims of the first deportation of Jews from Hamburg, says Jürgen Matthäus from the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, DC. But the students at the daily wrap-up meeting in the seminar room on Amalienstrasse are skeptical. No one in the photo is wearing the infamous Judenstern, the emblem which Jews were obliged to display in public at this time. – And would deportees have had so much baggage with them? Matthäus nods in agreement, and suggests that the image may well show some of the 44 people who were resettled at this time after their homes had been destroyed in bombing raids.

The students learn that historical sources must be critically analyzed, their origins and contexts elucidated, and claims must be based on verifiable evidence. In addition to junior researchers – from BA graduates to PhD students – from the US and Israel, who are attending the LMU Summer School on “German Sources and Archives of the Holocaust”, the class includes young European students who are taking part in a Summer School organized by the European Holocaust Research Infrastructure (ERHI) Network and coordinated by the Center for Holocaust Studies at the Institute for Contemporary History Munich (Institut für Zeitgeschichte, IZ), which is cooperating closely with LMU on a new initiative to establish Holocaust Studies as an academic field in Munich.

The joint venture is being led by renowned specialists. “It really is a great experience to somewhat bridge the geographical gap and talk with prestigious faculty such as Christopher Browning from North America about my PhD project,” remarks Jack Woods. Woods will embark on his PhD thesis, entitled “The Role and Function of Rumours in the Lodz and Warsaw Ghettoes”, in September at St. Andrews University in Scotland.

“For young Holocaust researchers, work in the archives is absolutely essential.”

The students also pick up very practical knowledge on the kinds of material that can be found in Munich and neighboring archives and on how one can make the best use of it in one’s own research. In groups of five, the course participants fan out for the local archives – the Central Bavarian State Archive or the Archive of the Archdiocese of Munich, for instance. They later report their findings to the whole class. Of course, the basic prerequisite for the study of the archival sources is the ability to read the originals, says Professor Wendy Lower, initiator of the LMU Summer School and of the Center of Holocaust Studies in Munich. “So we also offer our students an intensive four-week German course,” she adds. Frances Tanzer from Brown University in Providence (Rhode Island, USA) has no problem with German, having studied in Berlin for a year. In the Bavarian Archive for Economic History, she was able to scrutinize documents dealing with the art market before, during and after World War II. “It is really interesting material; I was surprised to find it,” she says. Her PhD thesis will trace the reconstitution of the art world and the inauguration of a new cultural policy in West Germany after the war.

For young Holocaust researchers, work in the archives is absolutely essential, says Wendy Lower. The International Tracing Service in Bad Arolsen alone stores more 26,000 linear meters of material on those incarcerated in concentration camps and ghettos, those conscripted for forced labor, as well as thousands of displaced persons. Then there are the masses of documents in the former Soviet Union that await evaluation.

The LMU Summer School’s program includes a visit to the Dachau Memorial and a meeting with Rudi Ceslanski, a survivor of the Holocaust. The study of archival sources is crucial, but for contemporary Holocaust researchers, personal encounters with witnesses are of inestimable value. Unlike the papers in public repositories, the living sources will not be accessible for much longer.

Translation: Paul Hardy
Making sense of digital information
by Nikolaus Nützel

Computers are now a fixture in classrooms at all levels. But how best to use them as learning tools is not as obvious as it might seem. Frank Fischer is seeking practical answers to the challenge.

For the complete article, see www.en.lmu.de/news/insightlmu/2013/03_02.pdf

Echolocation

Playing it by ear

As blind people can testify, we humans can hear more than one might think. The blind learn to navigate using as guides the echoes of sounds they themselves make. This enables them to sense the locations of walls and corners, for instance, by tapping the ground with a stick or making clicking sounds with the tongue, and analyzing the echoes reflected from nearby surfaces, a blind person can map the relative positions of objects in the vicinity. LMU biologists led by Professor Lutz Wiegrebe of the Department of Neurobiology have now shown that sighted people can also learn to echolocate objects in space, as they report in the biology journal Proceedings of the Royal Society B. Wiegrebe and his team have developed a method for training people in the art of echolocation. With the help of a headset consisting of a microphone and a pair of earphones, experimental subjects can generate patterns of echoes that simulate acoustic reflections in a virtual space: the participants emit vocal clicks, which are picked up by the microphone and passed to a processor that calculates the echoes of a virtual space within milliseconds. The resulting echoes are then played back through the earphones. The trick is that the transformation applied to the input depends on the subject’s position in virtual space. So the subject can learn to associate the artificial “echoes” with the distribution of sound-reflecting surfaces in the simulated space. “After several weeks of training, the participants in the experiment were able to locate the sources of echoes pretty well. This shows that anyone can learn to analyze the echoes of acoustic signals to obtain information about the space around him. Sighted people have this ability too; they simply don’t need to use it in everyday situations,” says Lutz Wiegrebe.

Candidate vaccine passes first test

Last autumn, health authorities were alarmed by reports of a previously unknown and highly virulent coronavirus from humans. The strain causes an acute respiratory syndrome and induces severe, and often fatal, lung damage. All 130 confirmed infections, including those identified in Europe, involved patients from the Arabian Peninsula and the Middle East. The virus responsible has been named “Middle East Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus (MERS-CoV)”. A team led by Professor Gerd Sutter at LMU’s Institute for Infectious Diseases and Zoonoses, in collaboration with colleagues at the Erasmus Medical Center in Rotterdam and at Marburg University, has created a vaccine against the MERS virus. “The candidate vaccine we have developed is the first one directed against the MERS coronavirus that could be administered to humans, as an emergency measure, in the event of an epidemic,” says Sutter. The starting point for the new vaccine was a related virus known as Modified Vaccinia virus Ankara (MVA). MVA serves as the carrier for specific antigens that elicit the production of protective antibodies in the immunized host. Sutter and his team used molecular biological methods to introduce the gene for the MERS S protein into the MVA genome. Following injection into mice, the resulting MVA-MERS-S virus particles were found to induce the production of antibodies and effectively blocked infection of susceptible cells in tissue culture. In order to confirm that vaccination with MVA-MERS-S also prevents the potentially lethal lung damage associated with MERS infections in humans, a preclinical test must be developed. “MVA-MERS-S could be used as it stands for the production of a vaccine” says Gerd Sutter. “This demonstrates that, using our method, we can fabricate a candidate vaccine within less than a year.”
The career path of a contemporary eclectic
by Elizabeth Willoughby

When Philipp Krüger received his law degree from LMU, he had no idea it would take him to a UN peacekeeping mission in Sierra Leone, to producing documentaries, and to collaborating with top global thinkers in American administrations. “One thing just led to another.”

LMU-alumnus Philipp Krüger, chief executive officer of explorist Inc., operates his software start-up from New York’s “Silicon Alley”. Mixing and mingling where the ICT action is, in the thick of Manhattan’s melting pot, his company provides a platform to create, share and manage projects from mobile devices, but pigeonholing him solely as a “techie” would be a mistake.

With Philipp’s interests in so many things, he simply followed them and entered the doors that opened. His first opportunity was provided by LMU’s Professor Bruno Simma, an inspiration and mentor to Philipp and a judge at the International Court of Justice for nine years, who recommended Philipp for an internship at the UN in New York.

Soon after the internship began, the desk officer for the UN mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) had an opening for a legal counselor. This led Philipp up to the 37th floor, one below Secretary General Kofi Annan, to give advice on actually occurring problems. “I always thought that the UN cafeteria was a miniature image of the post WWII world, with people from all nations, cultures, beliefs and professions interacting, collaborating, negotiating and patiently waiting in line for their lunch.”

Working for UNAMSIL meant coordinating military and civil activities including legal assignments and political and field office missions. Philipp worked on policy development and implementation in areas such as smart sanctions to deal with blood diamonds and disarming rebels without using force. For Philipp, this experience fundamentally changed his understanding of foreign affairs. “Theory is one thing. The realities on the ground are another.”

While in Sierra Leone, Philipp was approached by a journalist and agreed to write a piece on the illicit diamond trade in Africa for Der Spiegel, one of Germany’s leading weekly news magazines. This opened a door to the world of media for Philipp – from writing for print media to producing television documentaries. But international affairs was still on his mind. “I felt like a kid in a candy store.”

Deciding to get more background information to apply to his UN practical experience, Philipp enrolled in economic and international affairs theory at Harvard University’s Kennedy School, and two exciting years spent with inspiring personalities followed. From Karl Kaiser he learned that in foreign affairs perception is as important as fact; Joe Nye demanded personal opinion and the defense of it; and Larry Summers explained to him macroeconomics so that it actually made sense.

Grateful for the advice acquired from so many great minds, Philipp felt compelled to give something back. He joined New York’s Big Brothers Big Sisters, where adults mentor children facing adversity. Their influence will hopefully change children’s lives and futures for the better.

Philipp shares his professional expertise as well, by way of his involvement with the German New York technology accelerator program. GNYA aims to create German global leaders in technology by exposing them to the US market. One of the firms GNYA brought over just won the New York Next Big Idea competition. It had previously been sponsored by LMU’s EXIST program designed by Professor Dietmar Harhoff, who’s work on entrepreneurship at LMU is something Philipp greatly admires. Philipp also remains connected with LMU through its alumni programs, German University Alliance events and German Center for Research and Innovation conferences that showcase scientists from LMU.

From peacekeeping to media to technology, the common thread throughout Philipp’s career is in connecting and empowering people, an approach to life which often leads him to reflect on his former mentor and ponder, “What would Prof. Simma do?”
Echoes of Hogwarts at LMU
by Simon Kirner

He spent his early years with gorillas in the jungle, then he and his friend Harry Potter battled Lord Voldemort, and he lost Bella, the love of his life, to a vampire. LMU student Max Felder has inhabited all of these characters, giving each his own distinctive voice.

In light of the list of his roles as a voice actor, it is entirely appropriate that Max Felder should arrive for the interview on his motorbike. His crash-helmet may have compromised his coiffure, but the 24-year-old has no objection to being photographed. Vanity is not in his make-up, although – like the stars whose voices he overdubs – he is strikingly good-looking. Tall and slim, he looks every inch the promising young actor with a bright future. His days on the LMU campus may be spent at the Institute for American Studies, but his professional career as an actor already goes back 15 years.

Take 1: Mama, I want to be an actor.

It all began when the 8-year-old Max was taken to see Macaulay Culkin in Home Alone. “I loved everything about the film, but especially all the things that Kevin got to do in it. It looked like so much fun … I just wanted to be an actor too.” He nagged his parents constantly until they finally got him listed for an audition.

A month after his first screen test he was offered the leading role of Anton in Caroline Link’s 1999 feature film Pünktchen und Anton (“Annalouise and Anton”) based on the novel by Erich Kästner, which was to have a very successful run in Germany.

Felder landed his first role as a voice actor a short time later, when he was asked to overdub the role of the young Tarzan in Disney’s animated adventure film. He was also selected to speak Taylor Lautner’s lines in the role of the werewolf Jacob Black in the German version of Twilight. When the Harry Potter series began, he was initially cast for several other roles, before nabbing that of Ron Weasley – the part he had set his heart on. It would become his biggest, best-known and longest-running role. Max’s voice would be Ron’s German voice over a period of 11 years.

Take 2: Max Felder in the studio

His repertoire as a dubbing actor has grown with him, and the diversity of his roles is surprisingly wide. He has learned his craft essentially by doing. He has studio sessions virtually every week. “No voice actor I know does speaking exercises at home, just as nobody who works in an office practices with Excel spreadsheets at home.” Felder himself rates his part in “The Keys of the House” (“Le chiavi di casa”) as his greatest dubbing challenge to date. In the German version he speaks the part of a mentally handicapped boy whose voice becomes progressively weaker as the film progresses, so that he ends up murmuring indistinctly. In this case Felder made use of the services of a voice coach.

Films are generally dubbed in takes consisting of one to three sentences, although a single take may be devoted to a laugh or an intake of breath. Felder first studies each passage in the original before speaking the lines in parallel with the shot. His contribution has to be in character with the original. “Of course dubbing directors and voice actors enjoy an element of artistic freedom. Nevertheless, the dubbed version of a film should be as faithful as possible to the original – that is the primary goal.”

Take 3: Max’s American dream

Dubbing artists in Germany can find work only in Munich or Berlin. Munich is Felder’s hometown, so his choice of base was clear. The decision to take American Studies as his major at LMU wasn’t difficult either. “I have always been fascinated by North America. I’ve been there several times; I have also worked there. And I soon realized that I wanted to learn more about the place and, in particular, its history.”

Motivated primarily by his lively interest in the subject itself, his university studies keep him mentally flexible and ensure that he doesn’t get stuck in a rut. He has already found his niche – acting – with voice, movement and gesture. “My greatest ambition is to establish myself as a professional actor in Europe and America,” he says. – And he keeps this goal firmly in his sights. At the end of the interview, he mounts his bike and sets off for the studio. His voice has more work to do.

Translation: Paul Hardy

+ Visit Max Felder’s fan-page on Facebook at http://tinyurl.com/phzszzn
New openings for graduate medical research

The Faculty of Medicine at LMU Munich is taking a new approach to the doctoral phase of medical education. The newly established Munich Medical Research School (MMRS) will offer a choice of graduate training programs, all leading to the PhD degree. This strategy is expected to enhance international career prospects for young medical researchers, and should also make LMU’s doctoral program more attractive for medical students from abroad. “Our PhD programs offer first-class training in medical research. By promoting interactions between students with diverse educational backgrounds from different countries, the MMRS will make a valuable contribution to the international character and global orientation of our Faculty,” says Professor Peter Bartenstein, Chairman of the Board of Graduate Studies in Medicine, Dentistry and Human Biology at LMU.

In future, all doctoral studies in the Medical Faculty at LMU in the areas of Medicine, Dentistry, Human Biology and the affiliated Biosciences will be carried out under the auspices of the MMRS. The MMRS currently offers three PhD programs, in International Health, Oral Sciences and Public Health. Moreover, Collaborative Research Centers and Graduate Schools are now authorized to train, and award PhD degrees to students at the MMRS. www.med.uni-muenchen.de/promotion/mmrs

Research award for Professor Viatcheslav Mukhanov

Cosmologist Professor Viatcheslav Mukhanov of the Faculty of Physics at LMU shares this year’s Gruber Cosmology Prize with his fellow Russian Alexei Starobinsky. The Gruber Cosmology Prize, which is worth 500,000 dollars, honors leading cosmologists whose work has significantly advanced our understanding of the Universe. The Prize is awarded annually, and is sponsored by the Gruber Foundation, which is based at Yale University. Viatcheslav Mukhanov holds the Chair of Cosmology at LMU. Concepts developed by Mukhanov promise to throw new light on the evolution of the Universe and the mysteries associated with black holes and dark energy. His work focuses on the construction of theoretical models that describe the behavior of elementary particles in terms of quantum field theories.

LMU student helps secure European title

Germany’s women’s hockey team won the European Championship for the second time. LMU student Hannah Krüger was a member of the winning side. The German team was pitted against England in the final, and the match turned out to be a nail-biter. At the end of regular play, the score stood at 4-4, and a penalty shoot-out was required to break the tie.

“I still can’t believe how things worked out last week. One always goes into an important tournament in the hope of coming out on top – but when it really happens, the experience is indescribable. This is only the second time in the history of the competition that Germany has won the European title. That makes us all very proud and, of course, we celebrated in style,” says the 23-year-old, who is studying Biology and Chemistry at LMU.

Imprint

Published by the Executive Board of Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München

Luise Dirscherl (editor in chief)
Dr. Kathrin Bilgeri (executive editor)
Communications & Media Relations
Layout: Christine Meyer Design München

Picture Credits:
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WendyLower (p. 2), Norman Rembarz/ ddp images (p. 3), Philipp Krüger (p. 4), LMU Munich (p. 5 + 6).

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