



Peter Grzybek (1957 – 2019)

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OBITUARY



Peter Grzybek (1957 – 2019)



It is with great sadness that we announce the passing of Peter Grzybek on May 29th 2019 in Graz, Austria. He had been receiving medical treatment for a long time, and did not recover from his last operation. He left our world and community much too early. Peter Grzybek graduated in Slavic studies, English Studies and Language Didactics at the University of Bochum, Germany in 1984, and in 1988 he completed his PhD with a thesis on the concept of signs in Soviet semiotics. His academic outlook was influenced by the slavacist Karl Eimermacher, by the anglicist and semiotician Walter A. Koch, and by the linguist Gabriel Altmann. Peter started his academic career as an assistant to Karl Eimermacher. In 1992 he moved to the University of Graz, where he worked as Senior Scientist Lecturer at the Institute of Slavonic Studies. In 1992 he completed his Habilitation, receiving the *venia legendi* for 'Slavic literary studies' and 'Semiotics'. Since 1998 Peter has held a professorial chair at the University of Graz as well as many other visiting professorships at other institutions. From 2004 to 2011 he was Head of the Department of Slavonic Studies in Graz. From 2007–2009, he served as Secretary General of IQLA and then, from 2009–2012, as President. In 1989 Peter co-founded the Yearbook *Znakolog* with Wolfgang Fleischer, and was also initiator and editor of the book series 'Studien zur Phraseologie und Parömiologie', coeditor of *Glottometrics* (2003–2017), established the monograph series 'Quantitative Linguistics' with Reinhard Köhler in 2011, and was co-editor of 'WSK 9: Quantitative und Formale Linguistik'. His extensive scientific oeuvre covers work in psycho- and neurolinguistics, semiotics, paremiology, and quantitative text and linguistic analysis. He imposed demanding standards of rigour on himself in his scientific publications, and extended these to his academic teaching: collegial, but on a high level, requiring from his students a

maximum of commitment and effort. Peter was extraordinarily productive and full of wit. His interests in cultural and literary studies as well as in linguistics were for the most part methodologically driven by a desire to obtain empirically well-founded scientific insights and results. His Wikipedia entry (https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peter_Grzybek) and his personal webpage (<http://www.petergrzybek.eu/>) provide a good overview of his achievements and publications. As a scientist and as a character, Peter Grzybek was original and independent, and sceptical about many entrenched traditions and customs in academia. His openness of mind, his positive attitude towards new research directions, his cooperativeness and willingness to help, and even his rather direct manner, will all be sadly missed by his extensive circle of friends and colleagues.