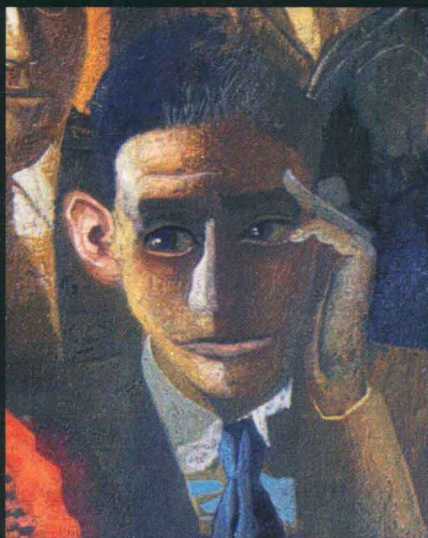


THE CAMBRIDGE COMPANION TO



KAFKA

Edited by Julian Preece

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EDITED BY
JULIAN PREECE
University of Kent at Canterbury



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Most of the chapters in this Companion were presented and discussed at a meeting of the contributors which took place in Prague in July 1999. We are grateful to the Zentrum Franze Kafka and the Austrian Culture Institute in Prague for inviting us to use their premises and to Kurt Krolop and Josef Čermák for their valuable comments. ✓

Transatlantic collaborations of this sort are rare in German studies but made much easier nowadays by electronic communication. My task as editor has been greatly eased by the spirit of co-operation which has characterised this enterprise from the beginning and I would like to thank the contributors for that. My special thanks go to my colleague Osman Durrani whose contribution to the volume has been far in excess of his own chapter.

ABBREVIATIONS

As one of the primary aims of this volume is to bring Kafka further into the orbit of the non-German speaker, all quotations from his writings are in English translation. Sometimes the contributors have preferred to translate themselves, sometimes they have used well-known published translations, which they have modified where appropriate. This variety of approaches has entailed a large number of cited German and English editions (for further clarification, see chapter 12, 'Editions, Translations, Adaptations').

When reference is made to German, the paperback version of the German critical edition has been used: Franz Kafka, *Gesammelte Werke in zwölf Bänden* (Collected Works in Twelve Volumes), ed. Hans-Gerd Koch (Frankfurt aM: Fischer, 1994):

- | | |
|-----|--|
| EL | <i>Ein Landarzt und andere Drucke zu Lebzeiten</i> , vol. 1 (A Country Doctor and Other Texts Printed in his Lifetime) |
| DV | <i>Der Verschollene</i> , vol. 2 (<i>The Man who Disappeared</i>) |
| DP | <i>Der Proceß</i> , vol. 3 (<i>The Trial</i>) |
| DS | <i>Das Schloß</i> , vol. 4 (<i>The Castle</i>) |
| BK | <i>Beschreibung eines Kampfes und andere Schriften aus dem Nachlaß</i> , vol. 5 (Description of a Struggle and Other Posthumous Writings) |
| BB | <i>Beim Bau der chinesischen Mauer und andere Schriften aus dem Nachlaß</i> , vol. 6 (The Great Wall of China and Other Posthumous Writings) |
| ZFG | <i>Zur Frage der Gesetze und andere Schriften aus dem Nachlaß</i> , vol. 7 (On the Question of Laws and Other Posthumous Writings) |
| DE | <i>Das Ehepaar und andere Schriften aus dem Nachlaß</i> , vol. 8 (The Married Couple and Other Posthumous Writings) |
| TB1 | <i>Tagebücher: 1909–1912</i> , vol. 9 (Diaries: 1909–1912) |
| TB2 | <i>Tagebücher: 1912–1914</i> , vol. 10 (Diaries: 1912–1914) |
| TB3 | <i>Tagebücher: 1914–1923</i> , vol. 11 (Diaries: 1914–1923) |
| RT | <i>Reisetagebücher</i> , vol. 12 (Travel Diaries) |

The editorial situation with the letters is more complicated as only the first of a planned five volumes of correspondence has so far appeared:

B₂ *Briefe 1902–1912* (Letters 1902–1912), ed. Hans-Gerd Koch (Frankfurt aM: Fischer, 1999)

The following volumes are also cited:

BF *Briefe an Felice und andere Korrespondenz aus der Verlobungszeit* (Letters to Felice and Other Correspondence from the Time of his Engagement), ed. Erich Heller and Jürgen Born (Frankfurt aM: Fischer, 1967)

BM *Briefe an Milena. Erweiterte und neu geordnete Ausgabe* (Letters to Milena. Revised Edition), ed. Jürgen Born and Michael Müller (Frankfurt aM: Fischer, 1983)

B_I *Briefe 1902–1924* (Letters 1902–1924), ed. Max Brod (Frankfurt aM: Fischer, 1958)

Apart from the diaries, which are only available in translations of Max Brod's editions, we have cited published translations which follow the revised critical edition of the fiction:

TT *The Trial*, tr. Breon Mitchell (New York: Schocken, 1998)

GWC *The Great Wall of China and Other Short Works*, tr. and ed. Malcolm Pasley (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1991)

TOS *The Transformation and Other Stories: Works Published During Kafka's Lifetime*, tr. and ed. Malcolm Pasley (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1992)

M *The Metamorphosis: Tradition, Backgrounds and Context* (New York: Norton, 1996), ed. and tr. Stanley Corngold

D_I *The Diaries of Franz Kafka 1910–13*, ed. Max Brod, tr. Joseph Kresh (London: Secker and Warburg, 1948)

D₂ *The Diaries of Franz Kafka 1914–23*, ed. Max Brod, tr. Martin Greenberg with the co-operation of Hannah Arendt (London: Secker and Warburg, 1949)

LF *Letters to Felice*, ed. Erich Heller and Jürgen Born, tr. James Stern and Elisabeth Duckworth (New York: Schocken, 1973)

LF_{FE} *Letters to Friends, Family, and Editors*, ed. Max Brod, tr. Richard and Clara Winston (New York: Schocken, 1978)

CHRONOLOGY

- 3 July 1883 Birth of Franz Kafka in Prague, capital of the kingdom of Bohemia in the dual monarchy of Austria–Hungary. His parents, the fancy-goods merchants, Hermann and Julie Kafka, name him after the Habsburg emperor, Franz Josef.
- 1886 Death of Kafka's brother Georg at fifteen months from measles.
- 1887 Birth of Felice Bauer in Silesia (Germany).
- 1888 Death of Kafka's second brother Heinrich at seven months from meningitis.
- 1889 The Panama affair. Jewish financiers are blamed for the collapse of the Panama Canal project. Thousands of French investors lose their money. Kafka's uncles Alfred and Joseph Loewy worked for the Panama Canal Company and feel the brunt of French anti-Semitism.
- 1889–90 The Dreyfus trial. After Alfred Dreyfus, a captain in the French army, is found guilty of passing military secrets to the Germans, France becomes embroiled in a bout of anti-Semitism, during which the loyalty of French Jews is called into question. The Dreyfus affair echoed through the decades in pre-Hitler Europe.
- 1889–92 Birth of Kafka's three sisters, Elli, Valli, and Ottla, all of whom will perish in the Holocaust.
- 1893–1901 Kafka attends the Altstädter Deutsches Gymnasium (German Grammar School) in Prague.
- 1896 Bar-mitzvah; Theodor Herzl publishes *The Jewish State*, the book which founded the Zionist movement; birth of Milena Jesenská.
- 1897 Three-day anti-Jewish riots in Prague (the 'December Storm').

- 1900 Publication of Sigmund Freud's *The Interpretation of Dreams*; death of Friedrich Nietzsche.
- 1901 Kafka's first foreign holiday – to the German islands of Norderney and Helgoland in the North Sea – on completion of his *Abitur* (school-leaving certificate). Publication of Otto Weininger's *Sex and Character*.
- 1901–6 Studies at the German University in Prague. After sampling courses in chemistry, art history, and German literature, finally settles on law and is awarded a doctorate after five years of study.
- 1902 Hugo von Hofmannsthal publishes 'Letter to Lord Chandos', arguably the most important single document in the *Sprachkrise* ('Crisis of language'), where he articulates a loss of confidence in words as a means of communication; Kafka meets Max Brod; correspondence with schoolfriends, Paul Kisch and Oskar Pollak.
- 1903 Journey to Munich.
- 1905 Failed revolution in Russia; Kafka spends part of the summer at a sanatorium in Zuckmantel, Austrian Silesia (now Poland).
- 1905–6 In order to qualify as a civil servant Kafka works for twelve months for no pay at the criminal courts.
- 1907–8 Employed at the Assicurazioni Generali in Prague.
- 1907–9 Correspondence with Hedwig Weiler.
- 1908 First publications of short prose pieces in literary journal; joins the Workers' Accident Insurance Institute, where he is promoted rapidly in his first five years and carries on working until 1922; Austria–Hungary annexes Bosnia–Herzegovina.
- 1909 The earliest date for surviving diary entries; journey with Brod to Brescia in northern Italy (September); publication of 'The Aeroplane in Brescia'.
- 1910 Journey with Brod to Paris (October); first journey to Berlin (December).
- 1911 Hears a lecture by Albert Einstein (May), whose *General Theory of Relativity* was published three years earlier; journey with Brod to Switzerland, northern Italy, and Paris (August/September); meeting with the Yiddish Theatre Troupe from Lemberg/Lwów (September); becomes closely involved with the running of the Kafka family's asbestos factory (autumn).

- 1911-13 Beiliss affair in Russia unleashes wave of anti-Semitism which, like the Dreyfus trial more than twenty years earlier, washes over the neighbouring Habsburg lands. After the brutal murder of a young schoolboy in Kiev, the 'blood libel' against the Jews is revived once more. Mendel Beiliss is accused of murdering the boy to use his blood for ritualistic purposes. The Tsarist authorities know of his innocence but proceed with the prosecution; Beiliss is finally acquitted.
- 1912-13 First and second Balkan Wars.
- 1912 Kafka delivers 'Introductory Lecture on Yiddish' (February); hears lecture by the Czech Social Democrat František Soukup on America and meets his future publishers, Ernst Rowohlt and Kurt Wolff (June); journey with Brod to Leipzig and Weimar (July), first book, *Contemplation*, accepted for publication; meets Felice Bauer (August) and begins correspondence with her (September); writes 'The Judgement', 'The Metamorphosis', and most of *The Man who Disappeared* (September-December).
- 1913 Meets the Zionist writer and intellectual Martin Buber (January); continues intensive correspondence with Bauer whom he visits in March; announces engagement on his thirtieth birthday; begins correspondence with Grete Bloch; travels to Vienna, Venice, and Riva (September).
- 1914 Outbreak of First World War after the assassination of the heir to the Habsburg crown, Archduke Franz-Ferdinand, in Sarajevo, the capital of Bosnia-Herzegovina (28 June); Austro-Hungarian troops march east on Russia and south on Serbia, suffering heavy defeats on both fronts; Kafka breaks off engagement with Bauer after acrimonious meeting in Berlin (July); begins work on *The Trial*, writes 'The Village Schoolmaster', 'In the Penal Colony'.
- 1915 Accompanies his sister Elli to the front in Hungary to visit brother-in-law (April); the German playwright Carl Sternheim donates his winnings from the Fontane Prize to Kafka.
- 1916 Holiday with Bauer in Marienbad (Marianski Lasne); work on short pieces for *A Country Doctor*; gives public reading from 'In the Penal Colony' in Munich (November).
- 1917 Bolshevik Revolution in Russia; Balfour Declaration in favour of a Jewish state; writes 'A Report for an Academy'

- (April); begins to learn Hebrew (May); first signs of the tuberculosis which will kill him (August); final break with Bauer; recuperation with Ottla in rural Zürau; work on aphorisms.
- 1918–19 After the defeat of Germany and Austria–Hungary much of Central Europe is in the grip of revolution; Prague becomes the capital of independent Czechoslovakia; Kafka travels to Schelesen in Bohemia for a further rest cure (November–December).
- 1919 Divides his time between work in Prague and rest cures in Schelesen; engagement with Julie Wohryzek; meets Minze Eisner, writes ‘Letter to his Father’ (November).
- 1920 Rest cure in Merano; correspondence with Milena Jesenská begins (April).
- 1920–1 Rest cure in Slovakian Matliary; correspondence with Robert Klopstock begins.
- 1922 Assassination of Walter Rathenau, the German foreign minister, by right-wing anti-Semites; Kafka writes *The Castle* (January–August), ‘A Fasting-artist’ (May), ‘Investigations of a Dog’; retires from the Workers’ Accident Insurance Institute on grounds of ill health.
- 1923 Meets Dora Diamant in Müritz on the Baltic coast (August) and lives with her in Berlin during the great inflation until March 1924; writes ‘A Little Woman’.
- 1924 Writes ‘Josephine, the Songstress or: the Mouse People’ (March–April); dies in Vienna on 3 June and is buried in the Jewish Cemetery in Prague.

(See Roger Hermes et al., *Franz Kafka: eine Chronik* (Berlin: Wagenbach, 1999).)

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JULIAN PREECE

Introduction: Kafka's Europe

Jewish, German, Czech, born a subject of the Habsburgs at 'the heart of Europe' in Bohemian Prague in 1883, died a citizen of Czechoslovakia on the outskirts of Vienna forty-one years later; a speaker of French and Italian in addition to his native German, Czech, and Yiddish, which he learnt as an adult; steeped in both Jewish lore and German literature and surrounded by the sound of Czech for most of his life, Franz Kafka was first and foremost an internationalist and a European. Since his death he has been claimed as one of the foremost Jewish authors of his age, as the greatest modernist prose writer in the German language, and – at least after 1945 – as an icon of both German and Austrian literature. More recently, though with less enthusiasm, he has been hailed in his homeland as a Czech, where his memory helped inspire resistance to Soviet dominance in the 1960s. One thing is certain: in his affiliations and the resonance of his writings Kafka is the most cosmopolitan of all German-language writers.

Yet the Europe which moulded this internationalism has been lost; it was torn at the seams by the First World War and the Versailles settlement which concluded it and then shredded by Hitler. Today Jewish Europe barely exists in the lands Kafka knew and the multilingual Habsburg Europe of Austria–Hungary long ago gave way to largely monolingual nation states. After the Second World War and the Holocaust, which claimed Kafka's three sisters and many of his surviving friends, Prague fell behind the Iron Curtain and Kafka's books were banned not celebrated. After the extermination of the European Jews came the expulsion of the Czech Germans in 1945. The tensions and communal anxieties which fuelled this destruction already shaped Kafka's fiction and autobiographical writing. Establishing Kafka's Europe cannot thus be an act of cultural resuscitation; it is a matter of historical and imaginative reconstruction. But this does not mean that our twenty-first-century world is not linked to his. His images of anxiety and cultural dislocation, his multilayered prose which partakes of a multitude of discourses simultaneously, and his ignorance of ultimate answers still speak to