Since the publication of the Cambridge edition of The Collected Letters of Joseph Conrad, the numerous letters in the nine volumes, many of them published for the first time and many more taken from hard-to-find books and journals, have had a profound influence on writing about Conrad. This selection makes the highlights available in one volume. The letters have been re-edited with shorter footnotes and an emphasis on the latest scholarship. Letters originally written in French or Polish appear only in revised English translations. Among the topics that stand out are Conrad’s memories of growing up in Poland and Ukraine, his ideas about fiction, often expressed in precise but sympathetic comments on the work of his friends, the anxieties of war and revolution, his struggle to keep his integrity as a writer, and his lives as a sailor and a family man.

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THE SELECTED LETTERS OF
JOSEPH CONRAD

EDITED BY
LAURENCE DAVIES
for Zdzisław Najder
with love and admiration
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The illustrations appear by kind permission of: Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University (1, 2a, 2b, 3b, 6b, 8); Malcolm Brodie Collection, State Library of Victoria, Melbourne (3a); Joseph Conrad Study Centre, University of Opole (4a); Research and Cultural Collections, University of Birmingham (5a); the late Richard Garnett (5b); the Cunninghame Graham Society (6a). Plates 4b, 7a and 7b come from the editor’s collection.
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As J. H. Stape’s tenacity and pluck have memorably shown, research into Conrad’s life and work never flags. When putting this volume together, I have also benefitted from the exemplary scholarship (and often the cherished friendship) of Richard Ambrosini, Debra Romanick Baldwin, Katherine Isobel Baxter, Mary Burgoyne, Helen Chambers, Mario Curreli, Stephen Donovan, Hugh Epstein, Alexandre Fachard, Andrew Francis, Robert Hampson, Jeremy Hawthorn, Susan Jones, Mara Kalnins, Owen Knowles, Donald Mackenzie, David Miller, Gene M. Moore, Richard Niland, Andy Purssell, Don Rude, Allan H. Simmons, Christopher Scobie, Joanna Skolik, Cedric Watts, Stefan Zabierowski, the late Martin Ray, and the late Sid Reid.

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Among the most fascinating contributions to Conrad scholarship and invaluable for this edition is the Conrad First website, edited by Stephen Donovan and hosted by Uppsala University, which preserves digital images of Conrad’s work as it appeared in serial: www.conradfirst.net/

Closer to home, I have many reasons to thank two marvellous artists, Lorna and Mary Modeen, whose company is a spirited conversation about everything under and beyond the sun.

The staff of many libraries contributed their professional knowledge and enthusiasm to the full edition of Conrad’s letters. For the present volume, I am most grateful for the help of librarians and curators at the National Library of Scotland, Glasgow University Library, the London Library, the Wellcome Library, the Bodleian Library, and the National Maritime Museum. For help with illustrations, I thank Susan Franklin, Research and Cultural Collections, University of Birmingham; Susan Brady, Cliff Johnson, and Karen Nangle, Beinecke Library Digital Archives, Yale.

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Acknowledgements

In 2014 the Press lost Andy Brown, who in one role or another had been involved with publishing the Conrad letters for thirty-five years. The words learned, shrewd, and funny do not always chime, but with him they did, and most delectably.

This volume is dedicated to the doyen of Conrad scholars, Zdzisław Najder, a great credit to his nation and a citizen of the world, whose wit, charm, and powerful intellect have shone in many kinds of darkness.
SHORT TITLES

These abbreviations identify the following sources.

Berg        Henry W. and Albert A. Berg Collection of English and American Literature, New York Public Library
CWW         Norman Sherry, Conrad’s Western World. Cambridge University Press, 1971
Huntington  Huntington Library, Pasadena, California
JCHC        Jessie Conrad, Joseph Conrad and His Circle. London: Jarrold’s, 1935


Lubbock Special Collections, Texas Tech University Library, Lubbock


Northwestern Charles Deering McCormick Library of Special Collections, Northwestern University, Evanston, Illinois

NYPL New York Public Library: collections other than the Berg

Princeton Special Collections, Firestone Library, Princeton University, New Jersey

List of short titles


Stape 2013 J. H. Stape, ‘Further Supplementary Notes and Corrigenda to *The Collected Letters of Joseph*
List of short titles

Conrad, The Conradian, 38.1 (Spring 2013), 177–85
Stape and Knowles 1996
Stape and Knowles 2006
J. H. Stape and Owen Knowles, ‘Marlow’s Audience in “Youth” and “Heart of Darkness”’, The Conradian, 31.1 (Spring 2006), 104–16
Stape and Knowles 2008
Stape and Niland
Stevenson
Robert Louis Stevenson, Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde, ed. Richard Dury. Edinburgh University Press, 2004
SWCG
Szczyponen
Taylor
Conversation with Mrs C. E. (‘Kit’) Taylor, Devonshire, August 1984
Texas
Harry Ransom Center, University of Texas at Austin
TU
UWE
Watts
Watts and Davies
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<td>Yale</td>
<td>Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut</td>
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EDITORIAL CONVENTIONS

1. All but two of the texts come from the nine-volume *Collected Letters*. Cross references to volume and page replace the citations of printed and MS sources given there. Errors caught since the publication of the original volumes have been silently corrected.

2. Some footnotes from those volumes have been shortened or deleted; some have been rewritten in the light of current scholarship. Unless the proposed date of a letter has changed, the original rationales for dating are not repeated here. Biographical notes on Conrad’s correspondents are gathered at the back of the volume.

3. In the Introduction and footnotes, letters identified solely by date appear in the *Selected Letters*. Quotations and citations with a volume and page number refer to the *Collected Letters*.

4. To avoid repetitions and make room for as much variety as possible, some of the letters have been shortened. In the texts, editorial cuts are signalled thus […], as are cuts made to quotations from Conrad and other authors in the footnotes and Introduction. Conrad’s own ellipses appear without brackets. Gaps in the text caused by damage to the original are marked thus: […]; doubtful readings, [?]; and Conrad’s own footnotes, †. For clarity’s sake, some missing words and expansions of abbreviated words are supplied in square brackets.

5. To keep their distinctive texture, the French passages in letters to Cunninghame Graham and the two Aniela Zagórkas remain in place, with translations provided in footnotes or at the end of the letter. Letters written entirely in French are given only in translation; the originals can be found in the Collected Edition. Translations from the French are mainly the work of the volume editors. Translators of letters in Polish are identified in the footnotes. Some translations from French and Polish have been revised for this edition.

6. Names of places testify to the complexities of history, politics, and culture. For twelve months in 1868–69, for example, Conrad and his father lived in what was then one of the chief cities of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, known in German as Lemberg, in Yiddish as Lemberik, and in Polish as Lwów; the Russian name is Lwów.
Editorial conventions

usually transliterated as Lvov, and the Ukrainian as Lviv. This edition gives names in Polish and, where relevant, Ukrainian, but uses the English forms Warsaw, Cracow, and Kiev.

7. This is not a diplomatic edition recording every quirk and quiddity of the MSS and TSS. All the same, this selection, like the Collected Letters, follows the principle that some house-styling is better than a lot. As in the Collected Letters, an asterisk (*) rather than a sic marks a word or phrase that could be taken as a misprint or misreading. If they appear in the Oxford English Dictionary, unusual (but typically Conradian) spellings such as ‘negociation’ and ‘inclose’ are not flagged, nor for the most part are words with missing or misplaced accents or apostrophes. In many of his letters, Conrad capitalises personal pronouns and uses lower case for months, days of the week, and adjectives of nationality. As signs of French or Polish influence and clues to Conrad’s state of mind, these characteristic usages stay as they are.

8. For the most part, I have kept to the distinction that a sailor works in, but a passenger travels on a ship.

9. Although Ford Madox Hueffer did not change his last name to Ford until June 1919, this edition follows current practice in calling him Ford throughout, except when he appears with other members of the Hueffer family.