Franz Kafka (1883–1924) lived through one of the most turbulent periods in modern history, witnessing a world war, the dissolution of an empire and the foundation of a new nation state. But the early twentieth century was also a time of social progress and aesthetic experimentation. Kafka’s novels and short stories reflect their author’s keen but critical engagement with the big questions of his time, and yet often Kafka is still cast as a solitary figure with little or no connection to his age. *Franz Kafka in Context* aims to redress this perception. In thirty-five short, accessible essays, leading international scholars explore Kafka’s personal and working life, his reception of art and culture, his engagement with political and social issues, and his ongoing reception and influence. Together they offer a nuanced and historically grounded image of a writer whose work continues to fascinate readers from all backgrounds.

Carolin Duttlinger is Associate Professor in German at the University of Oxford, a Fellow of Wadham College, and Co-Director of the Oxford Kafka Research Centre. An international expert on German modernism, she has been awarded numerous prizes and fellowships, including the Zvi-Meitar/Vice-Chancellor Oxford University Research Prize in the Humanities. She is the author of *Kafka and Photography* (2007) and *The Cambridge Introduction to Franz Kafka* (2013), the editor of *Franz Kafkas ‘Betrachtung’: Neue Lektüren* (2014) and the co-editor of *Walter Benjamins anthropologisches Denken* (2012) and *Weimar Photography in Context* (2017).
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2 Title page of the first edition of *In der Strafkolonie* (1919)  
   with a handwritten dedication by Kafka’s parents: ‘Zum Andenken von unserem verstorbenen Sohn | Julie Kafka. | Prag 20.5.1926, Hermann Kafka’ (‘In memory of our late son’). Anthony Northey, private collection  
3 Page from the manuscript of *Der Process*. Deutsches Literaturarchiv Marbach  
4 Fairground novelty photograph of Kafka with (left to right): Albert Ehrenstein, Otto Pick and Lise Kaznelson, Vienna Prater, 1913. Archiv Klaus Wagenbach  
5 Karel Teige, *Greetings from a Journey* (1923). Courtesy of the Estate of Karel Teige and DILIA, Prague  
6 ‘Of the castle hill there was nothing to be seen.’ A reader’s Kafkaesque imagining
Notes on Contributors

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Leonhard Herrmann), Lesen ist wie Sehen: Intermediale Zitate in Bild und Text (2006, with Karin Leonhard), and a special issue of Poetics Today dedicated to 'Photography in Fiction' (spring 2008, with Nancy Pedri).

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xvi Notes on Contributors


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Theodore Ziolkowski is Class of 1900 Professor Emeritus of German and Comparative Literature and past Dean of the Graduate School at Princeton University. He has published over thirty books in the fields of German Romanticism and reception of classical antiquity in modern literature. His most recent publications are Classicism of the Twenties: Art, Music and Literature (2015), The Alchemist in Literature: From Dante to the Present (2015) and Uses and Abuses of Moses: Literary Representations since the Enlightenment (2016).

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Notes on Contributors

Czech interwar avant-garde and on figures such as Kafka, Rilke, Benjamin and Lukács. He recently edited a special issue of *Central Europe* titled ‘Cultures of Bohemia in the Twentieth Century’ and is currently writing a book on Kafka and Czech modernism.
### Chronology

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<td>1883</td>
<td>3 July: Franz Kafka is born in Prague to Hermann Kafka (1852–1931) and his wife, Julie, née Löwy (1856–1934).</td>
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<td>1885</td>
<td>Birth of Kafka’s younger brother Georg, who dies of measles at the age of fifteen months.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1887</td>
<td>Birth of Kafka’s younger brother Heinrich, who dies of meningitis at the age of six months.</td>
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<td>1890</td>
<td>Birth of Kafka’s sister Valerie (‘Valli’; d. 1942).</td>
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<td>1892</td>
<td>Birth of Kafka’s sister Ottilie (‘Ottla’; d. 1943).</td>
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<tr>
<td>1893</td>
<td>Kafka transfers to the Altstädter deutsches Gymnasium housed in the Kinsky-Palais in Prague.</td>
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<td>1896</td>
<td>June: Kafka celebrates his Bar-Mitzvah at the Zigeuner-Synagoge in Prague; the invitations sent by Hermann Kafka refer to his son’s ‘confirmation’.</td>
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<td>1897</td>
<td>Anti-German attacks by Czech nationalists soon extend to Jewish businesses; the Kafkas’ haberdashery shop is spared.</td>
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<td>1901</td>
<td>July: Kafka passes his Abitur (A-levels) and then goes on his first longer trip, to the German North Sea islands of Norderney and Heligoland. October: Kafka matriculates at the German-language section of the Karl-Ferdinands-Universität (Charles University) in Prague. After two weeks of studying chemistry, he changes to law; in the course of his degree he also attends seminars and lectures in philosophy, psychology, German literature, art history, Latin and Greek.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1902</td>
<td>In the summer Kafka and his friend Paul Kisch make plans to move to Munich to study German literature but, unlike Kisch, Kafka continues with his law degree in Prague. He meets...</td>
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Max Brod (1884–1968), who will become his close friend, at a student society event. A prolific writer in his own right, Brod will later become Kafka’s posthumous editor.

1906 Kafka gains his doctorate in law with the lowest pass mark and begins an internship in the Prague law courts.

1907 Kafka starts working for the Prague branch of the Trieste-based insurance company Assicurazioni Generali.

1908 Kafka moves to the state-run Arbeiter-Unfall-Versicherungs-Anstalt für das Königreich Böhmen (Workers’ Accident Insurance Institute for the Kingdom of Bohemia). Eight of his short prose pieces are published in the journal *Hyperion*.

1909 September: Kafka goes on holiday with Max Brod and his brother Otto to Riva on Lake Garda. On their way home, they attend an airshow in Brescia, which will become the subject of Kafka’s short text ‘Die Aeroplane in Brescia’ (“The Aeroplanes in Brescia”).

1910 October: trip to Paris with Max and Otto Brod; Kafka returns home early because of an abscess.

1911 August–September: trip with Max Brod to Switzerland, Northern Italy and Paris. In the autumn and winter Kafka attends the performances of a Yiddish theatre troupe at the Café Savoy in Prague and befriends the actor Jizchak Löwy.


1913 Kafka visits Felice Bauer three times in Berlin. May: *Der Heizer* (The Stoker), the first chapter of *The Man who Disappeared*, is published as a self-contained volume by Wolff in the
Chronology

avant-garde series *Der jüngste Tag* (*The Last Judgement*).

September: Kafka attends a conference on accident prevention in Vienna, and also looks in on the Eleventh Zionist Congress. From Vienna he travels on to Riva (northern Italy), where he stays in a sanatorium.

1914

1 June: Kafka and Felice Bauer get officially engaged in Berlin.
12 July: the engagement is dissolved by Bauer, who confronts Kafka about his secret correspondence with her friend Grete Bloch. Kafka goes on holiday with the writer Ernst Weiss in the Danish resort of Marielyst. 1 August: Austria-Hungary declares war on Serbia; beginning of the First World War. August: Kafka starts writing his second novel *Der Prozess* (*The Trial*). October: he takes time off work to focus on *The Trial* but writes ‘In der Strafkolonie’ (‘In the Penal Colony’) instead.

1915

January: Kafka gives up work on *The Trial*; he meets up with Felice Bauer for the first time since their break-up and reads her the doorkeeper parable from *The Trial*. December: *The Metamorphosis* is published by Wolff. The playwright Carl Sternheim, who has been awarded the Fontane Prize for literature, passes on the prize money to Kafka.

1916

Reconciliation with Felice Bauer. July: Kafka and Bauer spend ten days together in the Bohemian resort Marienbad (Mariánské Lázně). ‘Das Urteil’ (‘The Judgement’) is published as a self-contained volume by Wolff. November 1916 – April 1917: Kafka uses a house his sister Ottla has rented in the Castle District as a writing retreat, producing the stories that will make up the collection *Ein Landarzt* (*A Country Doctor*).

1917

July: Kafka and Felice Bauer visit Bauer’s sister Else Braun in Budapest and renew their engagement. 12–13 and 13–14 August: Kafka suffers two nocturnal haemorrhages, which are then diagnosed as tubercular. September: he moves to the Bohemian village of Zürau (Siřem) to live with his sister Ottla. December: visit by Bauer; the engagement is dissolved.

1918

May: Kafka returns to Prague and resumes work. October: he contracts the Spanish flu. November: he returns to work for four days and is given leave again. He stays in a hotel in Schelesen (Želízy).

1919

January: Kafka meets Julie Wohryzeck (1891–1944) while in Schelesen. April: he returns to Prague and to work. September: he gets engaged to Wohryzeck; his parents try to jeopardize the
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match. October: *In der Strafkolonie (In the Penal Colony)* is published by Wolff.


1921 January: Kafka ends the correspondence with Milena Jesená. September: he returns to work but takes three further months’ sick leave from October.

1922 January: Kafka’s sick leave is extended again until April. He stays in a hotel in Spindlermühle (Špindlerův Mlýn) in the Tatra Mountains, where he writes his final novel, *Das Schloss (The Castle).* 1 July: Kafka is granted early retirement on health grounds by the Insurance Institute.

1923 July: Kafka is on holiday in Müritz on the Baltic Sea, where he meets Dora Diamant (1898–1952). September: Kafka moves to Berlin where he lives with Diamant; because of the hyper-inflation their financial circumstances are very strained.

1924 March: because of his declining health Kafka returns to Prague; he writes his final short story, ‘Josefine, die Sängerin oder Das Volk der Mäuse’ (‘Josefine, the Singer or The Mouse People’). April: it is diagnosed that his tuberculosis has spread to the larynx. Accompanied by Dora Diamant, he moves from a sanatorium in Ortmann (Lower Austria) to a laryngological clinic in Vienna, and from there to a small sanatorium in Kierling near Klosterneuburg. 3 June: Kafka dies, with Diamant at his side. August: his collection *Ein Hungerkünstler (A Hunger Artist)* is published by Die Schmiede.

1925 *Der Process (The Trial)*, edited by Max Brod, is published by Die Schmiede.

1926 *Das Schloss (The Castle)*, edited by Brod, is published by Wolff.

1927 *Amerika*, now known by Kafka’s own title, *Der Verschollene (The Man who Disappeared)*, edited by Brod, is published by Wolff.

1939 Max Brod leaves Prague on the last train before the German invasion, taking Kafka’s manuscripts with him, and reaches Palestine.
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1956  Brod transfers the manuscripts (with the exception of *The Trial*) to a bank vault in Zurich.

1961  The Oxford German scholar Malcolm Pasley, with the permission of Kafka’s heirs, transfers the manuscripts to the Bodleian Library Oxford.
Abbreviations and Note on the Texts

The following abbreviations are used in this book. Where a published translation is available, all quotations are referenced first to the English version and then to the German original. On occasion, translations have been tacitly modified. For works that have not been translated, the contributors have provided their own translations.

Unless otherwise stated, ellipses are editorial rather than part of the original text.

Fictional Writings

C  The Castle, trans. Anthea Bell (Oxford University Press, 2009)


M The Metamorphosis and Other Stories, trans. Joyce Crick (Oxford University Press, 2009)


List of Abbreviations and Note on the Texts


**ON** The Blue Octavo Notebooks, ed. Max Brod and trans. Ernst Kaiser and Eithne Wilkins (Cambridge, MA: Exact Change, 1991)

**P** Der Proceß, ed. Malcolm Pasley. Franz Kafka: Schriften, Tagebücher, Briefe: Kritische Ausgabe (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1990)


**S** Das Schloß, ed. Malcolm Pasley. Franz Kafka: Schriften, Tagebücher, Briefe: Kritische Ausgabe (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1982)


**T** The Trial, trans. Mike Mitchell (Oxford University Press, 2009)

**V** Der Verschollene, ed. Jost Schillemeit. Franz Kafka: Schriften, Tagebücher, Briefe: Kritische Ausgabe (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1983)


List of Abbreviations and Note on the Texts


B Briefe 1902–1924, ed. Max Brod (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1975)


BE Briefe an die Eltern aus den Jahren 1922–1924, ed. Josef Čermák and Martin Svatoš (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1993)

BF Briefe an Felice und andere Korrespondenz aus der Verlobungszeit, ed. Erich Heller and Jürgen Born (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1998)

BM Briefe an Milena, ed. Jürgen Born and Michael Müller, extended and revised edn (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1999)

BOF Briefe an Otta und die Familie, ed. Hartmut Binder and Klaus Wagenbach (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1981)


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