

GOETHE IN CONTEXT

One of the most prolific and versatile writers of all time, Johann Wolfgang Goethe (1749–1832) made an impact that continues to extend far beyond his native Germany. The variety of human questions and experiences treated in his works is arguably without parallel. He also had (for his era) an unusually long life, which spanned the French Revolution, the end of the Holy Roman Empire and subsequent reshaping of the German-speaking world, and the rapid onset of industrial modernity. In thirty-seven short essays, leading international scholars explore Goethe's life and times, his literary works, his activity in the realms of art, philosophy and natural science, his reception of – and indeed by – other cultures, and, finally, the resonance of his work in our time. The aim of this collection is to open as many windows as possible onto Goethe's wide-ranging intellectual and practical activity, and to give a sense of his ongoing importance.

CHARLOTTE LEE is Associate Professor of German at the University of Cambridge and a Fellow of Murray Edwards College. She is the author of *The Very Late Goethe: Self-Consciousness and the Art of Ageing* (2014) and the editor of *German Romantic Poets* for Everyman's Library (2024). She has published widely on the period around 1800, is co-editor of *Publications of the English Goethe Society* and is on the editorial board of the *Goethe-Lexicon of Philosophical Concepts*.

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EDITED BY
CHARLOTTE LEE
University of Cambridge



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Notes on Contributors

Yael Almog is Associate Professor of German at Durham University, UK. Her monograph *Secularism and Hermeneutics* (2019) examines exegesis as embedded in confessional belonging and challenges the modern presumption that interpretation is indifferent to religious concerns. Her research explores the late German Enlightenment, German-Jewish thought, literary theory and political philosophy.

Frederick Amrine is Arthur F. Thurnau Professor in German Studies at the University of Michigan. He has published widely on Goethe and Rudolf Steiner, and has recently been translating Novalis's philosophical writings with a view to writing a book-length study entitled *What Novalis Thought*. Many of his writings are published as Keryx volumes on Amazon.

Mark Austin is a conductor, pianist and independent scholar. A finalist in the Chicago Symphony Solti Conducting Competition, he has worked with opera companies ranging from the Royal Opera, London to Folkoperan, Stockholm, and orchestras including Aurora, Britten Sinfonia, Civic Orchestra of Chicago, London Philharmonic and Orchestre de chambre de Paris. He was elected an Associate of the Royal Academy of Music in 2019. Mark completed an MPhil in European Literature at the University of Cambridge with a dissertation on music in Goethe's writing, and has published several articles and chapters on literature and music.

Matthew Bell is Professor of German and Comparative Literature at King's College London, where he has taught since graduating in Ancient Greek, Latin and German and completing his PhD on Goethe at Oxford. His research has focused on European literature and ideas of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, with a particular focus on the history of the human sciences. His publications include *Goethe's*

Naturalistic Anthropology (1994), *The German Tradition of Psychology in Literature and Thought, 1700–1840* (2005), *Melancholia: The Western Malady* (2014) and *The Essential Goethe* (2016). He is currently writing an intellectual biography of Goethe for Princeton University Press.

ANNE BOHNENKAMP is Professor of Modern German Literature at the Goethe Universität, Frankfurt and Director of the Freies Deutsches Hochstift / Frankfurter Goethe-Museum. She received her doctorate in 1992 from the University of Göttingen under Albrecht Schöne with a thesis on the Paralipomena of Goethe's *Faust*. From 1989 to 2003 she taught comparative literature at LMU Munich. She has directed several edition projects (Hofmannsthal, Brentano, Goethe, Schumann) and steered the development of the German Museum of Romanticism in Frankfurt. Her main teaching and research interests are Goethe, translation, world literature, edition studies, literary exhibition and literature and media.

NICHOLAS BOYLE is Emeritus Schröder Professor of German at the University of Cambridge and a Fellow of the British Academy. His prize-winning biography, *Goethe: The Poet and the Age* (1991, 2000), has also been translated into German. In 2000 he was awarded the Goethe Medal of the Goethe-Institut, and in 2017 the Gold Medal of the Goethe-Gesellschaft (German Goethe Society). His wide interests in European literature, philosophy, theology and politics are reflected in *Who Are We Now?* (1998) and in *Sacred and Secular Scriptures: A Catholic Approach to Literature* (2005). He was also the Principal Investigator on the project *The Impact of Idealism*, which culminated in a four-volume work published by Cambridge University Press in 2013.

JENNIFER CAISLEY completed her PhD at the University of Cambridge, researching the interplay between materiality and immateriality in Goethe's geological writings, particularly in relation to his endeavours in the town of Ilmenau. As an independent scholar, she is continuing to explore Goethe's work in the field of geology.

DANIEL CARRANZA is Assistant Professor of Germanic Languages and Literatures at Harvard University. He studied German literature and philosophy in Portland (Oregon), Tübingen, Chicago and Leipzig. He received his MA and PhD from the University of Chicago. He has received fellowships from the Fulbright and Humboldt Foundations. His research and teaching interests include poetics and the history of the lyric; German Idealism and its aftermath; and moments of cross-pollination between the history of science and the history of philology.

Notes on Contributors

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STEFFAN DAVIES is Associate Professor in German at the University of Bristol. He has taught and researched various aspects of Weimar Classicism since his doctoral research on Schiller's *Wallenstein*, which was published as *The Wallenstein Figure in German Literature and Historiography, 1790–1920* in the MHRA's Bithell Series of Dissertations in 2010. He is one of the editors of *German Life and Letters*.

SARAH VANDEGRIFT ELDRIDGE is Associate Professor of German at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. Her publications include *Novel Affinities: Composing the Family in the German Novel 1795–1830* (2016), and the co-edited volume *Goethe's Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship and Philosophy*, with Allen Speight (2020) as well as 'Karl Philipp Moritz as Cognitive Narratologist: Travel Writing, Visualization, and Literary Experience' (2020). She was a Fulbright Scholar in Dresden in 2016 and she is currently co-editor, with Eleanor ter Horst, of the *Goethe Yearbook*.

STEPHANIE GALASSO is a Visiting Lecturer in German at Rutgers University, and was previously Schröder Research Associate and Affiliated Lecturer in German at the University of Cambridge. She specialises in critical approaches to post-Enlightenment German thought and literature. Her forthcoming monograph investigates the interactions of aesthetics and racialising philosophies of history in German literature around 1800. She is also the co-editor of *Epistemic Justice and Creative Agency: Global Perspectives on Literature and Film* (with Sarah Colvin, 2023).

RENATA GAMBINO is Associate Professor of German Literature at the University of Catania, Director of the Interdisciplinary Research Center NEW-HUMS (Neurocognitive and Humanities Studies) and co-founder of the digital platform www.neurohumanitiestudies.eu. She is responsible for the Catania unit of the Erasmus+ project ENID-TEACH devoted to research about digital pedagogy at university level. She was MC member in the international COST project E-READ inquiring into reading processes. She is co-editor of the book series *Wunderkammer* published by Mimesis (Milan). Her main areas of research include Goethezeit, the German fairy tale tradition, travel literature, literary anthropology, visual culture and cognitive poetics.

WILLI GOETSCHEL is Professor of German and Philosophy at the University of Toronto and the author of *Heine and Critical Theory* (2019), *The Discipline of Philosophy and the Invention of Modern Jewish Thought* (2013), *Spinoza's Modernity: Mendelssohn, Lessing, and Heine*

(2004) and *Constituting Critique: Kant's Writing as Critical Praxis* (1994). He is the editor of the collected works of Hermann Levin Goldschmidt, and an editor of *The Germanic Review*. He is currently finishing a book with the title *Difference and Alterity in Early Modern Philosophy: La Boétie, Montaigne, Spinoza, Mendelssohn*.

SUSAN E. GUSTAFSON is Karl F. and Bertha A. Fuchs Professor of German Studies, Comparative Literature and Translation Studies at the University of Rochester, New York. Her areas of research focus on eighteenth-century German literature, including three books on Lessing, Winckelmann, Moritz and Goethe, and portrayals of families, genders and same-sex relationships in the eighteenth century. She has also published an English translation of Goethe's *Stella: A Play for Lovers*.

KATHERINE HARLOE FSA FRHISTS is Director of the Institute of Classical Studies and Professor of Classics and Intellectual History in the School of Advanced Study, University of London. She is an interdisciplinary classicist whose research spans the history of classical scholarship, the reception of Greek and Roman antiquity in Europe (especially Germany) from the eighteenth to the twentieth centuries, the history of political thought and gender history.

AMIR IRANI-TEHRANI is Persian Program Director at the United States Military Academy's Department of Foreign Languages. His research focuses mainly on German translations of Persian poetry, specifically, Friedrich Rückert and August von Platen. He is currently working on a monograph on Platen in Persian.

MICHAEL JAEGER is Privatdozent in German at the Freie Universität Berlin, and frequently holds guest professorships at universities in Germany and around the world. Modern intellectual history and the theme of Goethe and modernity are at the heart of his research. He is the author of numerous studies of Goethe and of *Faust*, including the monographs *Fausts Kolonie* (2004) and *Wanderers Verstummen* (2014), together with the long essays *Global Player Faust* (2008) and *Salto Mortale: Goethes Flucht nach Italien* (2018). His most recent major publication is *Goethes Faust: Das Drama der Moderne* (2021).

JOHANNES D. KAMINSKI is a scholar of comparative literature, with a special interest in Goethezeit, Chinese vernacular novels and contemporary science fiction. Currently, he is a SASPRO2-Postdoctoral Fellow at the Institute of World Literature at the Slovak Academy of Sciences.

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Recent articles include ‘Zur Kritik der libidinösen Ökonomie: Liebe und Klassenkampf in der Literatur der chinesischen Moderne’ and ‘On Human Expendability: AI Takeover in Clarke’s *Odyssey* and Stross’s *Accelerando*’.

ASTRID KÖHLER studied Germanistik at the Friedrich-Schiller-Universität Jena and obtained her doctorate from the Freie Universität Berlin with a thesis on *Salonkultur im klassischen Weimar*. From 1993 to 1995, she taught at Gonville and Caius College Cambridge, and has been working at Queen Mary University of London since 1995. Her research interests span East German literature before and after 1990, the cultural history of late eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Germany, and Anglo-German cultural relations. From 2019 to 2022, she worked on the European research project *The European Spa as a Transnational Public Space and Social Metaphor* (www.theeuropeanspa.eu).

GERHARD LAUER is Gutenberg Professor for Book Studies at the University of Mainz. He has worked on many areas, including Jewish studies, and he was instrumental in creating a new online resource on the reception of Goethe’s *Theory of Colours* (<https://goethes-farbenlehre-berlin.sub.uni-goettingen.de>). His current main research interests are computational book history and experimental reading studies, including a larger project on the natural historian Johann Friedrich Blumenbach, a key source for Goethe’s views on nature. Recently, he published *Lesen im digitalen Zeitalter* (2020), a study of the continued place of reading in the digital age.

CHARLOTTE LEE is Associate Professor of German at the University of Cambridge and a Fellow of Murray Edwards College. She is the author of *The Very Late Goethe: Self-Consciousness and the Art of Ageing* (2014) and the editor of *German Romantic Poets* for Everyman’s Library (2024). She has published widely on the period around 1800, is co-editor of *Publications of the English Goethe Society* and is on the editorial board of the *Goethe-Lexicon of Philosophical Concepts*. Her next book will be a study of the relationship between poetry and movement.

CATRIONA MACLEOD is Frank Curtis Springer and Gertrude Melcher Springer Professor in the College and the Department of Germanic Studies at the University of Chicago. She is the author of *Embodying Ambiguity: Androgyny and Aesthetics from Winckelmann to Keller* and *Fugitive Objects: Sculpture and Literature in the German Nineteenth Century*, and has co-edited several volumes in the areas of word and

image studies and translation studies. Her present book project, *Romantic Scraps*, investigates how Romantics work with paper both conceptually and materially. MacLeod is Senior Editor of the journal *Word & Image*.

PETRA MAISAK studied history of art, German and history in Heidelberg and Cologne and received her PhD in 1978. From 1981 to 2015, she was director of the art collections at the Goethehaus / Freies Deutsches Hochstift in Frankfurt am Main, and had teaching positions at the Universities of Marburg and Gießen between 1988 and 1998. She has been a member of the Goethe-Gesellschaft (Goethe Society) in Weimar since 1983. She has curated numerous exhibitions and published widely on Classicism and Romanticism in German art and literature. Her research focuses on Goethe and the visual arts, especially Goethe's drawings.

THOMAS MARTINEC teaches German literature at the University of Regensburg. His research focuses on poetics and tragedy in the long eighteenth century and on music in poetics around 1900. Thomas is the author of *Lessings Theorie der Tragödienwirkung* (2003), and of *Unsaybarkeit und Musik in der Poetik um 1900* (2023). He is also the editor of *Familie und Identität in der deutschen Literatur* (with Claudia Nitschke, 2009) and *Rilkes Musikalität* (2019), and he is assistant and book review editor of the *Lessing Yearbook*.

STEFAN MATUSCHEK studied German, French and Philosophy at the Universities of Münster, Tours and Paris. He received his PhD in 1990 and his Habilitation in 1996. From 1996 he was Professor of Modern German Literature at the Friedrich-Schiller-Universität, Jena, and since 2004 he has held the chair of Modern German Literature and Comparative Literature at the same university. He has been director of 'Modell Romantik', a postgraduate programme funded by the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft since 2015, and President of the International Goethe Society in Weimar since 2019. His most recent publication is *Der Gedichtete Himmel: Eine Geschichte der Romantik* (2021).

CLARK S. MUENZER is co-editor of the *Goethe-Lexicon of Philosophical Concepts* and Emeritus Professor of German at the University of Pittsburgh. He has served as Executive Secretary and then President of the Goethe Society of North America. German literature and culture during the long eighteenth century has been the focus of his research for years, with special emphasis on the relationship of literature and

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philosophy. In his recent articles and work on the *GLPC*, Muenzer has reflected on Goethe's heterodox engagement with Western metaphysics in dialogue with such twentieth-century philosophical heretics as Alfred North Whitehead, Martin Heidegger and Gilles Deleuze.

ANGUS NICHOLLS is Professor of Comparative Literature and German at Queen Mary University of London. His monographs include *Goethe's Concept of the Daemonic* (2006) and *Myth and the Human Sciences* (2015). He was formerly co-editor of the *Publications of the English Goethe Society* and currently serves on the editorial board of the *Goethe-Lexicon of Philosophical Concepts*.

CLAUDIA NITSCHKE is Professor of German at Durham University, UK. Before coming to Durham, she was a Praelector (DAAD) at Lincoln College, Oxford, and lecturer at the University of Tübingen. She has published monographs on Achim von Arnim (2004), notions of 'fatherhood' in German literature (*Der öffentliche Vater*, 2012), and recognition and justice in the Age of Goethe (*Anerkennung und Kalkül*, 2020). She has also co-edited volumes on the interrelations between family and identity (*Familie und Identität in der deutschen Literatur*, 2009), and hospitality, intertextuality and economy in eighteenth-century German and English drama (*Gastlichkeit und Ökonomie*, 2014).

GRAZIA PULVIRENTI is Professor of German Studies and Neurohermeneutics at the Department of Humanities, University of Catania. She has held visiting positions in Vienna and London and is President of the Lamberto Puggelli Foundation Onlus. She is the recipient of the following awards: Anna Maria Ortese, 2019, L'Iguana, 2021, Nomination at the Premio Strega 2021. She is co-editor of the book series *Wunderkammer* and co-founder of the digital platform of interdisciplinary studies about neurocognitive sciences and humanities www.neurohumanitiestudies.eu. Her research is mainly focused on the intersection of literature and neurocognitive sciences, visual culture, Austrian literature and eighteenth-century German literature.

T. J. (JIM) REED was Fellow and Tutor in German at St John's College, Oxford, from 1963 to 1988, and Taylor Professor and Fellow of the Queen's College, Oxford, from 1989 to 2004. He is a Fellow of the British Academy, corresponding fellow of the Göttingen Akademie der Wissenschaften (Göttingen Academy of Sciences and Humanities), and is the recipient of many awards, including the Gold Medal of the Goethe-Gesellschaft (German Goethe Society) in 1991, and the

Schillerprofessur Jena in 1999. He has published widely, above all on Thomas Mann, Goethe, classicism, the Enlightenment and Heine, and has also produced a number of editions and translations of major works.

HEATHER I. SULLIVAN is Professor of German and Comparative Literature at Trinity University in San Antonio, Texas. She is Associate Editor of *Ecozon@* and President of the Goethe Society of North America (2022–4). Sullivan has published widely on ecocriticism and Goethe studies, including the co-edited volumes *German Ecocriticism in the Anthropocene* and *The Early History of Embodied Cognition from 1740–1920*; guest co-edited special volumes on the environmental humanities in *New German Critique*, *Colloquia Germanica* and *Interdisciplinary Studies of Literature and the Environment*; and is the author of *The Intercontextuality of Self and Nature in Ludwig Tieck's Early Works*.

GABRIEL TROP is Associate Professor of German at the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill. He is the author of *Poetry as a Way of Life: Aesthetics and Askesis in the German Eighteenth Century* (2015), co-edited the volume *Posthumanism in the Age of Humanism: Mind, Matter, and the Life Sciences after Kant* with Edgar Landgraf and Leif Weatherby (2018), and is the author of numerous articles.

ROBERT VILAIN is Senior Tutor of St Hugh's College, Oxford, having previously held chairs in German and Comparative Literature at the University of Bristol and at Royal Holloway, University of London. He works mostly on Franco-German comparative literature in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, particularly poetry; on symbolism, decadence, modernism and the avant-garde; and on the relations between literature and music or the visual arts. The subjects of his articles on individual authors range chronologically from Goethe in the 1820s to Gerhard Rühm in the 1960s, and on musicians from Wagner and Strauss to Schoenberg and Weill.

LILIANE WEISSBERG is Christopher H. Brown Distinguished Professor in Arts and Science at the University of Pennsylvania. She has held visiting professorships at numerous universities in the United States, Germany, Austria and Switzerland. Among her awards are a Guggenheim Fellowship, the Alexander von Humboldt Research Prize, the Berlin Prize of the American Academy in Berlin, and an honorary degree from the University of Graz. Her most recent book publications are *Benjamin Veitel Ephraim: Kaufmann, Schriftsteller, Geheimagent* (2021), and *Psychoanalysis, Fatherhood, and the Modern Family* (2022).

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JOACHIM WHALEY is Emeritus Professor of German History and Thought at the University of Cambridge, a Life Fellow of Gonville and Caius College, and a Fellow of the British Academy. He is the author of *Germany and the Holy Roman Empire 1493–1806* (2012) and *The Holy Roman Empire: A Very Short Introduction* (2018), as well as other books and numerous scholarly articles on German history and thought.

SEÁN M. WILLIAMS is Senior Lecturer in German and European Cultural History in the School of Languages and Cultures at the University of Sheffield, following a lectureship at Bern in Switzerland and a DPhil from the University of Oxford. He has published on Gellert, Goethe, Hegel, E. T. A. Hoffmann, Jean Paul, Kant and Klopstock, among others. His book examines the Age of Goethe through the prism of the preface; he has co-edited essays on anthologies. Seán has contributed to, presented and researched discussion programmes, documentaries and series for international radio, bringing the era around 1800 into the present for broad audiences.

W. DANIEL WILSON was Professor of German at Berkeley (1983–2005) and is now Emeritus Professor at Royal Holloway, University of London. His research has focused on eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century literature in its political and social contexts. His books include *Goethe Männer Knaben: Ansichten zur 'Homosexualität'* (2012), *Goethes Erotica und die Weimarer 'Zensoren'* (2015) and *Der Faustische Pakt: Goethe und die Goethe-Gesellschaft im Dritten Reich* (2018). He is writing the first comprehensive study of Goethe and the Jews for Beck-Verlag. In 2016 he received the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation's Reimar Lüst Award for International Scholarly and Cultural Exchange.

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Note on Translations and List of Abbreviations

Efforts have been made to cite existing published translations of Goethe's works. Quotations are referenced first to one of the major German critical editions and then to an English version. For consistency, we have in many cases used the multi-volume *Goethe's Collected Works*, published by Princeton University Press, which is the most comprehensive English-language edition of Goethe. Readers looking for a more compact edition might enjoy *The Essential Goethe*, ed. Matthew Bell (Princeton University Press, 2015), which reprints a number of the translations in the *Collected Works* in a single volume and offers an excellent introduction. Other translations are also cited in the present volume, especially for *Faust*, which is treated in a separate list below. For works that have not been translated, or where an author had reasons for using their own version, new translations have been provided.

Some contributions to the volume were originally written in German. They have been translated by the editor in partnership with the authors.

The following abbreviations are used in this book.

Critical Editions of Goethe's Works

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| AA | Johann Wolfgang Goethe, <i>Sämtliche Werke. Gedenkausgabe</i> , ed. Ernst Beutler (Zurich: Artemis, 1949; Munich: dtv, 1977). |
| FA | Johann Wolfgang Goethe, <i>Sämtliche Werke. Briefe, Tagebücher und Gespräche. 40 in 45 Bänden in 2 Abteilungen</i> , ed. Dieter Borchmeyer, Karl Eibel, Albrecht Schöne and others (Frankfurt am Main: Deutscher Klassiker Verlag, 1985–99). |
| GG | <i>Goethes Gespräche. Eine Sammlung zeitgenössischer Berichte aus seinem Umgang auf Grund der Ausgabe und des Nachlasses von Flodoard Freiherrn von Biedermann</i> , completed and ed. Wolfgang Herwig, 6 vols. (Zurich und Stuttgart: Artemis, 1965–87). |

- xxii *Note on Translations and List of Abbreviations*
- HA *Goethes Werke. Hamburger Ausgabe in 14 Bänden*, XIII, ed. Erich Trunz (Munich: Beck, 1981).
- HAB *Goethes Briefe und Briefe an Goethe. Hamburger Ausgabe in 6 Bänden*, ed. Karl Robert Mandelkow with Bodo Morawe (Munich: Beck, 1976).
- HABfe *Goethes Briefe und Briefe an Goethe. Hamburger Ausgabe in 6 Bänden*, ed. Karl Robert Mandelkow with Bodo Morawe, 4th edn (Munich: Beck, 1988ff.).
- LA *Goethe. Die Schriften zur Naturwissenschaft (Leopoldina)*, ed. K. Lothar Wolf, Wilhelm Troll, Dorothea Kuhn and Wolf von Engelhardt (Weimar: Böhlau Nachfolger, 1954).
- MA *Johann Wolfgang Goethe. Sämtliche Werke nach Epochen Seines Schaffens, Münchner Ausgabe*, ed. Karl Richter and others, 21 vols. (in 33) (Munich: Hanser, 1985–98).
- WA *Goethes Werke: Herausgegeben im Auftrage der Großherzogin Sophie von Sachsen, Abteilung I–IV*, 133 vols. (in 143) (Weimar: Böhlau, 1887–1919).

English Translations of Goethe's Works (see separate list below for versions of *Faust*)

- B *Goethe's Botanical Writings*, trans. Beate Müller (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2021 [1952]).
- CW *Goethe's Collected Works* (Princeton University Press, 1994–5; originally published New York: Suhrkamp, 1983–9).
- Vol. 1 *Selected Poems*, ed. Christopher Middleton, trans. Michael Hamburger, David Luke, Christopher Middleton, John Frederick Nims and Vernon Watkins.
- Vol. 2 *Faust I & II*, ed. and trans. Stuart Atkins.
- Vol. 3 *Essays on Art and Literature*, ed. John Gearey, trans. Ellen von Nardroff and Ernest H. von Nardroff.
- Vols. 4–5 *From My Life: Poetry and Truth*, ed. Thomas P. Saine and Jeffrey L. Sammons.
- Vol. 4: *Poetry and Truth, Parts I–III*, trans. Robert R. Heitner.
- Vol. 5: *Poetry and Truth, Part IV. Campaign in France. Siege of Mainz*, trans. with an introduction and notes by Thomas P. Saine.
- Vol. 6 *Italian Journey*, ed. Thomas P. Saine and Jeffrey L. Sammons, trans. Robert R. Heitner, introduction and notes by Thomas P. Saine.

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- Vol. 7 *Early Verse Drama and Prose Plays*, ed. Cyrus Hamlin and Frank Ryder, trans. Robert M. Browning, Michael Hamburger, Cyrus Hamlin and Frank Ryder.
- Vol. 8 *Verse Plays and Epic*, ed. Cyrus Hamlin and Frank Ryder, trans. Michael Hamburger, Hunter Hunnum and David Luke.
- Vol. 9 *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship*, ed. and trans. Eric A. Blackall in cooperation with Victor Lange.
- Vol. 10 *Conversations of German Refugees; Wilhelm Meister's Journeyman Years or, the Renunciants*, ed. Jane K. Brown, trans. Jan van Heurck (in cooperation with Jane K. Brown) and Krishna Winston.
- Vol. 11 *The Sorrows of Young Werther; Elective Affinities; Novella*, ed. David E. Wellbery, trans. Victor Lange and Judith Ryan.
- Vol. 12 *Scientific Studies*, ed. and trans. Douglas Miller.
- E Johann Peter Eckermann, *Conversations with Goethe in the Last Years of His Life*, trans. Allan Blunden, with an introduction and notes by Ritchie Robertson (London: Penguin, 2022).
- FvS *Selections from Goethe's Letters to Frau von Stein, 1776–1789*, ed. and trans. Robert M. Browning (Columbia, SC: Camden House, 1990).
- I *The Flight to Italy: Diary and Selected Letters*, translated by T. J. Reed (Oxford University Press, 1999).
- L *Letters from Goethe*, trans. M. von Herzfeld and C. Melvil Sym (Edinburgh University Press, 1957).
- RE *Roman Elegies and The Diary*, trans. David Luke, introduction by Hans Rudolf Vaget (London: Libris, 1988).
- SPL *Selected Poetry*, trans. with an introduction and notes by David Luke (London: Libris, 1999).
- SPW *Selected Poems*, trans. John Whaley, introduction by Matthew Bell (London: Dent, 1998).
- SV *Selected Verse*, with plain prose translations of each poem, ed. with an introduction by David Luke (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1986 [1964]).
- W *The Sorrows of Young Werther*, trans. with an introduction and notes by David Constantine (Oxford University Press 2012).
- WDO *West-Eastern Divan*, trans. and annotated by Eric Ormsby (London: Gingko, 2019).

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WDW *Poems of the West and East: West-Eastern Divan / West-östlicher Divan. Bi-lingual Edition of the Complete Poems*, verse translation by John Whaley, introduction by Katharina Mommsen (Bern: Lang, 1998).

English Translations of *Faust*

- AF *Faust: A Tragedy; Interpretative Notes, Contexts, Modern Criticism*, trans. Walter Arndt, ed. Cyrus Hamlin (New York: W. W. Norton, 2001 [1976]).
- CF₁ *Faust: The First Part of the Tragedy*, trans. with an introduction by David Constantine and a preface by A. S. Byatt (London: Penguin, 2005).
- CF₂ *Faust: The Second Part of the Tragedy*, trans. David Constantine, with a preface by A. S. Byatt (London: Penguin, 2009).
- CW₂ *Faust I & II*, ed. and trans. Stuart Atkins.
- LF₁ *Faust. Part One*, trans. with an introduction and notes by David Luke (Oxford University Press, 2008 [1987]).
- LF₂ *Faust. Part Two*, trans. with an introduction and notes by David Luke (Oxford University Press, 2008 [1994]).
- WF *Faust. A Tragedy in Two Parts*, trans. with an introduction and notes by John R. Williams (Ware: Wordsworth Editions, 2007).

Chronology^{*}

- 1749 28 August: Johann Wolfgang Goethe is born in Frankfurt-am-Main to Johann Caspar Goethe (1710–1782) and Catharina Elisabeth Goethe, née Textor (1731–1808).
- 1750 Birth of Goethe's sister Cornelia.
- 1753 Grandmother gives Goethe puppet theatre for Christmas.
- 1756 Begins to learn Latin and Greek.
- 1759 French army occupies Frankfurt.
- 1763 Confirmation.
Visits recital by Mozart.
- 1765 Moves to Leipzig to study law.
- 1768 Serious illness (possibly tuberculosis), return to Frankfurt.
- 1769 Publishes first collection of poems.
- 1770 Moves to Strasbourg to study for the doctorate in law.
Meets Johann Gottfried Herder.
- 1771 Relationship with Friederike Brion in Sessenheim; abrupt return to Frankfurt.
Begins legal practice in Frankfurt.
Writes *Götz von Berlichingen* (published 1773).
- 1772 Execution in Frankfurt of Susanna Margarete Brandt.
Goethe at Imperial Chamber of Justice in Wetzlar.
Meets Charlotte Buff.
- 1773 Cornelia marries.
- 1774 Writes and publishes *Die Leiden des jungen Werther* (*The Sorrows of Young Werther*).
Begins *Faust*.
Carl August (from 1775 Duke of Weimar-Saxe-Eisenach) visits Goethe in Frankfurt.
- 1775 Goethe engaged briefly to Lili Schönemann; breaks off engagement.
Travels in Switzerland.

- Begins *Egmont*.
 Moves to Weimar on the invitation of Carl August.
- 1776 Begins ten-year friendship with Charlotte von Stein.
 First visit to Ilmenau.
 Appointed Legation Councillor, joins the Privy Council in Weimar.
 Begins *Wilhelm Meister*.
- 1777 Death of Cornelia.
 Goethe travels in the Harz.
- 1779 *Iphigenie auf Tauris* (*Iphigenia in Tauris*); prose version. Final version in blank verse produced 1786.
- 1780 Becomes a Freemason.
- 1782 Becomes chancellor of the duchy's Exchequer.
 Ennobled to 'von Goethe'.
 Death of Goethe's father.
- 1784 Discovers intermaxillary bone in humans.
- 1785 Withdraws from Privy Council and Exchequer.
- 1786 Travels to Rome, via Verona and Venice.
- 1787 To Naples, Sicily and again to Rome.
- 1788 Returns to Weimar; relieved by Carl August of most administrative duties.
 Begins living with Christiane Vulpius.
 Works on *Römische Elegien* (*Roman Elegies*), to 1790; published 1795, with the exception of four, suppressed until 1914.
- 1789 Birth of son August.
Torquato Tasso.
Versuch die Metamorphose der Pflanzen zu erklären (*On the Metamorphosis of Plants*).
- 1790 Travels to Venice.
Venezianische Epigramme (*Venetian Epigrams*), published 1796.
Faust. Ein Fragment.
- 1791 Becomes director of Weimar theatre.
 Commences work on optics.
- 1792 Accompanies Carl August on the Allied campaign to France in 1792.
- 1793 Witnesses siege and destruction of Mainz.
- 1794 Beginning of friendship and collaboration with Friedrich Schiller.
- 1795 Publication of *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* (*Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship*, to 1796).