Appendix 1: Chronology of Frege’s Life and Works

(What little is known of Frege’s life is recorded in Bynum, 1972a, on which the present chronology is based. See also the Introduction, §1 above. For a complete list of Frege’s works, arranged chronologically, see the Bibliography below.)

1848 Birth of Friedrich Ludwig Gottlob Frege on 8 November in Wismar, on the Baltic Sea. His father, Karl Alexander (b. 1809), was principal of a private girls’ school, and his mother, Augustine Bialloblotzky, was a teacher and later principal of the school.

1864 Entered the Gymnasium in Wismar.

1866 Death of Frege’s father.

1869 Passed his Abitur in the spring and immediately entered the University of Jena, where he spent four semesters, taking courses in chemistry, mathematics and philosophy.

1871 Transferred to the University of Göttingen, where he spent five semesters, taking courses in physics, mathematics and philosophy of religion.

1873 Awarded his doctorate on 12 December for his dissertation ‘On a Geometrical Representation of Imaginary Forms in the Plane’ (GR).

1874 Appointed to the post of Privatdozent (an unsalaried lectureship) in the mathematics faculty at the University of Jena in May, submitting his Habilitationsschrift on ‘Methods of Calculation based on an Extension of the Concept of Magnitude’ (MC). Had a heavy teaching load during the first few years of his career.

1878 Death of Frege’s mother.

1879 Publication of Begriffsschrift (BS). Promoted to außerordentlicher Professor (a salaried position), on the recommendation of Ernst Abbe, his mentor at Jena. His book was, however, poorly received.

1884 Publication of Die Grundlagen der Arithmetik (GL). Again, the reviews were unfavourable.

1892 Publication of ‘On Concept and Object’ (CO) and ‘On Sinn and Bedeutung’ (SB), heralding the central development in Frege’s semantic views.

1893 Publication of Volume I of Frege’s magnum opus, the Grundgesetze der Arithmetik (GG). Once again, the reviews were unfavourable. One of them, however, was by Peano, which led to an exchange of letters between Frege and Peano, and through Peano, to Russell’s reading of Frege’s works.

1894 Review of Husserl’s Philosophie der Arithmetik (RH), which helped convert Husserl to anti-psychologism.

1895 Promoted to the post of Honorary Ordinary Professor. The post was unsalaried, but with no administrative duties, and with a stipend arranged by Abbe from the Carl Zeiss Stiftung (a foundation that Abbe had helped set up), Frege acquired more time for research.

1902 Letter from Russell to Frege, dated 16 June, informing him of the contradiction in his logical system.

1903 Publication, at Frege’s own expense, of Volume II of the Grundgesetze, including a hastily written appendix seeking to respond to Russell’s paradox.

1905 Death of Frege’s wife, Margaret Lieseburg (b. 1856), leaving Frege with their adopted son, Alfred. (Their natural children had died young, and Alfred had been adopted around 1900.)

1910 Carnap attended Frege’s course on logic. Carnap also attended later courses, including one given in 1914 on ‘Logic in Mathematics’ (LM).

1911 Wittgenstein visited Frege, who recommended that he study with Russell.

1918 Retired from the University of Jena, and moved to Bad Kleinen, near Wismar. Publication of ‘Der Gedanke’ (T).

1925 Death of Frege on 26 July at the age of 77.

1935 Frege’s Nachläß handed over by Alfred Frege to Heinrich Scholz of the University of Münster, who was planning an edition of Frege’s works. Copies were made of most of the important pieces. (For details of the history of Frege’s Nachläß, see NS, pp. xxxiv–xlii/PMC, pp. ix–xiii.)

1943 Frege’s Nachläß deposited in the University Library at Münster.

1944 Alfred Frege killed in action in France on 15 June.

1945 Frege’s Nachläß destroyed in a bombing raid on Münster on 25 March.

1950 First English translation, by J. L. Austin, of Frege’s Grundlagen (FA).

1952 First English edition, by P. T. Geach and M. Black, of Frege’s published philosophical writings (TPW).

1969 Frege’s Nachgelassene Schriften (NS), based on the copies Scholz had made, finally published in German (translated into English as PW in 1970).

1976 Frege’s correspondence (WFB) published in German (translated into English, in an abridged edition, as PMC in 1980).