Sigmund Freud (1856–1939)

The Austrian neurologist and psychiatrist Sigmund Freud was born in Freiberg in eastern Moravia (now Pílyor, Czechoslovakia) in 1856. As a student he already worked at the Institute of Physiology (University of Vienna) and had published papers on neurohistology. In 1885 Freud became Docent for Neuropathology and travelled to Paris for six months. There the introduction to the phenomena of hysteria and hypnotism brought a fundamental reorientation in Freud’s scientific interests. Back in Vienna he withdrew from academic life and opened a practice. The cooperation with the physician Breuer—aimed at developing promising methods of treating hysteria—led to Freud’s development of psychoanalysis as a therapeutic procedure, which at the same time provided him with the basis for his ideas on the instinctive structure of human behaviour, at the centre of which, in his opinion, was the sexual drive.

Sigmund Freud died in London on 23 September 1939. In 1938 the publications of this Jewish doctor had been “consigned to the flames”. His teaching—much criticised, rejected, misinterpreted, and in part disproved—had had a considerable and worldwide influence on the development not only of anthropology, psychology, psychiatry, and psychotherapy, but also on philosophy, art, and literature. Austria commemorated him in 1981 with a stamp.

FRANZ ALLERBERGER