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## *Biographical Notes*

**Maurice Halbwachs** (1877–1945) was the first to coin the term and conceptualise the notion of ‘collective memory’. As a student and collaborator of Emile Durkheim on the ‘L’Année Sociologique’ since 1905, his debts to this teacher can be traced throughout his work. Nonetheless, his work on collective memory, though perhaps the most Durkheimian in spirit and in method, is also the most independent from the master as well as the other disciples, who were friends and collaborators. He started his lifelong engagement with the topic as early as 1925 with ‘Les Cadres sociaux de la mémoire’ (Paris, Alcan, 1925; translated into English as *On Collective Memory*, with an introduction by Lewis A Coser (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1992)). He combined his interests in both social morphology and the imprint of social life into social space, and collective memory in his 1941 study on the legends from a book of gospels from rural France (*La Topographie légendaire des Évangiles en Terre Sainte, étude du mémoire collective* (Paris, Presses universitaires de France, 1941). His exploration of the spatial organisation of social life also shaped his last (unfinished) work on collective memory, *La Mémoire collective* that was posthumously published by his sister (Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, 1950; translated into English as *The Collective Memory*, with an introduction by Mary Douglas (New York, Harper, 1950)). The amazing diversity of his work and research is characterised by a continuous engagement with what he saw as ‘collective psychology’ and the material conditions of social life. Collective psychology, at the core of which is his work on collective memory, is the science of the representation of material conditions in social life, and simultaneously the science of the representation of social life in the individual. His last book on collective memory testifies to this, starting with a chapter on individual memory and dreams, and finishing with a chapter on social space and memory. In 1919, Maurice Halbwachs became Professor of Sociology at the University of Strasbourg. From 1935 to 1944 he held a Chair in Sociology at the Sorbonne. In 1944 he was awarded a Chair in Collective Psychology; but only a month later, he was arrested by the Gestapo and deported to the concentration camp Buchenwald in Germany. He was murdered there in March 1945, only days before the Allies liberated the camp.

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