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Rare Books and Manuscripts by
Mark James & Anke Timmermann



PRESS RELEASE

RESEARCH COLLECTIONS OF T.E. LAWRENCE'S AUTHORISED BIOGRAPHER JEREMY WILSON ACQUIRED BY MAGDALEN COLLEGE, OXFORD

'ANY FUTURE BOOK ABOUT T.E. LAWRENCE WILL BE BUT A COMMENTARY ON IT'
(Nigel Nicolson on Wilson's *Lawrence of Arabia*)

Magdalen College, Oxford have acquired a major collection of books, manuscripts, and iconography on the Arabist, soldier, and writer T.E. Lawrence ('Lawrence of Arabia', 1888-1935), assembled over fifty years by Jeremy Wilson, Lawrence's authorised biographer, whose publications dispelled many of the myths surrounding Lawrence and re-defined the modern perception of him. Daryl Green, College Librarian, commented:



'Magdalen is delighted to acquire this important research collection relating to Lawrence, one of the most celebrated twentieth-century figures associated with the college, through the generosity of our alumni and other patrons. This acquisition significantly enlarges our Lawrence holdings and will provide future scholars with access to Wilson's manuscripts and typescripts, his library of books by and about Lawrence (many inscribed to him or annotated), and his remarkable collection of iconographic materials relating to Lawrence. With this acquisition, Magdalen's collections now include volumes from Lawrence's own library at Cloud's Hill, first and limited editions of books by Lawrence, artefacts and archives which illustrate Lawrence's time as a Senior Demy at Magdalen (1911-1914), and rare portraits which have previously been exhibited at the National Portrait Gallery and the Imperial War Museum. A selection of these items will be on display, together with important loans from private and public collections in our forthcoming exhibition "Lawrence of Oxford" (7 November 2018-1 May 2019).'

T.E. Lawrence graduated from Jesus College, Oxford in 1910 with first class honours and he was awarded a four-year's Senior Demyskip by Magdalen College, Oxford at the instigation of the distinguished archaeologist D.G. Hogarth, himself an alumnus and sometime fellow and tutor of Magdalen, and Keeper of the Ashmolean Museum. This award, worth £100 a year, enabled Lawrence to participate in the British Museum's excavations at Carchemish organised by Hogarth, who would be the Director of the Arab Bureau during World War I (working closely with Lawrence during the Arab Revolt), and whose friendship was one of the most important in Lawrence's life.

Jeremy Wilson (1944-2017) first became interested in Lawrence as an undergraduate at Balliol College, Oxford in the early 1960s. Some years later Wilson met T.E. Lawrence's younger brother and literary executor, the archaeologist A.W. Lawrence, and, at his behest, Wilson edited T.E. Lawrence's *Minorities* (1971) for Jonathan Cape. In 1975 Wilson was appointed T.E. Lawrence's authorised biographer and he began assembling a research collection of printed, manuscript, and graphic works



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to support his work on Lawrence, publishing introductions to the Penguin Modern Classics edition of Lawrence's *The Mint* (1978) and the Limited Editions Club edition of Lawrence's translation of *The Odyssey* in 1981, editing the Whittington Press edition of Lawrence's *Letters to E.T. Leeds* (1988), and writing the catalogue of the National Portrait Gallery's landmark exhibition *T.E. Lawrence*.

In 1989 Wilson published his magisterial *Lawrence of Arabia; The Authorised Biography of T.E. Lawrence*, which was widely praised for its meticulous scholarship, comprehensive research, and painstaking, almost archaeological, removal of the palimpsest of myth, rumour, and misinformation which had obscured Lawrence's life. Reviewing it for *The New York Times Review of Books* Nigel Nicolson wrote that, 'this biography will endure beside *Seven Pillars* as [Lawrence's] monument, and any future book about T.E. Lawrence will be but a commentary on it'. *Lawrence of Arabia* consolidated Wilson's position as the pre-eminent authority on Lawrence and in the following

decades he contributed to numerous journals, lectured on Lawrence internationally, and, with his wife Nicole, established the Castle Hill Press to publish finely-printed, scholarly editions of Lawrence's letters and works.

Magdalen College's acquisition of Wilson's research collection was handled on behalf of Nicole Wilson by Mark James of antiquarian booksellers Type & Forme, who said, 'we are very pleased to have assisted Magdalen with the successful acquisition of this remarkable collection', while Nicole Wilson commented, 'I am delighted that Jeremy's working library and archive are now with Magdalen, an institution that he had a particular affection for and where he gave one of his last lectures, "T.E. Lawrence: A Fascination with Portraits", in 2015'.

TYPE & FORME ABA, PBFA was established in 2018 by Mark James FLS and Anke Timmermann PhD, FLS, who share a broad range of experience in the field of rare books and manuscripts. Mark James worked in the book departments of Sotheby's and Christie's (latterly as an Associate Director) between 1993 and 2007, before joining Henry Sotheran Ltd as Head of the Travel Book Department in 2007, and then holding the same position at Bernard Quaritch Ltd from 2013 to 2017. Dr Timmermann is a historian of science, manuscript scholar and historian of the book who, after holding the Munby Fellowship in Bibliography at the University of Cambridge (2013-2014), moved from academia into the rare book trade, and was an antiquarian bookseller at Bernard Quaritch Ltd until 2017. Her publications include *Verse and Transmutation: A Corpus of Middle English Alchemical Poetry* (Leiden, 2013) and 'Alchemy in Cambridge; An Annotated Catalogue of Alchemical Texts and Illustrations in Cambridge Repositories' (*Nuncius* 30 (2015), 345-511).