

Lawrence of Arabia: The Authorized Biography of T.E. Lawrence

By Jeremy Wilson


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Jeremy Wilson

This is the concise edition of the authorized biography of T.E. Lawrence. The author gained access to closed archives in the Public Records Office and has drawn on British Government papers not released until 1975, to present a portrait of this eccentric individual.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Thomas Edward Lawrence's discovery that he was an illegitimate child filled him with deep bitterness and insecurity. As "Lawrence of Arabia," he struggled to achieve a sense of identity and personal worth missing in his boyhood. His homosexual rape by Turkish captors in 1917 scarred him with guilt and shame, making the prospect of consummation in a marriage abhorrent, contends Wilson, official biographer as authorized by the Lawrence estate, who rebuts claims that his subject had homosexual affairs. According to this 1200-page tome, Lawrence was not the benevolent imperialist some critics have made him out to be, but an ardent supporter of Arab self-determination who felt morally degraded by the compromising role the British forced him to play in the Arab revolt against Turkish rule. This sense of debasement, argues Wilson, engendered a masochistic disorder that later led Lawrence to enlist in the Royal Air Force. Through its comprehensive amassing of facts and documents, the book credibly replaces the romantic legend of Lawrence with the image of a tragic idealist whose political aims were frustrated by diplomacy. Photos.

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From Library Journal

Numerous books have been written about T.E. Lawrence since his death in 1935, particularly in the last decade. This volume is fuller and more balanced than its predecessors, drawing extensively on relevant documents, including recently released British government records and never before available Lawrence family papers. Wilson successfully depicts all aspects of Lawrence's strengths and accomplishments, including his development as a literary figure and his friendships with writers and political leaders, without either minimizing or overdramatizing his psychological and emotional weaknesses. Wilson's lucid and well-paced prose style makes his careful research fascinating. This detailed study may be too elaborate for the casual reader, but it will be essential for libraries with readers seriously interested in the period or the man.

- *Elizabeth R. Hayford, Assoc. Colls. of the Midwest, Chicago*

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Users Review

From reader reviews:

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