

# JAMES ELROY FLECKER

## THE COLLECTION OF HOWARD MOSELEY



### **BLACKWELL'S RARE BOOKS**

48-51 Broad Street, Oxford, OX1 3BQ, UK  
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James Elroy Flecker was born in 1884; he was educated at his father's Dean Close School and Uppingham, then attended Trinity College, Oxford and Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge; the latter was in training for the consular service, which took him to Constantinople and Beirut, where he knew T.E. Lawrence. His career was curtailed by illness, and he died in 1915, aged thirty, from tuberculosis. He had published a handful of books that formed a monument to his romantic vision of the East – including poetry, and prose both creative and critical, though not yet the drama that brought him great acclaim in post-war London. His legacy outweighed his lifetime success, just as his posthumous publications outweighed those he saw in print.

This is a substantial archive, the most complete collection of Flecker material hitherto on the market – including a number of outstanding rarities, such as his undergraduate collaboration with J.D. Beazley or the German true first edition of *Hassan*, and superb association copies. The collection is equally divided, in terms of the number of items, between printed and manuscript material. There are numerous presentation copies to the poet's family and friends – including, in two cases, the dedicatee of the work in question; beyond Flecker's circle, there are glimpses of his wider reception in the literary world. Also present are Flecker's copies of the work of others, presented to or by him, in one instance with an original comic poem by Flecker as part of his inscription.

The manuscript material ranges from juvenilia and unpublished work to unique copies of some of Flecker's most important poetry, including his most famous poem 'The Golden Journey to Samarkand' – here with an unpublished verse and, as elsewhere, with numerous variant readings. Further manuscript poetry accompanies some of the letters,

The letters from Flecker, fifteen autograph pieces of correspondence along with Roger Senhouse's heavily annotated typed transcript of twenty letters from Flecker to Sir Edward Marsh, provide a compelling record of the author's various interests and activities – principally literary, but with some reference to his diplomatic career, personal life and plans for the future. They are supplemented by some important letters from the poet's widow to his friend, John Mavrogordato, dealing with Flecker's death and his literary remains – as well as one from Francis Brett Young to Heller Nicholls, greeting news of the poet's passing with the pronouncement, 'These are bad days – bad days'.

A selection of secondary material includes two outstanding pieces: T.E. Lawrence's 'Essay on Flecker' is here in proof form, corrected extensively by the A.W. Lawrence, with two letters from the same to Hellé Flecker; the poet's brother Oswald, meanwhile, provides a manuscript lecture on Flecker's verse.

The collection was formed by the late Howard Moseley, bibliophile and Eton housemaster, and compares in scope and quality with his collection of Rupert Brooke – Flecker's friend and Cambridge contemporary – now in the Eton College Library.

**THE PRICE FOR THE COLLECTION: £55,000**

## BOOKS AND EPHEMERA BY FLECKER

1. *The Best Man*, Oxford, Eights Week, 1906

Written whilst Flecker was preparing for his Finals, as a way to reduce his debts. Produced in collaboration with his close friend John Davidson Beazley – later knighted, but his literary ambitions curtailed by his eminence as an archaeologist – who drew all the illustrations. Number of copies unknown, but few and rare.

2. *The Bridge of Fire*, Elkin Mathews, 1907

Three copies of the first edition, all in original red wrappers:

- (a) John Mavrogordato's copy, initialled on front cover and signed on half-title. Inscribed 'read for Elkin Mathews June 1907'. Boxed.
- (b) Presentation copy to Professor Walter Raleigh, with letter from Flecker, undated, sending the copy. 'The reviews have been brief and discouraging . . . thanking you for your exceeding kindness toward me.'
- (c) F. C. Prevot's copy.

3. *The Last Generation, A Story of the Future*, The New Age Press, 1908

- (a) The dedication copy, inscribed 'To Frank [Savery] from James' with tipped-in letter to same, from Cambridge, asking for his opinion of the book. Boxed.
- (b) First edition, fine in wrappers.

4. *The Masque of the Magi (for Christmas or Epiphany)*, Bayley & Ferguson, [1908]

Sheet music, Choral Album No. 853. The author listed as James Elroy Fletcher and corrected in pencil, set to music by Heller Nicholls. 8pp.

5. *Thirty-Six Poems*, The Adelphi Press, 1910

Two copies:

- (a) First edition.
- (b) Second edition. Presentation copy to W. H. Nicholls, inscribed on the flyleaf; correction on p.68 towards the end of 'A Miracle at Bethlehem' with two lines crossed out and another two added during a performance of the poem. This change was adopted in some later versions of the poem.

6. *The Grecians, A Dialogue on Education*, J. M. Dent, 1910

7. *Forty-Two Poems*, J. M. Dent, 1911

- (a) Two copies of the first edition, one in price-cancelled dustjacket.
- (b) Lascelles Abercrombie's copy, with ALs from Flecker enclosed (Beirut, 18 January 1912), asking Abercrombie for a review in *The Daily News*.

8. *The Scholar's Italian Book*, David Nutt, 1911  
G. Wilson Knight's copy.
9. *The Golden Journey to Samarkand*, Max Goschen, 1913
- (a) 7/50 signed copies of the first edition, vellum spine, brown boards. Ex Kenneth A.Lohf. Boxed.
  - (b) 24/50 signed copies of the first edition, vellum spine, brown boards.
  - (c) Ordinary edition, blue cloth & dust-jacket; presentation copy from Edward Marsh to Edmund Gosse, with 4pp. ALs (6 January 1915), discussing Flecker who had just died. Ex Kenneth A. Lohf. Boxed.
  - (d) Ordinary edition, blue cloth, T. Balston's copy with his signature dated 1913.
10. *The King of Alsander*, Max Goschen, 1914
- (a) Tipped in postcard from Flecker in Switzerland to J. N. Mavrogordato, the work's dedicatee, explaining that a copy will be sent to him [from Goschen in London].
  - (b) First edition in the standard red binding, with title to backstrip and upper board Cancel slip over publisher's name: 'This book is now published by George Allen & Unwin Ltd.'
  - (c) First edition in yellow remainder binding. Max Goschen on title-page, but George Allen & Unwin Ltd on spine [dated 1915, this is classed as a new edition by Allen & Unwin]
  - (d) 1926 reprint by Allen & Unwin in damaged dustjacket. Dark blue cloth. Complimentary copy.
11. *Hassan*, Albert Langen, München, 1914  
German translation, predating the first English edition by eight years. W. Heller Nicholls' copy, with his annotations, explaining the publication and also the first German production in 1923 at Darmstadt. Tipped-in photograph of the Darmstadt Theatre. Original wrappers – the condition poor, but of the utmost rarity.
12. *The Old Ships*, The Poetry Bookshop, 1915
- (a) Presentation copy to John Mavrogordato from Hellé Flecker.
  - (b) Presentation copy to Edward Marsh from Hellé Flecker with a two page ALs discussing the recent death of Rupert Brooke, as well as her husband.
  - (c) First edition with the mermaid figure-head on front wrapper.
  - (d) Second edition with the mermaid removed.
  - (e) Second edition, with wrappers hand-coloured (front cover loose)

13. *God Save the King (A New Version)*, The Poetry Bookshop, [1915]  
Single folded sheet. Two copies
14. *God Save the King*, Clement Shorter, 1915  
With a Foreword by Clement Shorter, March 19 1915. One of twenty privately printed copies. Printed wrappers.
15. *The Burial in England*, Clement Shorter, 1915  
2/20 copies privately printed for his friends by Clement Shorter, and signed by him.
16. *Collected Prose*, G. Bell and Sons, 1920
  - (a) Two copies of the first edition with first state of title-page, one inscribed 'To the Poet's sister from his mother, Dec 20<sup>th</sup> 1920'
  - (b) First edition with second state of title page, with publisher named as William Heinemann and dated 1922.
17. *14 Poems*, Maurice Darantiere, Dijon, 1921, 1/50 copies on Old Japanese vellum. Lithographs by Charles Freegrove Winzer. Binding loose.
18. *Hassan*, William Heinemann, 1922
  - (a) First edition in dustjacket
  - (b) Programme for the first performance at His Majesty's Theatre, 20<sup>th</sup> September 1923. Together with two cast photos sold at the theatre during its original run.
  - (c) John Mavrogordato's copy of the 14<sup>th</sup> impression (1931) with note in his hand explaining that he had bought it in Oxford to replace one he had taken with him to the OUDS production of *Hassan* on Feb 21 1931. Tipped in are two envelopes from Hellé Flecker and a cutting of the *Times* review of the OUDS production.
19. *The Collected Poems of James Elroy Flecker*, Martin Secker, 1923  
Limited edition in dustjacket, 8/500 copies.
20. *Don Juan*, William Heinemann, 1925  
First edition, in dustjacket. Introduction by Hellé Flecker.
21. *The Letters of J. E. Flecker to Frank Savery*, The Beaumont Press, 1926  
One of 80 copies printed on parchment vellum and signed by Hellé Flecker, Claudia Guercio, Randolph Schwabe and C. W. Beaumont.

22. *Some Letters from Abroad of James Elroy Flecker*, William Heinemann Ltd., 1930  
 With reminiscences by Hellé Flecker and an introduction by J. C. Squire.

23. *Unpublished Poems and Drafts*, The Keepsake Press, 1971

With introduction and brief notes by Martin Booth. The poems come from Leonard Cheesman's archive, which Booth acquired. Two copies from an edition of 205, one in blue wrappers and the other in green boards with a light green dustjacket.

Along with various later editions of Flecker's work.

## MANUSCRIPTS

1. 'The Golden Journey to Samarkand'

4pp., quarto, signed 'James Elroy Flecker, The British Consulate, Smyrna, Asia Minor'. With numerous variant readings, including one unpublished verse.

2. 'The Gates of Damascus'

5pp., quarto, signed James Elroy Flecker. An early version. Very different from that published in 1913.

3. 'The Ballad of Iskander'

8 pp., quarto, signed James Elroy Flecker, April 1910, an early version, pre-publication.

4. 'Bryan of Brittany'

4pp., quarto, signed James Elroy Flecker. With numerous variant readings and the omission of three explanatory verses in part 3.

5. 'Santorin'

1p., folio, signed James Elroy Flecker, stamped 26 June 1912. Fair copy with four corrections to text.

6. 'Cradle Song', from the German of Dehmel

1p., quarto, signed Alroy Pardon [J. E. Flecker]. Fair copy with one correction to text. Not included in *Collected Poems* and presumably unpublished.

Together with a letter from J. C. Squire, 29 April 1936, agreeing to look at the ms., which he later confirmed was by JEF. Also, two original photographs of Flecker.

7. 'Lullaby'  
1p., octavo, unsigned. Fair copy with one correction to text.  
Another version of 'Cradle Song' (no. 6) but with many textual changes. Presumably unpublished.
8. 'Sleep my child'  
1p., octavo, unsigned. Fair copy. This lullaby is not in *Collected Poems* and is presumably unpublished.
9. 'Launch the galley, sailor bold'  
1p., octavo, unsigned. Fair copy but with corrections to second verse. Not in *Collected Poems* but an early version printed by Sherwood (p. 40), as a poem written by Flecker at Oxford. This is so different that the present version seems to be a later adaptation of a juvenile poem. The present version is a love poem; there is no girl in the Oxford version.
10. 'A little wind was on the lake'  
1p., octavo, unsigned. Fair copy. This unknown unpublished fourteen line poem is likely to have been written by JEF at Oxford, as it seems to have written at the same time as 9 above.
11. 'Roses for a golden head'  
1p., octavo, unsigned. Fair copy. Another apparently early poem, unpublished.
12. 'Lady Violette'  
2pp., octavo, unsigned. Fair copy – title was originally 'Lovely Violette'. Unpublished early poem. With the signature at the end of Heller Nicholls, who may well have planned to set the poem to music (the poem itself is in Flecker's hand).
13. 'When I was a dear little girl in frocks'  
1p., octavo, unsigned. Heavily corrected fair copy. Clearly intended to be sung, marked in places 'bis', 'rallentando', 'a tempo'.
14. 'Partenza'  
1p., octavo, unsigned. Fair copy. On the verso is a short list of church music in another hand.
15. 'Rex Diei, Noctis Lumen, A Christmas Carol'  
1p., quarto, unsigned. Fair copy, two columns, lightly corrected in pencil. Unpublished.

16. 'A Little Flower'  
1 p., quarto, unsigned. Fair copy. An unpublished early poem.
17. ['Three Kings have come to Bethlehem']  
4pp., octavo, unsigned. Fair copy in JEF's ordinary and italic hands, with light corrections in pen and pencil. An early version of 'The Masque of the Magi'.
18. 'I have sung all Love's old songs'  
1p., folio. Fair copy in pencil, together with 'Two bristly tramps are we', both unpublished and unsigned. Written on music paper with list of 'solos' on verso in another hand.
19. 'By the forest and meadow a boy has gone'  
2 pp., octavo. Fair copy, unsigned. Unpublished.
20. 'Ils étaient trois marins de groix'  
1p., octavo. Fair copy, unsigned. JEF has copied out a version of the first four lines of a popular Breton folk-song and translated them. Clearly unfinished.
21. Introduction to 'A Translation of Virgil Aeneid VI lines 264-547'  
1 p., quarto. Fair copy, corrected, in pencil. Signed (in ink) 'J. E. Flecker, Hotel Stephani, Montana-sur-Sierra, Switzerland'. With instructions to printer. Flecker is seeking for a publisher for a possible complete translation of Book VI.
22. *Don Juan*, typescripts, n.d.  
Five stapled individual acts of the play, two of Act 1, two of Act 2 and one of Act 3. The first copy of Act 1 has minor corrections in JEF's hand on five pages. This also has ownership inscriptions in pencil on front cover of H. E. Flecker and Jack Squire. The second copy of Act 1 has no corrections but has a typed letter tipped in. Dated 27<sup>th</sup> September 1911, it is from B. Iden Payne, returning the two acts of *Don Juan* and stating 'it is not the sort of play that would appeal to Miss Horniman'. The first copy of Act 2 has minor corrections in JEF's hand on six pages. It has the ownership inscription of H. E. Flecker. The second copy of Act 2 has no corrections. The copy of Act 3 is Flecker's own and is signed 'JE Flecker, The British Consulate, Smyrna'. There are ink corrections in JEF's hand on nineteen pages, some substantial.



## AUTOGRAPH LETTERS

### James Elroy Flecker

1. 2 ALs and 2 autograph postcards to Heller Nicholls, 1911-14, 8pp.  
All about music and requests for Nicholls to write settings for JEF's poems. They give interesting insights into the breadth of JEF's musical tastes.
2. ALs to Miss Jones, n.d. [1909], 2pp.,  
Probably to the daughter or sister of Captain H. Jones, a Boer War hero and housemaster at Uppingham, trying to fix a day for tea. Written during JEF's engagement to Eleanor Finlayson.
3. ALs to the Editor of *The Poetry Review*, 20 Nov [1912], 1p.  
Sending a copy of a poem for the December issue. This is 'The Artist's Mistress', a typewritten copy (with major variants from version in *Collected Poems*) enclosed.
4. Autograph postcard signed to [Edward] Marsh, 28 Nov 1912, 1p.  
Trying to fix an appointment to see him.
5. 2 ALs and 1 autograph postcard signed to Douglas Goldring, 1913-[14], 6pp.  
Lively letters about his publications and future plans.
6. 2 ALs to 'Kenneth', [1914], 9pp.  
Late letters with plans for 'French for the Field', a phrasebook for the fighting soldiers, a reprint of *The Grecians*, anthologies and poetry. 'Kenneth' works for a publisher JEF hopes to use now Goschen has stopped publishing during the war.
7. ALs to Edward Marsh, 6 Oct 1914, 2pp.  
Sending corrections to 12 lines of 'Burial in England'. New version enclosed in ms.
8. 2 ALs to John Mavrogordato, [1911] and [1912], 3 pp.  
Problems in writing *Don Juan* and difficulties in getting anyone interested in stage presentation. Plans after leaving Beirut, illness of Hellé, 'am of course highly practical, for a poet'.
9. Typed copies of a collection of 20 letters from Flecker to Edward Marsh, annotated throughout by Roger Senhouse. Prepared by Senhouse for a Collected Edition of

Flecker's Works for Secker and Warburg. Explanation in a typed copy of letter to Marsh from Senhouse, 8 April 1948. Photograph of Roger Senhouse included.

Hellé Flecker

1. 5 ALs (with envelopes) to John Mavrogordato, 10 Jan-19 April 1915, 13 pp.  
Highly important letters dealing with Flecker's death and his mss left behind. Together with typescript of 'The True Paradise' and ms, in HF's hand, of the fragments of 'Ode to the Glory of Greece' arranged in order. (9 pp., including an unpublished section.)
2. 5 ALs (with 1 envelope) to John Mavrogordato, [1921] - 1931. 13 pp.  
Discussing productions of *Hassan* in Oxford, Cambridge, London and Germany. Mention of *14 Poems*.

Francis Brett Young

1. ALs to Heller Nicholls, 10 Jan 1915, 1p.  
Thanking him for news of Flecker's death. 'These are bad days – bad days.'

**BOOKS OWNED BY FLECKER**

1. Douglas Goldring, *A Country Boy*, Adelphi Press, 1910. One of 40 copies. Inscribed by Goldring to JEF, 5<sup>th</sup> Nov 1910.
2. Stephen Phillips, *Ulysses*, John Lane, 1902  
Presentation copy to Leonard Cheeseman from JEF (as Kara James), with an eight line comic poem in Flecker's hand. Also a short ALs from Phillips to a 'Miss Yale'. Dennis Wheatley's bookplate.
3. *The Autobiography of Benvenuto Cellini*, translated by Thomas Roscoe, Newnes, 1904  
Inscribed 'G. Leonardo Cheeseman D.D. Kara-James' in JEF's hand, with an 18 line comic poem in Flecker's hand. Dennis Wheatley's bookplate.

## BOOKS AND ARTICLES ABOUT FLECKER

1. Douglas Goldring, *James Elroy Flecker*, Chapman and Hall, 1922
2. Geraldine Hodgson, *The Life of James Elroy Flecker*, Basil Blackwell, 1925
3. T.E.Lawrence, 'An Essay on Flecker', Doubleday Doran, 1937  
Proofs of this four page pamphlet, heavily corrected in ink and pencil by A.W. Lawrence. With two letters from A. W. Lawrence to Hellé Flecker
4. Oswald Flecker, 'The poems of J. E. Flecker', n.d.  
Manuscript notebook of a lecture given by JEF's brother, 50pp., probably written c. 1920. Oswald Flecker served in WWI.
5. A folder of clippings and ephemera relating to Flecker, including obituaries

