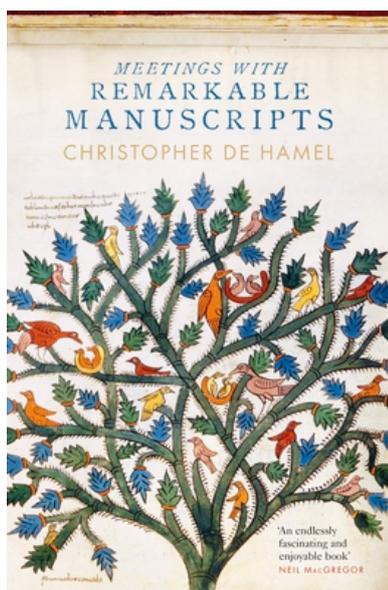


## WINNER OF THE WOLFSON HISTORY PRIZE 2017 ANNOUNCED



The winner of this year's Wolfson History Prize, awarded for excellence in accessible and scholarly history, has been announced as Dr Christopher de Hamel for his book *Meetings with Remarkable Manuscripts*.

De Hamel, who receives the £40,000 prize, is Fellow and former librarian of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge. He was one of six authors [shortlisted for the Prize earlier this year](#).

Awarded annually by the Wolfson Foundation for over forty years, the Wolfson History Prize has become synonymous with celebrating outstanding history. Established in 1972, it has awarded more than £1.1 million in recognition of the best historical writing being produced in the UK, reflecting qualities of both readability and excellence in writing and research.

**Sir David Cannadine, Chair of the Prize Judges, said:** "Christopher de Hamel's outstanding and original book pushes the boundaries of what it is and what it means to write history. By framing each manuscript of which he writes as the story of his own personal encounter with it, he leads the reader on many unforgettable journeys of discovery and learning. Deeply imaginative, beautifully written, and unfailingly humane, *Meetings with Remarkable Manuscripts* distils a lifelong love of these astonishing historical treasures, which the author brings so vividly to life. It is a masterpiece."

### About the Prize-winning book:

Part travel book, part detective story, part conversation with the reader, *Meetings with Remarkable Manuscripts* conveys the fascination and excitement of encountering some of the greatest works of art in our culture which, in the originals, are to most people completely inaccessible.

Christopher de Hamel traces the elaborate journeys that these exceptionally precious artefacts have made through time and space; how they have been copied, owned or lusted after; how they have been embroiled in politics and scholarly disputes; and how they have been regarded as objects of supreme luxury and symbols of national identity.

He introduces us to kings, queens, saints, scribes, artists, librarians, thieves, dealers, collectors and the international community of manuscript scholars, showing us how he and his fellows piece together evidence to reach unexpected conclusions.

## About the author:

In the course of a long career at Sotheby's Christopher de Hamel probably handled and catalogued more illuminated manuscripts and over a wider range than any person alive. He is Fellow and former librarian of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge. The Parker Library, which was in his care from 2000 to 2016, includes many of the earliest manuscripts in English language and history. He is a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries and the Royal Historical Society.

*Meetings with Remarkable Manuscripts* by Christopher de Hamel is published in hardback by Allen Lane at £30

## **Note to editors**

The Wolfson History Prize Judges in 2017 were Sir David Cannadine, Sir Richard Evans, Professor Julia Smith and Revd Professor Diarmaid MacCulloch. The other shortlisted authors for this year's Prize were:

Daniel Beer for *The House of the Dead: Siberian Exile under the Tsars* (Allen Lane)

Chris Given-Wilson for *Henry IV* (Yale University Press)

Sasha Handley for *Sleep in Early Modern England* (Yale University Press)

Lyndal Roper for *Martin Luther: Renegade and Prophet* (The Bodley Head)

Matthew Strickland for *Henry the Young King, 1155 – 1183* (Yale University Press)

First awarded by the Wolfson Foundation in 1972, the Wolfson History Prize remains a beacon of the best historical writing being produced in the UK, reflecting qualities of both readability and excellence in writing and research. Over £1.1 million has been awarded to 99 historians in its 45-year history, including Antony Beevor (for *Stalingrad*), Ian Kershaw (for *Hitler 1936-1945: Nemesis*), Antonia Fraser (for *The Weaker Vessel: Woman's Lot in Seventeenth-Century England*), Simon Schama (for *Patriots and Liberators: Revolution in the Netherlands, 1780-1813*) and Mary Beard (for *Pompeii: The Life of a Roman Town*). [The complete list of past winners is available here.](#) You can find out more at [www.wolfson.org.uk/history-prize](http://www.wolfson.org.uk/history-prize), and connect via [#WolfsonHistoryPrize](#) and [facebook.com/WolfsonHistoryPrize](https://facebook.com/WolfsonHistoryPrize)

**The Wolfson Foundation** ([www.wolfson.org.uk](http://www.wolfson.org.uk)) is an independent grant-making charity that aims to promote the civic health of society by supporting excellence in the arts & humanities, education, science and health. Since 1955, over £800 million (£1.7 billion in real terms) has been awarded to more than 10,000 projects across the UK, all on the basis of expert peer review.

The Wolfson Foundation is committed to supporting history and the humanities more broadly. Since 2012, awards across the UK of more than £10.7 million have been made to 135 Postgraduate Scholarships in the Humanities at universities, and some £11 million to museums and galleries, as well as numerous awards for historic buildings.

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**The winner of the Wolfson History Prize and Chief Executive of the Wolfson Foundation are available for interview. For further information please contact: Alex Hippisley-Cox on 07921 127077 or email her at [ahipcoxpr@btconnect.com](mailto:ahipcoxpr@btconnect.com)**