



## ***The Man Born to Be King*** **Wade Annotated Edition**

January 24, 2023 | \$45, 420 pages, paperback | 978-1-5140-0533-0

**Kathryn Wehr** (PhD, University of St Andrews) is a creative artist and scholar. Her written work has appeared in several journals and publications, including *Logos: A Journal of Catholic Thought and Culture*, *VII: Journal of the Marion E. Wade Center*, *Journal of Inklings Studies*, and *Transpositions: Theology, Imagination, and the Arts*. She is also the managing editor of *Logos: A Journal of Catholic Thought and Culture*.

# An Annotated Edition of a Dorothy Sayers Classic

## What led to your interest in creating an annotated version of *The Man Born to Be King*?

**Kathryn Wehr:** This new Wade Annotated Edition of Dorothy L. Sayers's *The Man Born to be King* brings this intriguing set of plays on the life of Christ back into print in the eightieth anniversary year of their publication (in 1943).

This new edition includes notes and references for all the things readers have always wanted to know, like the following:

- The Bible references for each scene and often line by line to show how Sayers's uses all four Gospels and numerous other biblical books to craft her plays
- Excerpts from Sayers's letters, explaining why she made the character and detail choices she did
- A new general introduction by the editor and editor's introductions to each of the twelve plays to help readers get further into Sayers's working process, what was happening behind the scenes with the writing and production, and how audiences reacted to the first broadcasts
- A detailed index to allow readers to find scenes based on topics, characters, and connections to Sayers's other work

## What is distinctive about your approach and methodology?

**Wehr:** This is the book I wish existed when I started my doctoral research about Sayers's *The Man Born to be King*. I was constantly asking, "Now, which Gospel is that story from?" or "Why did she choose to make Mary Magdalen and Mary of Bethany the same character?" etc. Now all that kind of information is right there in the sidebar and footnotes for both general and scholarly readers.

This edition is the fruit of my years of PhD research, which included the following:

- Personally finding and cross referencing the direct quotations and allusions to Scripture in every line of the plays (six months of work, at least)
- Tracking important influences from Sayers's commentaries and other secondary sources (beyond Scripture)—this work had never been done before
- Reading every letter available (over one thousand published and unpublished) written by or to Sayers about these plays including with the head of Religious Broadcasting at the BBC, her producer, her friends, family, and hundreds of protest letters and fan letters—found in the archives of either the Wade Center or the BBC Written Archives in England
- Paying close attention to how Sayers develops her theme of the kingship of Christ and how her commitment to theology based on the solid foundation of Creeds seen in her other work of the period is seen here in the plays as the full development of those ideas, particularly a robust Christology
- Distilling my published scholarly articles about the plays and Sayers's theology into introductions that are accessible enough for fans of Sayers's but also meaty and referenced enough for future Sayers's scholars



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## Q & A



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**What do you hope your book contributes to the study of Dorothy Sayers and *The Man Born to Be King*?**

**Wehr:**

- For the first time, Bible references are footnoted, showing Sayers's extensive and layered use of all four Gospels (this is in contrast to the scholarly assumption that she relies mostly on John)
- For the first time, Sayers's reliance upon her secondary sources (which she lists but doesn't detail in her introductions) is shown at importance points in the scripts where their influence is obvious or very likely
- For the first time, excerpts from her letters are found right where readers need them—in introductions to each script, telling the story of her writing and production process and also in the side bar, offering illumination about certain important or mystifying questions



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