

# The Rothschild Bibliography

Caroline Shaw of The Rothschild Archive describes her attempts to chart the family's countless ventures into print

The 'Dunottar Castle' from the cover of *Three weeks in South Africa* by Ferdinand de Rothschild



Has there ever been such a family as the Rothschilds for getting into print? For me, after working on this project for two years, the question is coloured by a mixture of wonder and exasperation. Will they never stop publishing? Of course, one hopes not; but is there to be no rest for the bibliographer? It has been a long-standing goal of The Rothschild Archive to compile a bibliography of publications by members of the Rothschild family and now, 1,840 entries by fifty-one individuals further on, we are perhaps ready to acknowledge that critical mass has been reached whilst accepting that completion may never be achieved.

The initial motivation for producing *The Rothschild bibliography* was a desire to bring some kind of intellectual order to this not insignificant aspect of the activities of the Rothschild family. It has been a mapping of a wide and diverse terrain and revealed some previously uncharted areas. Beyond this, and the greater insight allowed into the lives and interests of many members of the family, the bibliography has brought some other benefits to the Archive. New acquisitions have followed from our greater knowledge and awareness of the publications; and the ever-expanding database of references has also built up into a guide for locating material, whether held at the Archive or at another institution.

The Rothschild Research Forum has proved to be the logical and timeous way of distributing the bibliography as it currently stands, free of charge, to researchers with a proven interest in matters Rothschildian.<sup>1</sup> Each author's entries are accompanied by a brief introduction and often by illustrations too. Material can easily be updated as new information comes to light, and links made to related online material.

Whilst for the bibliophile nothing will replace the pleasure of handling a beautiful or rare book, the potential of modern technology cannot be ignored. It was pleasing to discover that *The avifauna of Laysan and the neighbouring islands: with a complete history to date of the birds of the Hawaiian Possessions*<sup>2</sup> by Walter Rothschild (1868-1937, creator of the Zoological Museum at Tring) is available online, courtesy of the Smithsonian Institution Libraries. Equally exciting was our first 'born digital' publication, *Growing as we age*, by Jacqueline Piatigorsky<sup>3</sup> (née Rothschild, b.1911, sculptor). Online publications like these can be accessed directly from *The Rothschild bibliography*.

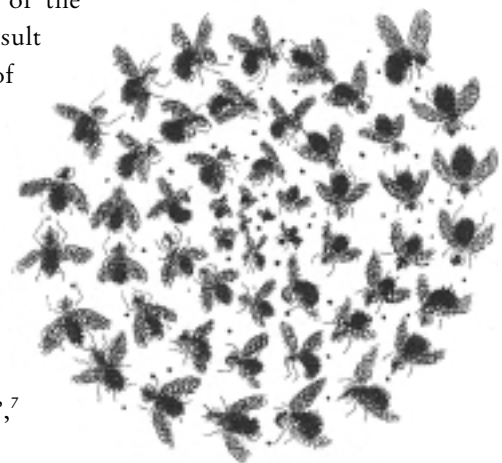
Online resources have, unsurprisingly, been invaluable in compiling the bibliography. The online catalogues of the British Library, the Bibliothèque National de France, the Deutsche Bibliothek, and the Natural History Museum, have been a few of the many to have been consulted. The Biblioteca Nacional de Portugal had an unexpectedly valuable catalogue, containing references to works published by the indefatigable Henri de Rothschild (1872-1947, doctor and playwright) during his wartime exile in that country. The Rothschild researcher network then came up trumps when we found a volunteer in Lisbon to examine some of the publications and send us photocopies of their contents pages.

Online bibliographic services which give access to information about articles from scholarly periodicals have also been used, helping to track, for example, the recent scientific publications of Miriam Rothschild (b. 1908, entomologist and conservationist). The antiquarian booksellers' online databases have been particularly fun to use, providing an effortless virtual rummage through what must be miles of actual shelving, but leading to the same thrill of an occasional unexpected discovery in unlikely places. How, for example, had an extremely rare copy of *Linoubliée*<sup>4</sup> by Héléne van Zuylen de Nyevelt (née de Rothschild, 1863-1947, novelist and poet), one of only thirty ever printed, found its way to Argentina? Uncovering this book and Héléne's other works of literature has given us a fuller sense of her involvement in the milieu of the – then controversial – lesbian symbolist poet Renée Vivien.

But nothing can compare with the satisfaction of consulting the material, of verifying data derived from secondary sources and getting a sense of the contents themselves. Fortunately, Archive staff have been able to consult some of the personal libraries of members of the family as well as some of the great national library collections. Not every great library is a national library of course, and smaller institutions have also been invaluable resources. Visiting the library of the Royal Entomological Society, for example, proved to be a wonderful experience, with holdings ranging from the highly professional schoolboy research published by Charles Rothschild (1877-1923, banker and natural historian) in *Harrow butterflies and moths*,<sup>5</sup> to his work on a parasite of the Antarctic seal 'Hemiptera parasitica: Pediculidae. *Echinophthirius setosus*,<sup>6</sup> and an article of his on Hungarian lepidoptera 'Adatok Magyarországi lepkefaunájához',<sup>7</sup> presumably translated for him by his wife Rozsika.

Inevitably not every item in the bibliography has been seen in this way, but in the cases of the extensively published scientists Walter Rothschild and his

Illustration by  
Mario Avati for  
the poem 'Sieste'  
from *À l'aube  
d'une guerre:  
poèmes* by  
Philippe de  
Rothschild



niece Miriam Rothschild, we have been able to draw on a number of pre-existing bibliographies including Miriam's own list of her publications *List of papers published 1932-1979*<sup>8</sup> and, for Walter, the 'List of scientific papers'<sup>9</sup> and 'Bibliography'.<sup>10</sup>

Even for a non-scientist it is disappointing not to have seen all of these publications, not least because the Rothschild sense of style and appreciation of aesthetic quality can often be identified in their publications as much as in their art collections or their gardens. This applies regardless of the subject matter, and Miriam Rothschild and her co-authors Yosef Schlein and Susumo Ito say as much in their introduction to *A colour atlas of insect tissues via the flea*,<sup>11</sup> a book which makes a photographic journey through the innards of a flea reminiscent of the complex landscapes of Australian aboriginal art:

"It is hoped that some of the coloured photographs will stir the imagination and excite the aesthetic susceptibilities of students, not hitherto familiar with insect histology. For there is nothing which is more pleasing to the eye, and which can afford the microscopist more innocent excitement and pleasure, than good sections of insect tissues."<sup>12</sup>

Before the advent of electron micrography and other specialist photographic techniques, Walter Rothschild employed some of the best zoological illustrators of the day to produce accurate – and beautiful – plates, essential for the dissemination of the results of the taxonomic discoveries emanating from the museum at Tring. The work of J.G. Keulemans (1842-1912) and F.W. Frohawk (1861-1946) can be found in Walter's monographs and his journal *Novitates Zoologicae*. Maurice de Rothschild (1881-1957, French politician and financier) in *Voyage de M. le Baron Rothschild en Éthiopie et en Afrique orientale anglaise (1904-1905). Resultats scientifiques: animaux articulés*<sup>13</sup> shows the same attention to detail. In the third volume of this work there are one hundred plates of insect illustrations, eighty-four of which are exquisitely hand-coloured. One could speculate that this might have been one of the reasons for the elapse in time between the expedition and the publication of its findings.

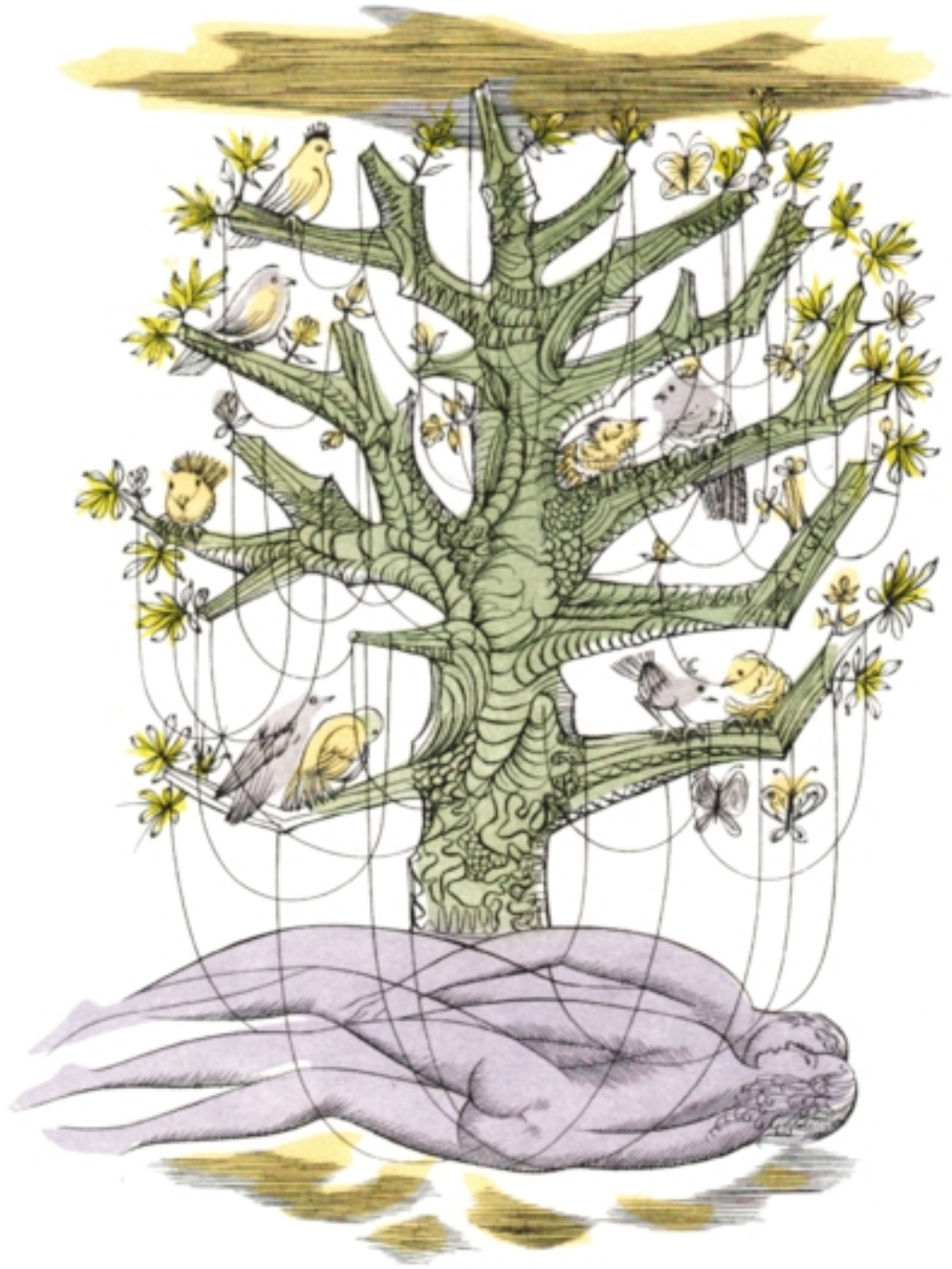
Not all Rothschilds are scientists of course, although even Philippe de Rothschild (1902-1988, winemaker at Mouton Rothschild), with five volumes of poetry to his name, published works on light diffusion and cathode rays. Book illustration and design reach a striking zenith with his companion volumes *À l'aube d'une guerre: poèmes* and *Éclos à l'aube: poèmes*.<sup>14</sup> The first volume, poems written whilst a prisoner of war in Casablanca in 1940, contains dark illustrations, insect-inspired, by Mario Avati (b.1921), a leading French revivalist of the mezzotint. The second volume, of love poetry, has light and curious engravings and aquatints by Georges Arnulf (1904-1994). Another striking example of post-war French book design is *La danse artistique aux USA: tendances modernes*<sup>15</sup> by Batsheva de Rothschild (1914-1999, founder of the Bat-Dor Dance Company in Israel) with its distinctive use of blue-grey majuscules, typography and layout.

Many of the family's publications can be found in fine bindings and *éditions de luxe* (see p20). *Linoubliée*, for example, is bound in lilac morocco with ivory silk lining; *Three weeks in South Africa*<sup>16</sup> by Ferdinand de Rothschild (1839-1898, creator of Waddesdon Manor) has a cover bearing gold illustrations of the steamer 'Dunottar Castle' on which Ferdinand sailed to Cape Town, and a group of ostriches; and The Rothschild Archive's copy of *Le plus grand amour*,<sup>17</sup> a play by Henri de Rothschild, is bound in green morocco with gold tooling – and this for an edition which claims that:

"Ce tirage, qui est de cinquante exemplaires, est destiné uniquement aux études de répétitions et de mise en scène."

The Rothschild love of collecting and their evident interest in books meet, for some members of the family, in bibliophilia. James Edouard de Rothschild (1844-1881, banker and bibliophile) is one of the

Illustration by  
Georges Arnulf for  
the poem 'Colin-  
Maillard' from  
*Éclos à l'aube:  
poèmes*  
by Philippe de  
Rothschild





The final scene  
from *La Rampe*  
by Henri de  
Rothschild.  
Illustrations by  
Maurice Leloir  
and engravings  
by Léon  
Boisson



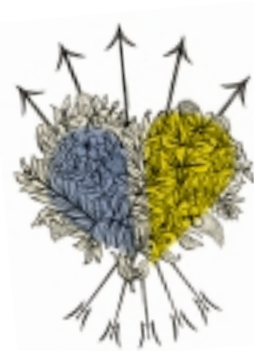
most notable of these, with his early interest in literature demonstrated by the four volumes of *Recueil de poésies françaises des XVe et XVIe siècles: morales, facétieuses, historiques. Tomes X-XIII*<sup>18</sup> which he co-edited with Anatole de Montaiglon. His son Henri claimed that James Edouard's collaboration with Montaiglon had begun, in fact, as early as 1856 but his contribution was only acknowledged in the last four volumes of the series. Henri, who inherited this interest in books, published a graceful tribute to his father in *Un bibliophile d'autrefois: le Baron James Edouard de Rothschild, 1844-1881*.<sup>19</sup> The book is beautifully decorated with designs drawn from the collections of both men. Victor, third Lord Rothschild (1910-1990, research scientist, civil servant and banker), created from scratch a collection now at Trinity College, Cambridge. The origins of the collection in the eccentricities of the university's examination requirements is described in his introduction to *The Rothschild Library: a catalogue of the collection of eighteenth-century printed books and manuscripts formed by Lord Rothschild*.<sup>20</sup> He also describes some of the hazards of book collecting in *The history of Tom Jones, a changeling; caveat emptor*.<sup>21</sup>

The range of subjects covered in the Rothschild bibliography is rather astonishing, and snapshots from a consolidated index could yield a wonderfully absurd alphabet: from aardvark to zinc, via mathematics, nicotine, oology [the study of eggs] and philately. But one subject which lends its very particular flavour is that of 'Rothschilds on Rothschilds'. Members of the family have often led lives out of the ordinary, and their writings about their experiences and those of their relatives offer a

unique perspective on people, places and times of interest to the rest of the world. Constance, Edmund, Ferdinand, Guy, Henri, Jacqueline, Laura Thérèse, Monique, Philippe, Rosemary and Victor have all published memoirs and autobiographies. Furthermore, Henri has written about James Edouard and Arthur; Victor has written about Nathan and Lionel; Miriam has written about Walter and Charles. Rothschilds have written about Rothschild gardens, homes, music and art. Lionel de Rothschild (b.1955), following the genealogical research previously published by Victor, is also the author, with Melanie Aspey, of the best-thumbed – and certainly the most beautifully designed – of all the reference works available in The Rothschild Archive: *The Rothschild family tree 2000*.<sup>22</sup>

The Rothschild Archive sees the acquisition of publications by members of the family as part of its remit, and it is very satisfying to be able to write that the overwhelming majority of the publications described in this article can be consulted at the Archive.

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A joyful  
reworking of  
the five arrows  
motif by  
Georges  
Arnulf in *Éclos  
à l'aube:  
poèmes*  
by Philippe de  
Rothschild

#### NOTES

1. To view *The Rothschild bibliography* users must be registered as members of the Rothschild Research Forum. Visit [www.rothschildarchive.org](http://www.rothschildarchive.org) for further information.
2. London: R.H.Porter, 1893-1900
3. Los Angeles: Armchair World, 2003
4. Paris: Sansot, 1910
5. Harrow: Harrow School Scientific Society's Memoirs, 1895 and 1897
6. In: British Museum (Natural History) *Report on the collections of natural history made in the Antarctic regions during the voyage of the 'Southern Cross'* (London: British Museum [Natural History], 1902)
7. In: *Rovartani Lapok* no. 16, 1909
8. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press [printer], 1979
9. In: *Novitates Zoologicae* vol. 41, 1938
10. In: *Ibis* vol. 2, 1938
11. London: Wolfe, 1986
12. *Ibid.* p.8
13. Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1922
14. Paris: Henri Javal, 1950 and 1954
15. Paris: Elzévir, 1949
16. London: Hatchard [printer], 1895
17. Paris: Protat Frères [printer], 1920
18. Paris: Paul Daffis, 1875-1878
19. Paris: E. Droz, 1934
20. London: Dawsons, 1969
21. Cambridge: [the author], 1951
22. London: Balding & Mansell [printers], 2000