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Matthew Parker: Archbishop, Scholar and Collector. A conference on collaborative scholarship, the retrieval of the past and the cultures of the book in sixteenth-century England. Anthony Grafton, Princeton University; Scott Mandelbrote, University of Cambridge; Bill Sherman, Victoria & Albert Museum, London / University of York, 17.03.2016—19.03.2016.

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Matthew Parker: Archbishop, Scholar and Collector. A conference on collaborative scholarship, the retrieval of the past and the cultures of the book in sixteenth-century England

As the subtitle of a recent conference in Cambridge succinctly states, Matthew Parker (1504â1575) was an âarchbishop, scholar and collectorâ. As archbishop of Canterbury, Parker was expected by Queen Elizabeth to make Protestant reform irrevocable in England. One of his key achievements in this capacity was editing the âThirty-Nine Articles of Religionâ of 1563, which officially defined the beliefs of the English Church. These articles made it clear that the king or queen of England was also the head of the Church and that the authority of the pope was not to be recognised; they also stated that the Bible and religious services could be in English.

Since ecclesiastical reform in England had not yet been fully established and accepted by the population, Parker looked for examples from history to justify the independence of the English Church. He set in motion a research project which resulted in a collection of over 450 medieval manuscripts, including âmany (if not most) of the oldest of all books in English historyâ. See Christopher de Hamel, The Parker Library, Corpus Christi College Cambridge, London 2010, p. 9. Many of these manuscripts came from monasteries which had been suppressed under Henry VIII from around 1540 and, particularly, from cathedral priories where important libraries had been preserved. These manuscripts provided proof that the ecclesiastical policy under Elizabeth was legitimate. The oldest complete copy of the Gospels in the West Saxon dialect of Old English (MS 140), for example, proved that the vernacular was used for Bible translations before the Norman conquest of England in 1066. Thus English had traditionally been an integral part of religious life. Parker also put together a rich collection of chronicles with the aim of documenting the unbroken continuity of the English Church from the early Middle Ages onwards. Parker, it seems, was convinced that religious autonomy was taken away in 1066 when England became an outpost of Europe and that the country had previously preserved the truest form of Christianity. De Hamel, pp. 9, 15. As Parkerâs contemporary John Foxe stated, Parkerâs book collection showed that âreligion presently â¦ is no new reformation of thinges â¦ but rather a reduction of the Church to the pristine state of olde conformitieâ. Gospels of the Fower Evangelistes, London 1571, sig.

Â¶ iir. See also David J. Crankshaw and Alexandra Gillespie, âParker, Matthewâ, in Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, Oxford 2004 (online edition). MADELINE MCMAHON (Princeton) expressed this idea beautifully in her paper by saying that it was Parkerâs aim to supply âorigin stories for the English episcopacyâ.

Parkerâs relationship with German Protestantism was influenced by Martin Bucer (d. 1551), who became Regius Professor of Divinity at Cambridge in 1549 and was involved in the revision of the Book of Com-

mon Prayer (this was explained well in the paper by BRIAN CUMMINGS (York)). But it was a letter from Matthias Flacius, forwarded to Parker in 1560, which arguably gave a strong stimulus to his research and collecting â or, as ANTHONY GRAFTON (Princeton) put it, âtransformed his lifeâ. Flacius had requested material on English history for his own collaborative project, the *Magdeburg Centuries*, in which a large-scale Protestant version of ecclesiastical history was produced. This new kind of history was essentially based on manuscript research. In Flaciusâs case, a team of about 15 scholars was involved. Grafton (going beyond an article by Norman Jones Norman L. Jones, âMatthew Parker, John Bale, and the Magdeburg Centuriatorsâ, Sixteenth Century Journal 12 (1981), pp. 35-49.), found similarities and differences between Flaciusâs and Parkerâs teams. Both teams recognised the importance of historical arguments for present-day theology. Both Parker and Flacius used a characteristic red crayon or pencil to mark manuscripts. The English team, however, was much smaller, i.e. only about three persons were involved, notably John Joscelin and Stephen Batman (SIMON HOROBIN (Oxford) presented an in-depth paper about the latter). According to Grafton, the Magdeburg team was highly systematic, whereas Parkerâs team, lacking manpower, followed the rule of improvisation. PAUL NELLES (Carleton), in his talk, confirmed that our knowledge about Parkerâs team and how they organised their work is very limited.

Parker not only collected manuscripts but was also responsible for publications and editions. Most famous among these are his âDe antiquitate Britannicae ecclesiaeâ of 1572 (tracing the fortunes of the Church in Britain from late antiquity onwards) as well as his edition of the âBishopâs Bibleâ (1568). This Bible was, as SCOTT MANDELBROTE (Cambridge) reminded us, subjected to constant revision. DEBORA SHUGER (Los Angeles) in her talk concentrated on the paratexts in this Bible and found that Parkerâs own religious position is difficult to pin down. In some respects, he seems to have broken with Reformed readings of the Bible; Shuger questioned, in conclusion, whether Elizabethans thought of their own religiosity in confessional terms at all.

Apart from DAVID CRANKSHAWâS (London) opening paper, Parkerâs functions as a religious administrator and leader were only lightly touched upon during this conference; one wonders if a more thorough investigation of these roles might add to our understanding of his activity as a scholar and collector.

Conference Overview:

Welcome and introduction: Anthony Grafton, Scott Mandelbrote, Bill Sherman

David Crankshaw (Kingâs College, London): âA Man of Stomachâ: Matthew Parker's Reputation

Parkerâs Sense of History I

Thomas Roebuck (UEA): Matthew Parker and Anglo-Latin Historiography

Elizabeth Evenden (Brunel): Matthew Parker and Arthurian Romance in Early Modern Europe

Parker and the Religious Book

Scott Mandelbrote: Parker and the Bible

Brian Cummings (York): Parker, Bucer, and the Book of Common Prayer

Plenary: Matthew Parker, Sacred Geography and the British Past (Alexandra Walsham, Cambridge)

Parkerâs Sense of History II
Stefan Bauer (York), Chair

Madeline McMahon (Princeton): Parker and Ecclesiastical History

Anthony Grafton (Princeton): Parker and Flacius

Parker As Collector And Reader

Paul Nelles (Carleton): Parker as Collector: The View from the Continent

Simon Horobin (Oxford): Batman and his Associates

Mirjam Foot: Matthew Parker and the Bookbinders of his Time

Parker as Annotator: From Scribal to Digital Culture

Bill Sherman (V&A/York): In the Margins of Parker

Alexandra Gillespie (Toronto): Digital Approaches to Parker

Jeffrey Todd Knight (Washington): Parker and the Working Copy. With a presentation of the digital project on Parkerâs printed books by Andrew Dunning (BL) and Alexandra Gillespie

Plenary: Matthew Parker and the Church of England (Debora Shuger, UCLA)

Plenary: Matthew Parkerâs Scholarship (James Carley (Toronto/ Kent)

Historyâs Sense of Parker

Kathryn James (Yale): Parker in the 18th and 19th Centuries

Lori Anne Ferrell (Claremont): How the Parker Society Got its Name

Roundtable on Parkerian Legacies: Confirmed speakers include: Elisabeth Leedham-Green (Cambridge); Stephen Archer (Cambridge); Arnold Hunt (London). David McKitterick to chair.

If there is additional discussion of this review, you may access it through the network, at:

http://hsozkult.geschichte.hu-berlin.de/

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