

Reviewing Committee on the Export of Works of Art and Objects of Cultural Interest, Case 27 (2021-2022) Nine conjoined roundels: presentation manuscript for Queen Elizabeth I by Archbishop Matthew Parker	
Statement from Expert Adviser	Statement of the Expert Adviser to the Secretary of State that the manuscript meets Waverley criterion three. See below
Statement from the Applicant	Statement from the applicant referencing the three Waverley criteria against which the Committee will consider whether an item referred to it is of national importance. a) <i>Is it so closely connected with our history and national life that its departure would be a misfortune?</i> b) <i>Is it of outstanding aesthetic importance?</i> c) <i>Is it of outstanding significance for the study of some particular branch of art, learning or history?</i> See below
Note of case hearing	See below
Press release	A press release was issued by the Secretary of State on 2 September 2022: https://www.gov.uk/government/news/archbishops-gift-to-queen-elizabeth-i-at-risk-of-leaving-the-uk
Recommended price	£9,450 (plus VAT of £390 which can be reclaimed by an eligible institution)
1st Deferral period	1 December 2022
2nd Deferral period	21 March 2023
Note of outcome	During the initial deferral period, we received a serious expression of interest from Corpus Christi College, Cambridge. The owner accepted this offer and granted Corpus Christi College an Option Agreement. The manuscript was purchased by Corpus Christi College.

RCEWA – Nine conjoined roundels: presentation manuscript for Queen Elizabeth I by Archbishop Matthew Parker

Statement of the Expert Adviser to the Secretary of State that the manuscript meets Waverley criterion three.

Please note that images and appendices referenced are not reproduced.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. Brief Description of Object

Nine conjoined roundels. Two roundels depict agate jewels showing St George and the Dragon within the Garter and a cameo of Queen Elizabeth I respectively. A Latin inscription records Archbishop Matthew Parker's gift of the agate to Elizabeth. Seven roundels contain longer texts in Latin and French on the properties of agate.

Manuscript on parchment, 1573, 127 x 127 mm. Fair condition.

2. Context

Presented by Archbishop Parker to Elizabeth I in 1573. Attested in the Lloyd-Baker Collection at Hardwicke Court, Gloucestershire, in 1860 and 1862, when associated in error with an intaglio on agate, showing Venus and Cupid at the forge of Vulcan. The manuscript, intaglio and a rose-turned ivory box were displayed together in the Exhibition of the Royal House of Tudor (New Gallery, London, 1889–90). All three items were on long-term loan at the Victoria and Albert Museum until 2021 (LOAN: MET ANON. 107-1968).

Sold in the Treasures sale at Sotheby's, 7 December 2021, lot 2.

3. Waverley Criteria

I consider the manuscript to meet the third Waverley criterion, namely that it is of outstanding significance for the study of the history of the Elizabethan period and for understanding Matthew Parker's role in and use of material culture.

- The manuscript is an exceptionally rare and potentially a unique example of its kind, in a novel and highly unusual format;
- Much remains to be discovered about the manuscript's production and purpose, which enhances its research value;
- The manuscript sheds light on Parker's self-presentation through material culture and illuminates his relationship with Elizabeth I at a crucial moment in history;
- It is an important witness to Elizabethan gift culture and a record of an important object that no longer survives, research into which would itself be of immense benefit for our knowledge of this period.

DETAILED CASE

1. Detailed description of object(s) if more than in Executive summary, and any comments.

The manuscript is formed of nine conjoined roundels, organised in three rows of three and linked by thin strips of vellum. The central roundel contains a miniature in blue and gold of St George and the Dragon within the Garter, with a Latin text on the presentation of the agate to Elizabeth I:

+ Regni αχος Elizabetha gerit Matthæus Achaten Cantuar. ei donat fidus dum vivet Achates ('Elizabeth bears the cares of the state: Matthew of Canterbury, her faithful Achates so long as life may endure, presents to her this agate.')

This inscription is a triple wordplay on *achos* ('cares'), *achates* ('agate') and *Achates* (the ever 'faithful' right-hand man of Aeneas in Vergil's *Aeneid*). The parallel between Achates and Aeneas on the one hand, and Parker and the Queen on the other, is a declaration of Parker's own loyalty to Elizabeth.

The middle roundel of the third row contains a miniature of Elizabeth I in blue, with accompanying Latin texts:

+ Audiens sapiens sapientior erit et intelligens gubernacula possedibit + Hei mihi quod tanto virtus perfusa decore + Non habet hic stabiles inviolata dies.

The first quotation is taken from Proverbs 1:5 ('Let the wise hear and increase in learning, and the one who understands obtain guidance'). The second ('Alas, that so much virtue suffused with beauty should not last for ever inviolate') is also found on two medallion portrait jewels of Elizabeth: the Phoenix Jewel of 1574 (British Museum) and the Heneage Jewel of c. 1600 (Victoria and Albert Museum). This text was published in 1567 among the poems of Walter Haddon (d. 1572), a celebrated Latinist and lawyer who served both Elizabeth and Archbishop Parker.

It is our understanding that the miniature portrait of Elizabeth may record the earliest of its kind. According to Sir Roy Strong (*Portraits of Elizabeth I*, Oxford 1963, p. 128), none of the extant cameos of the Queen 'were produced much before 1575'.

The remaining seven roundels contain texts on the properties of agate, written in different calligraphic scripts. The texts in French in the upper three circles are drawn from scientific and lapidary sources, citing Pliny, Isidore of Seville and Dioscorides. The first and third circles in the second and third rows contain Latin excerpts taken directly from Pliny's *Natural History*, Vergil's *Aeneid*, and an unidentified source, possibly a 16th-century encyclopedia.

In 1573 Elizabeth I made a royal progress through Kent. Her visit to Canterbury coincided with her fortieth birthday on 7 Sept., when Archbishop Matthew Parker hosted a magnificent banquet in her honour. Some copies of Parker's *De Antiquitate Britannicae Ecclesiae* include an account of Elizabeth I's reception at Canterbury and

describe the now lost gold salt cellar that Parker presented to the Queen. The description of the jewelled gift links it to the manuscript:

‘Besides this splendid and sumptuous banquet, the Archbishop bestowed certain distinguished gifts upon the Queen, namely a salt cellar made of gold, into the cover of which was inset a jewel, an agate, containing St George killing the dragon, along with verses in French upon the customary royal insignia; in the curved section or hollow of this was enclosed another agate, incised into which was a true likeness of the Queen on white agate. On top of its cover, a small golden boat held a rectangular diamond. The Archbishop gave the Queen this salt cellar as a gift.’

2. Detailed explanation of the outstanding significance of the object(s).

The manuscript is seemingly unique in its format, content and purpose. Experts in the fields of art history and ecclesiastical history whom we have consulted report that, in their experience, the manuscript is unparalleled. Its apparent uniqueness makes it difficult to understand without further study.

In all probability the manuscript formed part of Parker’s gift made to Elizabeth I at Canterbury. The use of shell gold around the two miniatures, to highlight the authorial authorities and to frame the roundels, indicates that the manuscript was intended to impress the Queen. The joints connecting the roundels are creased, suggesting that they were once folded into a pile, possibly to be placed inside the salt when it was presented to Elizabeth. The manuscript’s unusual and intricate format suggests a particularly considered and conscious creation, the precise origins and intentions of which are as yet unclear and would benefit from detailed first-hand examination and wider contextual research.

Matthew Parker is an extraordinary cultural figure. His gifts of plate to Cambridge Colleges are well documented and his benefactions of books and manuscripts place him among the most important figures in library history in Britain. Hitherto unknown to scholars, the manuscript is of outstanding significance for the study of Parker’s role in and his use of material culture. It attests to the great significance — unparalleled in his time — that Parker attached to the design and creation of his gifts and also sheds new light on his self-presentation through material culture.

When Parker presented the manuscript and salt cellar to the Queen both he and the Church of England were engulfed by crisis following the publication of the polemical *Admonition to Parliament* by two ‘puritan’ ministers the previous year. The text denounced the English Church as still mired in popery and attacked Parker as ‘this pettie pope’. With his reputation in peril, Parker’s description of himself as the Queen’s ‘fidus Achates’ was carefully chosen to emphasise his devotion to the monarch and to strengthen his royal backing. Further study of the manuscript’s

inscriptions is required to understand their significance and how Parker intended them to be understood by Elizabeth. During the course of preparing this submission, it has become clear that there are more Classical allusions and double-meanings than may immediately be apparent. In the long term, it would be valuable to study the manuscript within the context of Parker's gifts more generally and to the Queen specifically.

Parker's gift of the salt to Elizabeth I is recorded in an inventory of the Queen's jewels and plate, compiled in 1574 by John Astley (British Library, Harley MS 1650, f. 132v). The salt cellar itself can be identified in subsequent inventories in 1574 and 1596 (British Library, Stowe MSS 955 and 956), as well as in the inventory of the goods of the late King Charles I in 1649–51, where it is recorded as having been sold to James Guinion. As both an exceptionally rare and beautiful example of gift culture and a record of the lost gold salt cellar, the manuscript is of outstanding significance for the study of Elizabethan gift exchange. It reveals what was engraved on the salt cellar and provides illustrations of the agate jewels set into it. Not only does the manuscript take us a step closer to the object itself, but crucially it has the potential to shed light on topics of significance in the broader cultural, political and religious context and in relation to Matthew Parker and Elizabeth I, both separately and jointly.

RCEWA – Nine conjoined roundels: presentation manuscript for Queen Elizabeth I by Archbishop Matthew Parker

Applicant's statement

We argue that Archbishop Matthew Parker's presentation manuscript to Queen Elizabeth I does not meet any of the three Waverley Criteria. It has some historical or scholarly interest, but not, in our view, to a level that could reasonably allow the claim that its departure from the UK would be a misfortune.

Is the item closely connected with our history and national life?

The manuscript's connection with British history and national life is not sufficiently powerful to mean that its departure from the UK would be a misfortune. Whilst it can be shown with a reasonable degree of certainty that this manuscript formed part of a gift from Archbishop Matthew Parker to Queen Elizabeth, who are of course both figures of national importance, the significance of the manuscript to either individual, or to their relationship, is relatively small. The manuscript only is a fragment of a gift – it was originally integrated into a gold salt cellar – which is described by Matthew Parker himself in his surviving account of the Queen's 1573 visit to Canterbury. This gift itself was one amongst thousands of gifts presented to the Queen by courtiers throughout her long reign. Many such gifts are recorded, for example in surviving New Years' gift rolls, and a modest but not insignificant number of such gifts survive (e.g. amongst the Royal Manuscripts in the British Library). We would suggest that this manuscript can better be compared to letters or documents bearing the Queen's signature, which are resonant objects but which are offered with some regularity on the open market and regularly exported, rather than to manuscript items of a similar period that have recently been found to meet the first Waverley criterion, such as the Astor Armada Drawings or the Melford Hall manuscript of John Donne's poetry.

Is it of outstanding aesthetic importance?

The attractive calligraphy and illustrations are comparable to many other presentation manuscripts of the period and are not of outstanding aesthetic importance.

Is it of outstanding significance for the study of some particular branch of art, learning or history?

This scholarly importance of this manuscript is not sufficient to give it outstanding significance to any field of learning. Gift giving at the Elizabethan court is richly documented through multiple sources, for example the Royal Manuscripts held by the British Library. The current example is similar to other surviving presentation manuscripts in its calligraphic style, its use of Classical texts, and its integration of visual iconography. It does not have any outstanding features that would mean that it should meet the third Waverley Criteria.

Reviewing Committee on the Export of Works of Art and Objects of Cultural Interest, note of case hearing on 13 July 2022: *Nine conjoined roundels, presentation manuscript to Queen Elizabeth I* (Case 27, 2021-22)

Application

1. The Reviewing Committee on the Export of Works of Art and Objects of Cultural Interest (the Committee) met on 13 July 2022 to consider an application to export *Nine conjoined roundels, presentation manuscript to Queen Elizabeth I* by Archbishop Matthew Parker. The value shown on the export licence application was £9,450 which represented the hammer price at auction (£7,500) plus the buyer's premium (£1,875) and the overhead premium (£75). The manuscript had been conditionally exempted from capital taxation and three months' notice had been given to the Arts Council. The expert adviser had objected to the export of the manuscript under the third Waverley criterion on the grounds that its departure from the UK would be a misfortune because it was of outstanding significance for the study of the history of the Elizabethan period and for understanding Matthew Parker's role in and use of material culture.

2. Six of the regular eight RCEWA members were present in person and able to inspect the manuscript. One member attended virtually. They were joined in person by three independent assessors, acting as temporary members of the Reviewing Committee. The Chairman explained that the binding offers mechanism was applicable for this case.

3. The applicant was consulted about the hybrid digital/in person process and confirmed they were content to proceed in this manner and were content for the RCEWA member who was attending remotely to vote. The applicant confirmed that the value did not include VAT and that VAT of £390 on the Buyer's and Overhead Premiums would be payable in the event of a UK sale and that a sale could be structured so that an eligible UK institution could reclaim it. The applicant also confirmed that the owner understood the circumstances under which an export licence might be refused.

Expert's submission

4. The expert adviser had provided a written submission stating the manuscript is seemingly unique in its format, content, and purpose. Its apparent uniqueness makes it difficult to understand without further study.

5. In all probability the manuscript formed part of Parker's gift made to Elizabeth I at Canterbury. The use of shell gold around the two miniatures, to highlight the authorial authorities and to frame the roundels, indicates that the manuscript was intended to impress the Queen. The joints connecting the roundels are creased, suggesting that they were once folded into a pile, possibly to be placed inside the (now lost) gold salt cellar when it was presented to Elizabeth. The manuscript's unusual and intricate format

suggests a particularly considered and conscious creation, the precise origins and intentions of which are as yet unclear and would benefit from detailed first-hand examination and wider contextual research.

6. Matthew Parker was an extraordinary cultural figure. Hitherto unknown to scholars, the manuscript is of outstanding significance for the study of Parker's role in and his use of material culture. It attests to the great significance — unparalleled in his time — that Parker attached to the design and creation of his gifts and sheds new light on his self-presentation through material culture.

7. As both an exceptionally rare and beautiful example of gift culture and a record of the lost gold salt cellar, the manuscript is of outstanding significance for the study of Elizabethan gift exchange. Not only does the manuscript take us a step closer to the object itself, but crucially it has the potential to shed light on topics of significance in the broader cultural, political, and religious context and in relation to Matthew Parker and Elizabeth I, both separately and jointly.

Applicant's submission

8. The applicant had stated in a written submission that they did not consider that the roundels met any of the three Waverley criteria. Regarding the first criterion, they noted that the manuscript's connection with British history and national life was not sufficiently powerful to mean that its departure from the UK would be a misfortune. Whilst it can be shown with a reasonable degree of certainty that this manuscript formed part of a gift from Archbishop Matthew Parker to Queen Elizabeth, who are of course both figures of national importance, the significance of the manuscript to either individual, or to their relationship, is relatively small. The manuscript only is a fragment of a gift – it was originally integrated into a gold salt cellar – which was described by Matthew Parker himself in his surviving account of the Queen's 1573 visit to Canterbury. This gift itself was one amongst thousands of gifts presented to the Queen by courtiers throughout her long reign.

9. In response to the second Waverley criterion, they stated that the attractive calligraphy and illustrations were comparable to many other presentation manuscripts of the period and were not of outstanding aesthetic importance.

10. Regarding the third Waverley criterion, they noted that the scholarly importance of this manuscript was not sufficient to give it outstanding significance to any field of learning. Gift giving at the Elizabethan court is richly documented through multiple sources, for example the Royal Manuscripts held by the British Library. The current example is similar to other surviving presentation manuscripts in its calligraphic style, its use of Classical texts, and its integration of visual iconography.

Discussion by the Committee

11. The expert adviser and applicant retired and the Committee discussed the case. They noted the ephemeral nature of the manuscript, and particularly that its shape made it unique in its relevance to Elizabethan gift culture. They commented that the distinctive format necessitated research with the original object as opposed to a digitisation, in order to ascertain the way each roundel is revealed as the manuscript is unfolded.

12. The Committee agreed unanimously that the manuscript had enormous research value, specifically regarding Archbishop Matthew Parker's relationship to Queen Elizabeth I and material gift culture. The literary allusions on the roundels further suggested Matthew Parker's engagement with classical humanist culture that was not typically associated with the clergy and would lead to illuminating further study.

Waverley Criteria

13. The Committee voted on whether the manuscript met the Waverley criteria. Of the ten members, all ten voted that it met the third Waverley criterion. The manuscript was therefore found to meet the third Waverley criterion for its outstanding significance to the study of Matthew Parker and gift giving culture in the Elizabethan period.

Matching offer

14. The Committee recommended the sum of £9,450 (plus VAT of £390 which can be reclaimed by an eligible institution) as a fair matching price.

Deferral period

15. The Committee agreed to recommend to the Secretary of State that the decision on the export licence should be deferred for an initial period of three months. At the end of the first deferral period, if the Arts Council received notification of a serious intention to raise funds with a view to making an offer to purchase the manuscript, the owner will have a consideration period of 15 Business Days to consider any offer(s). The Committee recommended that there should be a further deferral period of three months that would commence following the signing of an Option Agreement.

Communication of findings

16. The expert adviser and the applicant returned. The Chairman notified them of the Committee's decision on its recommendations to the Secretary of State.

17. The expert adviser agreed to act as champion if a decision on the licence was deferred by the Secretary of State.