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# Katherine Parr, Translation, and the Dissemination of Erasmus's Views on War and Peace

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Article abstract

This article offers new evidence of Katherine Parr's activities as a translator by demonstrating that she translated two prayers from Erasmus's *Precationes aliquot novæ* in 1544. The first, "A Prayer for Men to Say Entering into Battle," appeared in all the editions of Parr's *Psalms or Prayers*; the second, "A Prayer for Forgiveness of Sins," was included only in sextodecimo editions. These newly recovered translations have important implications for our understanding of Parr's involvement in Henry VIII's war effort and for the history of the dissemination of Erasmus's ideas in England. This study argues that Parr's translations provide new evidence that she collaborated with Thomas Cranmer and Henry VIII in producing wartime propaganda but also that Parr reframed, edited, and distorted Erasmus's prayers to promote Henry's wartime needs. This data has additional repercussions because Parr was also the sponsor of the translation of Erasmus's *Paraphrases on the New Testament*, a text that exhorted Henry and other princes to avoid war and embrace peace. Parr, then, was at the heart of two translation projects that were fundamentally at odds with one another, and her translations can be described as important interventions into Erasmus's legacy in England.

# Katherine Parr, Translation, and the Dissemination of Erasmus's Views on War and Peace

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*This article offers new evidence of Katherine Parr's activities as a translator by demonstrating that she translated two prayers from Erasmus's Precationes aliquot novae in 1544. The first, "A Prayer for Men to Say Entering into Battle," appeared in all the editions of Parr's Psalms or Prayers; the second, "A Prayer for Forgiveness of Sins," was included only in sextodecimo editions. These newly recovered translations have important implications for our understanding of Parr's involvement in Henry VIII's war effort and for the history of the dissemination of Erasmus's ideas in England. This study argues that Parr's translations provide new evidence that she collaborated with Thomas Cranmer and Henry VIII in producing wartime propaganda but also that Parr reframed, edited, and distorted Erasmus's prayers to promote Henry's wartime needs. This data has additional repercussions because Parr was also the sponsor of the translation of Erasmus's Paraphrases on the New Testament, a text that exhorted Henry and other princes to avoid war and embrace peace. Parr, then, was at the heart of two translation projects that were fundamentally at odds with one another, and her translations can be described as important interventions into Erasmus's legacy in England.*

*Cet article présente des preuves inédites des activités de traduction de Katherine Parr, en lui attribuant la version anglaise (1544) de deux prières tirées des Precationes aliquot novae d'Érasme. La première, "A Prayer for Men to Say Entering into Battle", apparaît dans toutes les éditions des Psalms or Prayers de Parr; la seconde, "A Prayer for Forgiveness of Sins", ne se trouve que dans les éditions in-16o. La découverte de ces traductions nous apporte des lumières importantes sur l'implication de Parr dans l'effort de guerre d'Henry VIII; elle nous renseigne aussi sur la circulation de la pensée érasmienne en Angleterre. L'article établit de nouvelles preuves de la collaboration de Parr avec Thomas Cranmer et Henry VIII dans la production de textes de propagande guerrière; Il est également montré comment Parr recadre, remanie, et déforme les prières composées par Érasme à fins de promotion de la campagne d'Henry VIII. Ces éléments sont d'autant plus significatifs que Parr avait par ailleurs soutenu la traduction anglaise des Paraphrases sur le Nouveau Testament d'Érasme, œuvre exhortant Henry VIII et autres princes à choisir la paix plutôt que les conflits armés. Parr se retrouve ainsi au cœur de deux projets de traduction radicalement divergents, et ses activités de traductrice peuvent ainsi se lire comme autant d'interventions directes dans la réception anglaise des œuvres d'Érasme.*

Translation was one of the most creative, challenging, and potentially prestigious literary activities in the early modern world, and over the course of the past three decades scholars have made great strides in uncovering,

theorizing, and mapping out women's participation in the complex art of early modern *translatio*. This has involved identifying the women behind anonymous translations, identifying women's source texts, analyzing women's linguistic choices, and situating and interpreting women's manuscript and printed translations within complex political, literary, social, and religious matrices.<sup>1</sup> As we now know, early modern women were skilled cultural mediators who engaged in various kinds of textual remediation, ranging from minor repackaging to major reworking. This article contributes to this new body of knowledge through an examination of Queen Katherine Parr's involvement in two high-profile translation projects in 1544 and 1545. Specifically, this article will offer evidence that Parr was a translator of two prayers by Erasmus, and it will shed new light on the ways in which she used (or, as Gregory Dodds says, "exploited") Erasmus's works for inconsistent religio-political ends.<sup>2</sup>

Katherine Parr has only recently been recognized as an important translator. In 1999, Susan E. James persuasively argued that Parr was the anonymous translator of a volume entitled *Psalms or Prayers taken out of Holy Scripture* (Thomas Berthelet: 25 April 1544; RSTC 3001.7), an attribution further supported by evidence provided by Janel Mueller.<sup>3</sup> This octavo volume contains three items: a translation of Bishop John Fisher's *Psalmi seu preces* (a collection of seventeen "Psalms"); a short "A Prayer for the King"; and "A

1. See in particular Marie-Alice Belle, "Locating Early Modern Women's Translations: Critical and Historiographical Issues," in "Women's Translations in Early Modern England and France," ed. Marie-Alice Belle, special issue, *Renaissance and Reformation/Renaissance et Réforme* 35.4 (2012): 5–23; Patricia Demers, *Women's Writing in English: Early Modern England* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005), 64–93; Danielle Clarke, "Translation," in *The Cambridge Companion to Early Modern Women's Writing*, ed. Laura Lunger Knoppers (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 167–80. For a discussion of women translators of religious texts in the whole period from 1526 to 1632, see Jaime Goodrich, *Faithful Translators: Authorship, Gender, and Religion in Early Modern England* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern Press, 2014).

2. Gregory D. Dodds, *Exploiting Erasmus: The Erasmus Legacy and Religious Change in Early Modern England* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009), xiii. Dodds explains that he uses the term "exploited" not so much to argue that the English authors he discusses deliberately misrepresented Erasmus, but to show that they found him "highly useful." He notes, though, that some authors did manipulate Erasmus's texts. My interest lies in the fact that Parr's use of Erasmus was inconsistent.

3. Susan E. James, *Katherine Parr: The Making of a Queen* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1999), 200–08; Janel Mueller, ed. *Katherine Parr: Complete Works and Correspondence* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011), 197–200.

Prayer for Men to Say Entering into Battle.”<sup>4</sup> Recent studies have discussed Parr’s linguistic skills, her sources, the popularity of the *Psalms or Prayers* throughout the sixteenth century, and its role in Henry’s final military campaign against the Scots, the French, and the Turks (1544–46).<sup>5</sup> This article will advance our understanding of this volume by demonstrating that “A Prayer for Men to Say Entering into Battle” was not an original composition (as has been assumed in scholarship on Parr) but a translation of Erasmus’s “Inituri praelium” from his *Precationes aliquot novæ*.<sup>6</sup> This translated prayer circulated widely; it was included in Parr’s *Prayers or Meditations* (June 1545), a text that named Parr on the title page. I will also demonstrate that the sextodecimo editions of *Psalms or Prayers* contain another prayer, “A Prayer for Forgiveness of Sins,” which is a translation of Erasmus’s “Pro venia delictorum.” Parr’s decision to translate these prayers from the *Precationes aliquot novæ* for her 1544 wartime volume is intriguing because Erasmus was famous for his criticisms of intra-Christian warfare. In this instance, however, Parr set aside Erasmus’s skepticism and rewrote and reframed his prayers in order to advance a positive view of Henry’s war and to complement the view of the war articulated in Archbishop Thomas Cranmer’s *Litany* (May 1544), a new translation of the Procession used in times of crisis.

Our recognition that Parr was translating Erasmus in the spring of 1544 has additional repercussions because it sheds new light on her position as the mastermind, organizer, and sponsor of the English translation of Erasmus’s

4. Mueller provides an excellent introduction to, and modernized version of, these texts (Mueller, 197–365).

5. Kimberly A. Coles, *Religion, Reform, and Women’s Writing in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 47–51; Micheline White, “The Psalms, War, and Royal Iconography: Katherine Parr’s *Psalms or Prayers* (1544) and Henry VIII as David,” *Renaissance Studies* 29.4 (2015): 554–75; David Skinner, “‘Deliver me from my deceitful enemies’: a Tallis Contrafactum in a Time of War,” *Early Music* 44.2 (2016): 233–50; Micheline White, “Katherine Parr, Henry VIII, and Royal Literary Collaboration,” in *Gender, Authorship and Early Modern Women’s Collaboration*, ed. Patricia Pender (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 23–46.

6. The Erasmian source of the prayer for soldiers has not been recognized in scholarship on Parr. However, in his study of Erasmus’s prayer book, Hilmar Pabel noted that the 1545 “anthology of prayers collected by Katherine Parr” contained a translation of “Inituri praelium.” See Pabel, *Conversing with God: Prayer in Erasmus’ Pastoral Writing* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), 201. Pabel cites Parr’s *Prayers or Meditations* (1545), where the prayer was reprinted, but he describes Parr as the “collector,” rather than the translator, of the prayer.

*Paraphrases on the New Testament*. The first volume, which every parish was required to purchase as per the Royal Injunctions of July 1547, contained translations by Nicholas Udall (Luke and Acts), Thomas Key (Mark), and Mary Tudor and Francis Mallet (John).<sup>7</sup> It has long been known that Udall's translation of Luke was sent to Parr with a dedicatory letter dated 30 September 1545, but the fact that Parr was translating prayers from the *Precationes* in the winter/spring of 1544 suggests that she may have had the idea to coordinate the translation of the *Paraphrases* at that time.<sup>8</sup> More importantly, our realization that Parr was both a translator and a sponsor of Erasmian translations in 1544–45 prompts us to consider the relation between the two projects. Taking my cue from Patricia Pender's argument that Parr must be studied as one of the *Paraphrases*' primary "authors," I point out that Parr was engaged in two translation projects that were strangely inconsistent.<sup>9</sup> While she was actively reframing Erasmus's short prayers in order to support Henry's war effort, she was also sponsoring the translation of dedications in which Erasmus exhorted Henry (and other princes) to abandon their sinful territorial wars and promote Christian peace. Parr's place at the heart of these two contradictory Erasmian discourses becomes even more interesting when we realize that Udall's 1545 dedication to Parr of the *Paraphrase on Luke* (dedicated to Henry) explicitly alludes to her "A Prayer for Men to Say Entering into Battle." Intriguingly, Udall ultimately depicts Parr (rather than Henry) as England's most effective military "captain," and he exhorts her to wield the *Paraphrases* as a weapon in a spiritual war against Catholic abuses. In other words, just as Parr rewrote and

7. It is unclear who completed Matthew. The first volume of the *Paraphrases* was issued with a colophon dated 31 January 1548 (RSTC 2854).

8. Udall was described as "newly" from London in a document dated from Michaelmas term 1544, and he resigned the vicarage of Braintree in 1544. For his arrival in London, see *Nicholas Udall's Roister Doister*, ed. G. Scheurweghs (Louvain, 1939), xxxiii. Udall claimed that Parr gave a "commandment" for him to translate Luke, but he also states that he had already decided to translate the text and dedicate it to her (see Mueller, 103). This suggests that people like Udall knew of Parr's ambitious project and were hoping to contribute even before invitations were issued.

9. Pender persuasively argues that Parr must be considered as one of the "authors" (as opposed to writers / translators) of the *Paraphrases*. Patricia Pender, "Dispensing Quails, Mincemeat, Leaven: Katherine Parr's Patronage of the *Paraphrases of Erasmus*," in *Material Cultures of Early Modern Women's Writing*, ed. Patricia Pender and Rosalind Smith (London: Palgrave MacMillan, 2014), 36–54. She also astutely notes that Parr's patronage has "long been widely celebrated as historical fact and at the same time surprisingly ignored as a social, literary and mechanical process" (36).

reframed Erasmus's prayers in order to promote Henry's military agenda, so Udall reframed Parr's prayer and Erasmus's *Paraphrases* to promote an English reformist agenda.

### Erasmus's *Precationes aliquot novae* in England

As noted above, Parr's "A Prayer for Men to Say Entering into Battle" and "A Prayer for Forgiveness of Sins" are not original compositions but translations from Erasmus's *Precationes aliquot novae* (1535–37). In translating these two prayers, Parr was working with a well-known and widely disseminated devotional work. As Hilmar Pabel notes, the *Precationes* is an early example of an "occasional" prayer book (as opposed to a Book of Hours).<sup>10</sup> The book is divided into several sections consisting of twenty-seven "new prayers," three longer, previously published prayers, and thirty-five very short prayers derived from the Bible. The volume was first printed in 1535 but subsequent editions printed from 1537 onward contained a slightly different selection of "new prayers." The *Precationes* was reprinted in many European cities before 1544, and there are extant copies in quarto, duodecimo, and sextodecimo formats from 1535 (Basel, Leipzig, and Antwerp), 1537 (Basel, Cologne, and Friburg), 1538 (Cologne), 1541 (Cologne), 1542 (Lyons), and 1543 (Lyons). The Private Libraries in Renaissance England database shows five copies in inventories between 1552 and 1577, all owned by scholars and a munciple.<sup>11</sup> The *Precationes* was also included in the fifth volume of Erasmus's *Opera Omnia* (Basel: Frober, 1538–40), and would have been known to English scholars and courtiers in that format.

While Erasmus's *Precationes* circulated in volumes that clearly carried his name, his prayers were also extracted, translated, and incorporated into English prayer books, often without attribution. For example, four of his "graces" appeared without attribution in the first English primer edited by William

10. Pabel, 158.

11. Private Libraries in Renaissance England, accessed 26 April 2020, [plre.folger.edu/](http://plre.folger.edu/). There is an edition of the *Precationes* (Friburg, 1537) at the British Library that is intriguing, for although it contains no ownership marks, it is bound with a copy of Savonarola's *Dominicae precationis explanatio* (1540) and Georg Witzel's *Formulae Precationum aliquot evangelicarum* (1541). Parr translated prayers from all three books between 1544 and 1545, and one wonders if she might have encountered this particular edition. See British Library 1011.a.5. (1–3).

Marshall ca. 1535 (RSTC 15986). Richard Taverner's *An Epitome of the Psalms* (1539; RSTC 2748) contained attributed translations of Erasmus's prayers that he found (unattributed) in Wolfgang Capito's *Precationes Christianae* (1536), and a diglot primer by Robert Toye from 1542 (RSTC 16027) contained two other prayers from the *Precationes*.<sup>12</sup> Most importantly, it is clear that Archbishop Cranmer and other senior clergymen were thinking about the national usefulness of Erasmus's *Precationes* in the mid-1540s as they were preparing the official *King's Primer* designed to replace all earlier primers. The *King's Primer* (RSTC 16034) was printed in May 1545, and it included four of these previously printed translations of Erasmus's prayers. In other words, in the mid-1540s Erasmus's *Precationes* was being read carefully by the religious leaders tasked with charting the future direction of the English church.

### **Henry's "just" war: the political transformation of Erasmus's prayer for soldiers**

Parr's translation of "Inituri Prælium" in 1544 appears to have been the first translation of the prayer into English. Scholars who have discussed it as an original text have already observed that it was designed to assist Henry's soldiers and was notable for having been produced by a woman.<sup>13</sup> The recognition that Parr's prayer was a translation prompts us to ask new questions about *why* it was selected and *how* it was altered. At first glance, we might find it quite unremarkable that Parr would have selected Erasmus's prayer for soldiers: her *Psalms or Prayers* was a wartime publication that provided Henry's subjects with texts enabling them, through repentance, pleas for assistance, and prayers for his victory, to help him win the war. A prayer for soldiers was a perfect addition. And yet it must be emphasized that Parr's decision was not as straightforward as it may seem, both because Erasmus was a famous anti-war humanist and because the prayer itself expresses skepticism about human conceptions of warfare. As Parr would have known, in polemics, dedications to princes, and works of biblical exegesis, Erasmus had argued that princes should go to war only as a last resort "for the defence of public tranquillity" (especially against invading Turks), and he repeatedly condemned the contemporary

12. Charles C. Butterworth, *The English Primers (1529–1545)* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1953).

13. James, 210; Mueller, 364.

intra-Christian battles that were gripping Europe.<sup>14</sup> He boldly criticized princes (like Henry) who claimed that their wars were “just”; he condemned them for being motivated by ambition, greed, and false notions of courage, and he observed that war brought only misery and destruction. It seems pretty clear that Erasmus would not have considered Henry’s 1544 military efforts to be “just.”<sup>15</sup> In light of Erasmus’s views on war, it is not surprising that his prayer for soldiers is not really an endorsement of war, but rather a devotional concession to the fact that war was a horrific reality for many young men. As Pabel and others have noted, the “*Inituri Prælium*” is focused on God’s justice and future peace, rather than on man’s justice or military glory.<sup>16</sup>

Parr’s decision to translate this prayer for her wartime volume was thus curious rather than straightforward. Parr, though, was a discerning reader of Erasmus’s prayer, and I will argue that she intervened by reshaping four of its five parts to suit Henry’s immediate wartime needs.<sup>17</sup> Specifically, she altered Erasmus’s core “petitions” in order to assert the justice of Henry’s war, and she adapted the “address,” “acknowledgement,” and “aspiration” in ways that complemented the representation of Henry’s military exploits found in Cranmer’s *Exhortation* and *Litany*.<sup>18</sup> As it appeared in the *Precationes aliquot novæ*, Erasmus’s prayer reads as follows:

14. Erasmus, *Paraphrase on Luke 1–10*, trans. and annot. Jane E. Phillips, *Collected Works of Erasmus* 47 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2016), 111. Erasmus criticized war in each of the following: the *Panegyricus* (1504); the “*Dulce bellum inexpertis*” found in the *Adages* of 1515, but published separately in 1517 and translated into English in 1534; the chapter “On Starting War” in the *Institutio principis christiani* (1516); the *Querela pacis* (1517); the 1506 *Annotations on the New Testament* (which drew criticism from traditional theologians); and the *Paraphrases on the New Testament* (1517–24). The scholarship on Erasmus’s criticism of war is extensive.

15. Henry had not done everything possible to avoid war with Scotland and France and these were not defensive wars. Henry’s capture of Boulogne (September 1544) would lead to many deaths and nearly bankrupt the nation. It was also futile in the long run as Boulogne was regained by the French in 1550.

16. Pabel, 179–80.

17. Short prayers can be divided into five parts: the address (to God); the acknowledgement (the attributes of God); the petition (what the speaker is asking for); the aspiration (what the result of God’s gift will be); and the pleading (through Christ). See *Collects of Thomas Cranmer*, ed. C. Frederick Barbee and Paul F. M. Zahl (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1999), x–xi.

18. On 8 June 1544, Cranmer directed parishes to use his new vernacular *Litany* to pray for the English war effort. He also wrote a sermon, “An Exhortation,” which was to be read before the *Litany* began. See note 25.



Inituri praelium

Omnipotens Rex Sabaoth, hoc est exercituum, qui per Angelos tuos ad id delegatos provinciarum tum bella, tum paces administras, quique David adolescenti & animum & vires addidisti, ut pusillus, inermis, bellique rudis, immanem Goliath funda adoriretur, ac deijceret, si justa de causa, si coacti militiam hanc militamus, primum illud precor, ut hostium animos convertas ad studium pacis, ne quid Christiani sanguinis effundatur in terram, aut terrorem quem panicum appellant injicias, aut certe quam minima sanguinis jactura minimoque incommodo victoria contingat ijs, quorum causa tibi probatior est, ut cito finito bello, tibi concordibus animis cantemus triumphales hymnos. Qui regnas in omnibus & super omnia. Amen.<sup>19</sup>

My literal translation:

Those entering into battle

All powerful King of Sabaoth, that is of hosts, who through your angels appointed to that effect, administer in your kingdoms sometimes war and sometimes peace, and who gave the young David both courage and strength, so that little, unarmed and rude in war, he attacked and overthrew the huge Goliath with a sling. If our cause is just, if we are forced to fight this war, I pray, first, that you turn the hearts of enemies to the desire for peace so that the blood of Christians not be spilled on the earth, that either you inspire the terror that they call panic, or that for certain with the least loss of blood and with the least harm to innocent people victory may be attained by those whose cause is more pleasing to you, so that with the war ended quickly, we may sing triumphant hymns with united minds to you who reign among all persons and over all things.<sup>20</sup>

19. I cite from the British Library edition that Parr might have seen: Erasmus, *Precationes aliquot novae, ac rursus novis adauctae, quibus adolescentes assuescant cum Deo colloqui* (Friburg, 1537), 46–47. See note 11.

20. There is a translation by Stephen Ryle, but it is not as literal as the translation that I provide: Erasmus, *Some New Prayers (Precationes Aliquot Novae)*, trans. and annot. Stephen Ryle, in *Collected Works of Erasmus* 69, *Spiritualia and Pastoralia*, ed. John W. O'Malley and Louis A. Perraud (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), 137. I thank Brenda M. Hosington for her assistance with the translations in this article.

Parr's translation reads:

"A Prayer for Men to Say Entering into Battle"

O almighty King and Lord of hosts, which, by thy angels thereunto appointed, dost minister both war and peace; and which didst give unto David both courage and strength, being but a little one, unarmed and unexpert in feats of war, with his sling to set upon and overthrow the great, huge Goliath: Our cause now being just, and being enforced to enter into war and battle, we most humbly beseech thee (O Lord god of hosts), so to turn the hearts of our enemies to the desire of peace, that no Christian blood be spilt. Or else grant (O Lord) that with small effusion of blood, and to the little hurt and damage of innocents, we may, to thy glory, obtain victory. And that the wars being soon ended, we may all, with one heart and mind, knit together in concord and unity, laud and praise Thee: which livest and reignest, world without end. Amen.<sup>21</sup>

In Erasmus's prayer, the "address" to God and the "acknowledgement" of his attributes draw on the Old Testament to describe him as a leader of armies.<sup>22</sup> For example, Erasmus opens with the formulation "Omnipotens Rex Sabaoth" and then explains "that is of hosts" ("hoc est exercituum"). He continues to address God by referring to the angels that he has appointed to administer war and peace, an allusion to Deuteronomy 32:8.<sup>23</sup> Parr makes only one minor adjustment to this section. While Erasmus chose to use and explain the Hebrew word "Sabaoth," Parr opted for the more ample and poetic "Lord of hosts," a phrase found in the Coverdale Bible: "O almighty king and Lord of hosts, which, by thy angels thereunto appointed, dost minister both war and peace."<sup>24</sup>

21. Mueller, 364. All subsequent parenthetical citations will be from this edition.

22. In crafting this prayer, Erasmus drew on bellicose language from the Old Testament, but he argued elsewhere that the New Testament had ushered in a new era that should privilege peace. The "Hebrews were allowed to engage in war, but with God's permission. On the other hand, our oracle, which re-echoes again and again in the pages of the Gospel, argues against war." Erasmus, *The Education of a Christian Prince*, trans. Neil M. Cheshire and Michael J. Heath, ed. Lisa Jardine (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 108. See also 64.

23. Ryle, 137n114.

24. The phrase "lord of hosts" was found in Coverdale's Bible as the English translation of both "domine Sabaoth" and "dominus exercituum." *Great Bible* (London: Whitchurch, 1540; RSTC 2070).

Parr's choice (both to translate the prayer and to make that small change) might be read in light of the fact that the opening section of the prayer resonates very closely with Thomas Cranmer's "Exhortation" which also describes God as "Lord of hosts" and exhorts the people to ask God to send an angel to defend Henry (and his army) in the war: "Let us pray, that it may please almighty God, lord of hosts, in whose hands is only wealth and victory, mercifully to assist him, sending his holy angel, to be his succour, keeper and defender from all his adversaries."<sup>25</sup> Parr will later heighten the bellicose content of her translation by repeating and adding the phrase "O lord God of hosts" to the first petition.

Erasmus's acknowledgement of God's warlike attributes concludes with his reference to his support of the young David who felled the giant Goliath. Parr translates this quite closely: "[O almighty King and Lord of Hosts ...] which didst give unto David both courage and strength, being but a little one, unarmed and unexpert in feats of war, with his sling to set upon and overthrow the great, huge Goliath."<sup>26</sup> Erasmus's use of David as the biblical anchor for this prayer may have been one of the details that caught Parr's eye, for the David-Goliath story was important to Henry's self-representation and self-understanding as he prepared for war. A manuscript psalter that Henry commissioned around 1540 included a miniature of him as David fighting Goliath at the beginning of Psalm 26, and he annotated this Psalm with several trefoils (see fig. 1).<sup>27</sup> Moreover, Parr's translation of Fisher's "Psalms" as a tool for wartime preparation was predicated upon the notion that the English were to enlist God's help by imitating David's trust in his power. For example, the reader of Parr's "Psalms" explicitly aligns herself with David in asking God to destroy her enemies: "O Lord, Thou art the strength of my life; in Thee I will ever trust" and "Although never so strong enemies shall pitch their tents against me, my heart shall not be afraid."<sup>28</sup>

25. Thomas Cranmer, *An Exhortation unto Prayer... Also a Litany with Suffrages to be said or sung in the time of the said processions* (London: Berthelet, 27 May 1544; RSTC 10620), A6r–v. See note 18.

26. Mueller, 364 (as quoted above).

27. BL Royal MS 2 A XVI, fol. 30<sup>r</sup>. A digital version is available on the British Library website. For a discussion of Henry's annotations on this Psalm, see White's "The Psalms, War, and Royal Iconography."

28. Mueller, 323, 325. Fisher is drawing, here, on Psalm 26:1, 2–4.



Figure 1. Henry VIII as David fighting Goliath, Psalm 26 in Henry VIII's Psalter (@ The British Library Board, Royal 2 A XVI, fol. 30r).

If Parr made only minor adjustments to the first two parts of the prayer, the “address” and “acknowledgement,” she made major revisions to the third part, the “petitions” in which the speaker explains *what* she is asking God to do. As Hilmar Pabel and Rudolf Padberg have noted, this section of Erasmus's prayer is interesting because it focuses so intently on peace. The prayer is not tied to any particular war or party; it is conditional about the “justness” of the conflict, and what it focuses on is “not the victory of one's own faction, but the triumph

of God and of justice.”<sup>29</sup> Our appreciation of the prayer’s unusual content is enhanced when we observe that it echoes a passage from *The Education of a Christian Prince* where Erasmus argues that a prince should avoid war if at all possible. He first notes how “desirable” peace is and how “wicked” war is, and how “even the most just of wars brings with it a train of evils—if indeed any war can really be called just.”<sup>30</sup> However, “if so pernicious a thing [as war] cannot be avoided,” then “the prince’s first concern should be to fight with the least possible harm to his subjects, at the lowest cost in Christian blood, and to end it as quickly as possible.”<sup>31</sup> All these ideas are present in the “Inituri praelium.”

Parr’s textual interventions are very evident in this section as she erases Erasmus’s emphasis on God’s justice, asserts that of Henry’s cause, and boldly asks for a glorious victory. Erasmus’s soldier, for example, prefaces his requests with two conditional formulations: “if our cause is just [and] if we are forced to fight this war, I pray [...]” (my emphasis). This may seem odd, but it is perfectly consistent with Erasmus’s skepticism about monarchs who “deceive” themselves into thinking that they were fighting “just” wars.<sup>32</sup> Erasmus agreed that Augustine and Bernard of Clairvaux had defended the possibility of a just war, but he argued that contemporary wars were motivated by “ambition, anger, arrogance, lust, or greed” and that none of the gospels or church fathers “approves of the kind of war which is usually fought today.”<sup>33</sup> Parr, by contrast, sweeps away any such uncertainty regarding the legitimacy of Henry’s war. Henry’s soldiers are encouraged to assert the righteousness of their cause before requesting support: “our cause now *being just*, and *being enforced* to enter into war and battle, we most humbly beseech thee” (my emphasis). Parr’s insistence that the English cause was “just” and that they were “enforced” into war echoes Henry’s public declarations against the Scottish and the French. For example, the declaration against the Scots issued in December 1543 had argued that their violation of the Treaty of Edinburgh had forced Henry to invade Scotland

29. Pabel, 180. Pabel is translating and citing Rudolf Padberg, “Erasmus contra Augustinum: Das Problem des bellum justum in der erasmischen Friedensethik,” in *Colloque érasmien de Liège. Commémoration du 450<sup>e</sup> anniversaire de la mort d’Érasme. Études rassemblées par Jean-Pierre Massaut*, ed. Jean-Pierre Massaut (Paris: Société d’Édition “Les Belles Lettres,” 1987), 279–96, 281.

30. Erasmus, *Education of a Christian Prince*, 103.

31. Erasmus, *Education of a Christian Prince*, 103.

32. Erasmus, *Education of a Christian Prince*, 104.

33. Erasmus, *Education of a Christian Prince*, 104–05.

and secure the safety of Mary Stuart.<sup>34</sup> Similarly, Henry's Proclamation of War against the French insisted on his duty to punish King Francis I for his ungodly support of the anti-Christian Turks and asserted that Henry had been forced to go to war to recuperate the pension that Francis owed him.<sup>35</sup>

Parr's reworking of Erasmus's conception of war is similarly evident in her treatment of the requests. In asking for help, Erasmus's soldier presents God with three possible outcomes, beginning with the most desirable one. Parr translates the first fairly closely: "we beseech thee [...] so to turn the hearts of our enemies to the desire of peace, that no Christian blood be spilt." Erasmus's second option is more curious, as he asks God to "inspire the terror that they call panic." Stephen Ryle suggests that Erasmus was alluding to verses from Judges 7:18–22, a passage in which God caused confusion in the ranks of Gideon's enemy (the Midianites), who then fled.<sup>36</sup> It is notable that Parr completely omits this scenario, which was both unlikely and inglorious. Erasmus's third option includes combat, but he asks for minimal blood loss and tactfully allows God to let the victory be attained by "those whose cause is more pleasing to you" (*"quorum causa tibi probator est"*). Parr, by contrast, omits this latter phrase entirely and makes a blunt bid for Henry whose cause is, of course, the most pleasing to God. She also adds a phrase about the "glory" of war that is not in Erasmus, and although she indicates that the glory will be God's, it is clear that the glory will be Henry's as well: "grant (O Lord) that with small effusion of blood, and to the little hurt and damage of innocents, we *may, to thy glory, obtain victory*."<sup>37</sup> Parr's addition of the word "glory" is consistent with an addition she made when translating "A Prayer for the King," for she stressed Henry's military honour, changing her source's "set glory and great comeliness upon him" (*"Gloriam et magnum decorum impone super eum"*) to "*heap glory and honor upon him*."<sup>38</sup>

34. *Hamilton Papers: Letters and Papers Illustrating the Political Relations of England and Scotland*, ed. Joseph Bain, 2 vols. (Edinburgh, 1892), 2:235–38.

35. Paul L. Hughes and James F. Larkin, ed. *Tudor Royal Proclamations*, 3 vols. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1969), 1:320–21, 2 August 1543.

36. Erasmus, *Some New Prayers*, 137n116.

37. Parr adds to Erasmus's reference to harm (*"incommodo"*) by stressing that the English seek a victory that would avoid both "hurt" and "damage of innocents."

38. Mueller, 363–64. For a detailed discussion of Parr's translation of the prayer for Henry, see White, "The Psalms, War, and Royal Iconography."

Finally, Parr makes interesting changes to the “aspiration”—the portion of the prayer that imagines the outcome of God’s gifts (“so that...”). Like the changes to the “acknowledgement,” these changes link Parr’s prayer to Cranmer’s *Litany*. For example, in Erasmus’s prayer, the soldier asks God to end the war quickly so that the soldiers may “tibi concordibus animis cantemus triumphales hymnos” (sing triumphant hymns with united minds to you). Parr amplifies this depiction of unity as her speaker hopes that they may “with one heart and mind, knit together in concord and unity, laud and praise Thee.” I suggest that Parr added these words in order to promote the novel concept of vernacular public worship. In the rubric prefacing the *Litany*, Cranmer explained that since the rite was now in English, the laypeople were to join their “minds” and “hearts” with the petitions being sung by the clergy so that they might pray with “one sound of the heart, and one accord.”<sup>39</sup> Given Cranmer’s emphasis on unified “minds” and “hearts” in communal worship, it is striking that Parr’s addition to Erasmus is identical. Parr also translates Erasmus’s “[that] we may sing triumphant hymns” as “that [...] we may all [...] *laud and praise Thee*” (my emphasis). It is worth considering the possibility that she made this minor alteration in order to echo actual liturgical practice. In early modern Europe, military victories were celebrated with the singing of the *Te Deum*, a hymn which begins “Te Deum laudamus” (“we laud thee God” or “we praise thee God”). Parr’s phrasing brings liturgical specificity to Erasmus’s aspiration, and under her guidance the English soldiers pray for the day when they will gather together to hear a *Te Deum* of victory. In fact, on 22 May 1544 (two days before the second printing of Parr’s book), the English celebrated a victory over the Scots in precisely that way: “there was a sermon made in Paul’s to the laud of God and praise of the King’s Majesty, with *Te Deum* sung, and after a general procession.”<sup>40</sup> The *Te Deum* was also sung at St. Paul’s Cathedral and across the country on 20 September to celebrate Henry’s capture of Boulogne, and it was sung again at St. Paul’s on 3 October once Henry had returned from France.<sup>41</sup>

39. Cranmer, *An Exhortation unto Prayer*, B3<sup>v</sup>. This concept is not found in late medieval discussions of corporate worship.

40. *A Chronicle of England during the Reigns of the Tudors, from AD 1485 to 1559*, ed. William Douglas Hamilton, 2 vols. (Westminster: Camden Society, 1875–78), 1:147.

41. *A Chronicle*, 1:149.



### Parr's weaponization of Erasmus's "A Prayer for Forgiveness of Sins"

At some point in 1544, a small sextodecimo edition of Parr's *Psalms or Prayers* was printed (RSTC 3002.3); this format was popular and it was reissued at least three times in 1545. These small editions are particularly interesting because they contain all the material in the octavo editions (Fisher's "Psalms," "A Prayer for the King," and "A Prayer for Men to say Entering into Battle"), but they conclude with an additional item, "A Prayer for Forgiveness of Sins" (fig. 2).<sup>42</sup> This prayer is a translation of Erasmus's "Pro venia delictorum," and to date it is largely unknown.<sup>43</sup> It is easy, however, to see why Parr would have selected it for inclusion in her *Psalms or Prayers*: like Fisher's "Psalms," it is a "Collage-Psalm" comprising five verses drawn largely verbatim from the Vulgate translations of Psalms 118, 24, and 29.<sup>44</sup> Moreover, its themes are identical to those found in Fisher's "Psalms": the speaker repents, asks for mercy and relief, and promises to sing of God's glory.

Erasmus's "Pro venia delictorum":

Erravi sicut ovis quæ periit, require servum tuum domine, quia mandata tua non sum oblitus. Delicta juventutis meæ & ignoraciones meas ne memineris domine. Secundum misericordiam tuam memento mei. Propter bonitatem tuam domine custodi animam meam, & erue me, non erubescam, quoniam speravi in te. Converte planctum meum in gaudium. Conscinde saccum meum, & circunda me lætitia, ut cantet tibi gloria mea, & non compungar.<sup>45</sup>

My literal translation with Psalm verses:

42. The 1544 sextodecimo edition is not dated but was likely printed after the first octavo edition. The linguistic and political strategies at work in the translation of "A Prayer for Forgiveness of Sins" are perfectly consistent with the strategies on display in Parr's other work and strongly suggest that she was the translator.

43. "A Prayer for Forgiveness of Sins" is not included in Mueller's edition. James discusses the prayer briefly, but did not recognize the source (James, 208).

44. In excerpting Psalm 29:2–13, Erasmus changed the verb tenses from the perfect tense to the imperative. Parr follows Erasmus.

45. Erasmus, *Precationes aliquot Novæ*, 61–62.



I have strayed like a sheep that is lost, seek your servant Lord, for I have not forgotten your commandments [Ps 118:176]. May you not remember, Lord, the sins of my youth and my ignorances. According to your mercy remember me. For your goodness's sake, Lord, keep my soul & deliver me, let me not be ashamed because I have trusted in you [Ps. 24: 7, 20]. Turn my mourning into joy. Tear my sackcloth and surround me with gladness, so that my glory may sing to you and I may not be silenced [Psalm 29:12–13].

Parr's translation: "A Prayer for Forgiveness of Sins."

I have strayed abroad, as a lost sheep: seek for thy servant (O Lord) for I have not forgotten thy commandments. Remember not (lord) the offenses and ignorances of my youth. Mind me according to thy mercy. Lord, for thy goodness sake, keep my soul, deliver me, for I have hoped in thee. Turn my wailing into joy. Cut my sack of sorrow in pieces, and cloth me with gladness, and I will sing thy glory. Amen.<sup>46</sup>

A comparison of Parr's translation and her source reveals that she made only minor verbal adjustments to the text. However, she has radically transformed the *function* of the prayer by extracting it from its original context and turning it into a devotional weapon. In Erasmus's *Precationes* there is nothing connecting the "Pro venia delictorum" to the wartime "Inituri praelium." In fact, the "Pro venia delictorum" is from an entirely different section of Erasmus's volume (entitled "Ejaculations") that consists of very short prayers derived from scripture. It appears between prayers "For a Gentle Faith" ("Pro docilitate pietatis") and "For Purity of Heart" ("Pro mundicia cordis"). Parr, however, gives the prayer an entirely new role within a program of national wartime preparation as it provides Henry's subjects with another devotional script to use in preparing for possible death, in asking for help, and in promising to be thankful. Erasmus's prayer also contains a verse that echoes a phrase from the *Litany*, a fact that may have appealed to her. In revising the Catholic *Litany*, Cranmer had retained verses that asked God not to "remember" the "offenses" of the community: "Remember not Lord, our offenses, nor the offenses of our

46. Katherine Parr, trans. *Psalms or Prayers* (London: Thomas Berthelet, 1544; RSTC 3002.3), N7r–v.

forefathers.”<sup>47</sup> In the Parr/Erasmus prayer, the speaker cites a verse from Psalm 24:7 that similarly asks God, “Remember not (lord) the offenses and ignorances of my youth.” Of course, some of the lines from Erasmus’s prayer take on new meanings when read in the context of the other prayers in Parr’s volume. When her readers used Erasmus’s petition, “Lord, for thy goodness sake, keep my soul, deliver me,” they were hoping to be “delivered” from the suffering of war or death, and when they promised to “sing [God’s] glory,” they surely hoped for the kind of singing imagined at the end of Erasmus’s prayer for soldiers: a triumphant *Te Deum*. The prayer also enabled them to pray that God might have “mercy” on them if they perished in battle.

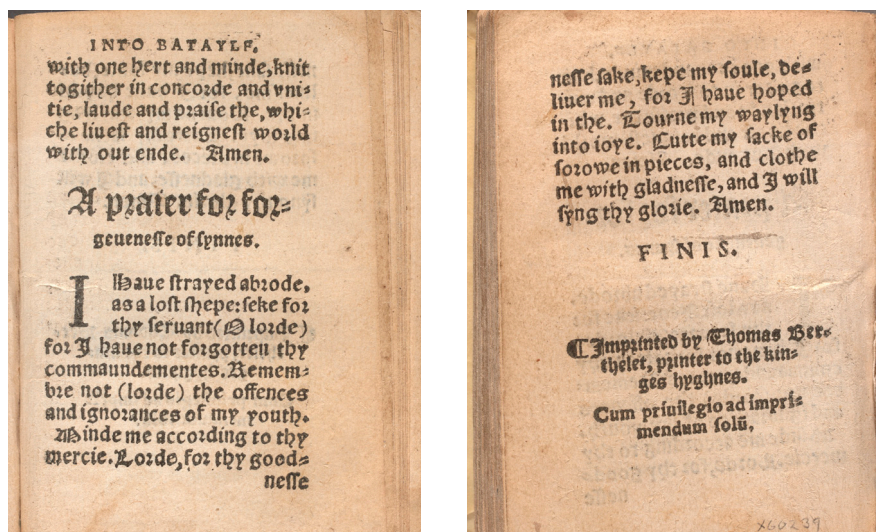


Figure 2. “A Prayer for Forgiveness of Sins.” Katherine Parr, trans. *Psalmes or prayers taken out of holie scripture* (London, 1544; RSTC 3002.3.), N7r. RB60239, The Huntington Library, San Marino, California.

In turning to examine the details of the translation itself, we note that while Parr makes only minor changes to Erasmus’s Psalm verses, she displays a remarkable degree of independence and does not always rely on the Coverdale translation (Great Bible) authorized by Henry and ordered to be used in

47. Cranmer, *An Exhortation unto Prayer*, B4<sup>r</sup>.

churches. In fact, in 1543 Henry had introduced tighter restrictions on lay Bible reading, and so Parr's verbal licence stands out as she clearly offers her own translation of the Latin Psalm verses rather than adopting Coverdale's authorized translations.<sup>48</sup> Erasmus's prayer, for example, opens by drawing on verse 176 from Psalm 118 (Vulgate), and where Coverdale offers "I have gone astray, like a sheep that is lost: O seek thy servant, for I do not forget thy commandments," Parr offers her own translation, "I have strayed abroad, as a lost sheep: seek for thy servant (O Lord) for I have not forgotten thy commandments."<sup>49</sup> Parr also decided to omit two biblical phrases, perhaps because they were confusing. For example, Erasmus reproduces the Vulgate verse 24:20 verbatim: "custodi animam meam, & erue me, non erubescam, quoniam speravi in te." The phrase "non erubescam," meaning here "let me not be ashamed," was translated by Coverdale as "let me not be confounded." Parr omitted this phrase, offering a petition that is more economical: "Keep my soul, deliver me, for I have hoped in thee." She also made changes to the final petition derived from Psalm 29:13: "ut cantet tibi gloria mea, & non compungar." The words "non compungar" in the Erasmus/Vulgate were challenging and led to various different translations.<sup>50</sup> Parr streamlines, offering "and I will sing thy glory."

### **Parr and the dissemination of Erasmus's exhortations to Christian peace**

The recognition that Parr altered and reframed Erasmus's prayers in order to further Henry's war effort has significance beyond our understanding of her *Psalms or Prayers*, for it sheds new light on her role as the patron and coordinator of the translation of Erasmus's *Paraphrases upon the New Testament*. The *Paraphrases* is an enormous work that deals with a multitude of religious issues, but in several places Erasmus addresses the morality of war waged by princes and bishops, stressing Christ's role as the "Prince of Peace"

48. See the 1543 "Act for the Advancement of True Religion."

49. The Vulgate reads: "Erravi sicut ovis quae periit, quaere servum tuum domine, quia mandata tua non sum oblitus." I cite from Coverdale, *Great Bible* (London: Whitchurch, 1540; RSTC 2070).

50. See Augustine's discussion of the challenging formulation "non compungar." From *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, First Series, vol. 8, ed. Philip Schaff (Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Publishing Co., 1888). Coverdale, translating from the Hebrew, "I will praise forever," offers "Therefore shall (every good man) sing of thy praise without ceasing. O my God, I will give thanks unto thee for ever."

and the Gospel message of unity and concord.<sup>51</sup> In addition, Erasmus prefaced his *Paraphrases* with dedications to Charles V (Matthew), Francis I (Mark), Henry VIII (Luke), and Ferdinand Archduke of Austria (John), dedications that explicitly criticize the wickedness of current Italian wars and elaborate on a prince's duty to set aside insults and territorial squabbling in order to promote peace.<sup>52</sup> These four dedications were given a new life by Parr in around 1544–45 as she “commanded” Udall to translate the paraphrase on Luke, accepted Thomas Key's offer to translate Mark, and enlisted Mary Tudor to translate John.<sup>53</sup> What this means for us is that Parr was the main authority figure who underwrote the translation and dissemination of Erasmus's views regarding the prince's duty to promote peace.<sup>54</sup> For example, in his dedication to Francis I, Erasmus (in Key's translation) explains that he has dedicated his books to four “chief princes” in hopes that the “spirit of the gospel” might join their “hearts” together in “mutual amity and concord.”<sup>55</sup> He laments that Christian monarchs have “warred one against another” with “dishonor” and to the “utter decay of Christ's religion” (aaii<sup>v</sup>). He further notes that all princes think that their cause is the “most rightful and just” and argues that it would be better to “embrace an unjust peace” than to “wage battle” because nothing is more destructive than war (aiii<sup>r</sup>). In light of Parr's addition of the words “glory” and “honor” to Erasmus's prayer for soldiers and to “A Prayer for the King,” it must be noted that Erasmus criticizes notions of military valour and argues that true courage comes from avoiding conflict: “among all Princely virtues, high stomach and noble courage of mind is reckoned the chief” and yet what “greater argument is there of a very lofty and courageous mind, then to be able nothing to pass upon injuries” (aiiir–aiiiv). He continues that it is more “honourable and glorious” for a “Christian Prince to buy peace and tranquility of the commonwealth with the loss of some part of his dominion” or by ignoring a “railing word.” Towards the end of the dedication he discusses the Gospel as the key to ending war, for

51. See his paraphrases of Luke 3:14, 22:36, and Matthew 26:52.

52. Dodds discusses Erasmus's treatment of war and peace in *Exploiting Erasmus*, 31–34.

53. For Parr's “commandments,” see Mueller, 103, 111.

54. Parr's coat of arms was on the title page of the printed work, and five of the volume's seven dedications celebrate *her* as the mastermind, organizer, and sponsor of the translation.

55. Thomas Key, trans. “Preface to Francis I,” in *The First Tome or Volume of the Paraphrases of Erasmus upon the New Testament* (London: 1548; RSTC 2854), aii<sup>v</sup>. All subsequent parenthetical references are from this edition.

it is a powerful “medicine” that can “purge” our sins and “restore” us to the tranquility of Christ (avi<sup>v</sup>–avii<sup>i</sup>).

Erasmus’s description of the Gospel as healing medicine leading to peace is developed further in his dedication to Henry VIII. As Marjorie O’Rourke Boyle has noted, Erasmus dedicated his translation in August 1523, when Henry had formed an alliance with Charles V and was plotting an invasion of France.<sup>56</sup> The dedication focuses on Luke as a physician; it deliberates on the spiritual and political health of a king, of the body politic, and of Christendom; and, as Boyle argues, it exhorts Henry to “swallow the medicine of Christ into the whole anatomy of the commonwealth” so that it might “remedy the spiritual disorder which erupts into ambition for war.”<sup>57</sup> Erasmus’s agenda is particularly evident in a passage where he analyzes how the healing medicine of the word operates on us: first we ingest the “potion of faith” which produces repentance and expels our sins; second, we ingest an “electuary of consolation” and “perfect doctrine” that replenishes the soul.<sup>58</sup> He identifies wrath, envy, greed, and the desire for war as “sins” that the Word seeks to expel, and he identifies gentleness, liberality, and the desire for peace as the virtues that God “infuses” into the newly healthy body:

Wrathfulness is voided out, and gentleness and meekness is instead thereof infused. Envy is sucked out, and taking of all things to the best, put in for it. Picking and polling is voided out, and in place thereof succedeth liberality. The fervent desire of making war, is consumed away, and the earnest zeal of peace cometh in for it.<sup>59</sup>

While this “medicine” is for all Christians, the message for Henry is clear and uncompromising: the impulse to wage war is a sin that the Gospel should expel and replace with an “earnest zeal of peace.” One cannot help wondering how Henry interpreted Erasmus’s advice, but probably not with the “delight” that Udall claimed when he offered his English translation to Parr in 1545: “[I] knew

56. Marjorie O’Rourke Boyle, “Erasmus’ Prescription for Henry VIII: Logotherapy,” *Renaissance Quarterly* 31.2 (1978): 161–72.

57. Boyle, 163.

58. Nicholas Udall, trans., “Dedication to Henry VIII,” in *The First Tome or Volume of the Paraphrases of Erasmus*, Bbi<sup>v</sup>.

59. Udall, Bbiir.

his majesty to ha[ve] singularly well allowed and most graciously accepted [Erasmus's dedication] in Latin, and in perusing thereof, to be daily exceeding much delighted."<sup>60</sup> An unidentified reader of the copy of the *Paraphrases* owned by the parish of Trull in Somerset was struck by Erasmus's discussion of the scriptures as "medicine" that expelled sins, placing marks beside passages such as "Jesus [...] left unto us by his Apostles a medicinal electuary of the gospel, both easy and ready for everybody that will take it."<sup>61</sup>

As Parr was surely aware, Erasmus's exhortations to Henry, Francis, and Charles about war and peace were directly relevant between 1544 and 1545 as the political situation from 1523 had repeated itself, with Henry aligning himself with Charles and being at war with Francis. When we read Parr's translations of the prayers from the *Precationes* against her "commandment" to Udall and Key to translate Erasmus's dedications to Henry and Francis, we can see that she was engaged in two translation projects that appear to be at odds with one another. On the one hand, she was reframing and reworking two of Erasmus's (unattributed) prayers in order to appeal to the "Lord of Hosts" to give Henry a "victory" over the "great, huge Goliath" (Francis I); on the other hand, she was sponsoring a work in which Erasmus exhorted Henry, Francis, and Charles to purge themselves of the "desire of making war" and to embrace an "earnest zeal of peace." Unfortunately, it is impossible to determine how Parr viewed or understood the apparent tension between these projects. It is possible that she believed that Henry's wars were indeed "just" (according to Erasmus's rigorous definition) and that there was no contradiction. She may have believed that Erasmus's criticisms of war were noble and worth translating, but that political realities on the ground gave her permission to retool his prayers to help Henry win his war. It is also possible that she agreed with Erasmus's criticisms of war, but was compelled to participate in Henry's war effort.

### Parr as "captain" of an Erasmian war on Catholic doctrine and practice

As a coda to this study, I would like to point out that Parr's role as the translator of Erasmus's prayer for soldiers is something that is actually acknowledged *within*

60. Mueller, 103.

61. Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library at the University of Toronto, Rare Book STC 00155. *The First Tome or Volume of the Paraphrases of Erasmus upon the New Testament* (London: 1548; RSTC 2854), Bbi. It is impossible to date this annotation.

the body of the *Paraphrases*, even though, as we have seen, Parr's reworking of the prayer sits uncomfortably with Erasmus's views and with his dedications to Henry and Francis. The reference is found in Udall's dedication to Parr of the paraphrase on Luke, dated 30 September 1545. As Gregory Dodds, Jaime Goodrich, and others have noted, the prefatory and dedicatory materials written by Udall and Key have a complex relation to the (often traditional) content and objectives of the *Paraphrases*.<sup>62</sup> Dodds observes that Udall overlooks Erasmus's Catholicism and repackages the *Paraphrases* as a weapon in the fight against papal authority and in the struggle to promote Bible reading and to advance reformed theology and devotion. Of interest to us is the fact that Udall's 1545 dedication to Parr (which is placed right before Erasmus's dedication to Henry) completely ignores Erasmus's emphasis on the role of the Gospel in promoting peace. Instead, Udall alludes to Parr's translations of his short wartime prayers, but substantially alters their meaning as he criticizes Henry's conservatism and implicitly exhorts Parr to assume the role of Davidic "captain" and to lead the English church into battle by wielding the "stone" of the *Paraphrases* and the "sling" of the spirit against Catholic abuses.<sup>63</sup>

About a quarter of the way through his dedication, Udall positions Parr's coordination of the *Paraphrases* as part of a larger literary program to disseminate the Gospel, a program that includes her *Psalms or Prayers* and *Prayers or Meditations*: he praises her for "the Psalms and contemplative meditations on which your highness, in the lieu and place of vain courtly pastimes and gaming, doth bestow your night-and-day's study."<sup>64</sup> In then describing the fact that she has "hire[d]" men at her "great costs and charges" to work on the *Paraphrases*, he argues that her own writing is what inspires them, and he uses a military metaphor that appears to refer to her "A Prayer for Men to Say Entering into Battle." Parr is a "good captain" whose forward writing serves to encourage "forward soldiers" and to "lead" an "army" of writers:

And as a good captain, partly to the encouraging of his forward soldiers,  
and partly to the shaming of dastards or false-hearted loiterers, leadeth  
and guideth his army, and goeth himself before them, so your grace, far

62. Dodds, 15–26. Goodrich, 72–87.

63. Mueller, 94, 97, 98.

64. Mueller, 93.



otherwise than in the weak vessels of woman-sex is to be looked for, do show unto men a notable example of forwardness in setting pen to the book.<sup>65</sup>

Here, Udall alludes to Parr's literary contribution to Henry's war effort, but he quickly repositions her as the "captain" in a different conflict: the struggle to eradicate Catholicism by disseminating Erasmus's *Paraphrases*. Surprisingly, he complains twice about Henry's religious conservatism and it slowly becomes clear that he views Parr as the figure who might lead England in the battle against Catholic devotional practices. For example, he turns from praising Parr's textual labour to hoping that she can work on Henry so that "one day, when his godly wisdom shall so think expedient," he will "cause the same Paraphrase to be published and set abroad" and will satisfy the people "thirsting" for the "knowledge of God's word."<sup>66</sup> As Mueller notes, Udall alludes here to Henry's recent attempts to restrict Bible reading (1543).<sup>67</sup> In explaining why Henry should share Parr's enthusiasm for the *Paraphrases*, Udall elaborates on its usefulness as a weapon in the decade-long struggle against Catholicism. He begins this section with what is surely a second reference to Parr's "A Prayer for Men to Say Entering into Battle," describing Henry as David using "the stone of God's Word" to fight Goliath, now the pope rather than Francis I:

For his most excellent majesty, being a man after the heart of the Lord, being a right David chosen to destroy Goliath, the huge and cumbrous enemy of Israel, without any armor and with none other weapon but the stone of God's Word cast out of the sling of the divine Spirit working in him and his laws made here in England; and being the elected instrument of God to pluck down the idol of the Romish Antichrist, who [...] hath usurped a kind of supremacy and tyranny over all the princes on earth.<sup>68</sup>

65. Mueller, 94. This passage, which praises Parr for working "from the first hour of the day to the twelfth" and for "hir[ing] other workmen to labour in the same vineyard of Christ's Gospel," might be referring solely to her labour for her first two books. But it might also suggest that Parr was the translator of the *Paraphrase on Matthew*.

66. Mueller, 97. Udall expresses his frustration with Henry's reluctance to publish the *Paraphrases* again a few pages later (Mueller, 102).

67. Mueller, 97n87.

68. Mueller, 97–98.



In this account, Henry/David used “God’s Word” to break free from papal tyranny, to dissolve the monasteries, and to authorize the translation of the Bible into English. But in Udall’s view, the printing of the English Bible was only the beginning, not the conclusion, of the English Reformation, for the Bible was now leading the English to fight other “superstitious” Catholic doctrines and practices, only some of which Henry has banned: the use of religious images, pilgrimages, intercessory prayers, Masses for the dead, indulgences, et cetera. It is in this context of an ongoing struggle that Udall establishes the value of Erasmus’s *Paraphrases*, a text that offers a “godly exposition” of biblical truths that will further “edify” the English people and lead them to continue to purge the church of Catholic “errors.”<sup>69</sup> Crucially, although Udall appears to praise Henry for his rejection of papal authority, he ultimately attacks his conservatism and implicitly exhorts Parr to lead the way as the Davidic “captain” who will wield the “stone of God’s word” (the *Paraphrases*) in a textual war against traditional doctrine and devotional practices.

### Conclusion

As we have seen, the new data and analysis offered in this article enrich our understanding of early modern translation in several ways. First, they provide detailed evidence of the way in which translators could transform a text through repackaging it for new contexts, with different purposes in mind and for different readerships. Parr’s translations furnish an elegant example of how she reworked and reframed Erasmus’s short prayers to complement Cranmer’s *Litany* and to support Henry’s war effort. More broadly, our study demonstrates that the translation and dissemination of Erasmus’s ideas about war in mid-sixteenth-century England were more complex than has been previously imagined, and reveals that Katherine Parr, as translator, was the figure at the heart of that complexity. Indeed, her relationship to the translation, repackaging, and circulation of Erasmus’s ideas regarding war and peace is a tangled thicket as she produced texts that communicated contradictory messages regarding the role of the prince in promoting political peace, in waging military war, and in overseeing spiritual warfare. Although it is impossible to determine how Parr

69. Mueller, 101–02.

viewed or understood the tensions between these projects, what we can assert is that the tensions had a long life. The *Paraphrases*, the anonymous *Psalms or Prayers*, and the *Prayers or Meditations* were widely disseminated and reprinted in the Henrician, Edwardian, Marian, and Elizabethan periods, meaning that several generations of English readers were simultaneously using Parr's translated and edited Erasmian prayers in waging war, reading Parr-sponsored Erasmian exhortations to political peace, and reading Parr-sponsored Udallian exhortations to spiritual warfare.