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## PARKER MINES NEW DOCUMENTS FOR BIOGRAPHY OF SPANISH KING



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Prolific scholar [Geoffrey Parker](#) has done it again.

Parker — Andreas Dorpalen Professor of History, Distinguished University Professor, and Mershon Center affiliate — has another landmark book hitting the shelves this week.



Parker's new biography of King Phillip II, *Imprudent King: A New Life of Phillip II*, published by Yale University Press, is the first biography to take advantage of a treasure trove of unidentified documents that Parker discovered in 2011 and authenticated in 2012. Parker is the world's leading authority on King Phillip II.

The advance "buzz" for *Imprudent King* promises it may equal if not exceed the triumphs of his last book, *Global Crisis: War, Climate Change and Castrophe In the Seventeenth Century*.

*Global Crisis*, an analytical history of world-wide chaos in the 17th century, published by Yale University Press in 2013, was named the History Book of 2013 by The Sunday Times. It won both the Society for Military History's 2014 Distinguished Book Award and a 2014 British Academy Medal for "a landmark academic achievement...which has transformed understanding of a particular subject."

Parker, winner of the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences' Dr. A.H. Heineken Prize for History in 2012, is the world's leading authority on King Phillip II (1527-1598), Spain's most famous monarch, and is the author of several books on Phillip, including a critically acclaimed biography published in Spain in 2010.

Little did he know then, that there was more — much more — to come. And what came next reads a bit like a good detective story, although Parker could well argue that a good historian is, by nature, a good detective.

In 2011, Parker uncovered a veritable treasure trove of 3,000 unidentified documents at The Hispanic Society of America in New York City. These were acquired at the turn of the 20th Century by Archer M. Huntington, founder of the Hispanic Society, when he purchased the library of the marquis de Jerez de los Caballeros.

Placed in Huntington's private vault, the documents did not enter the Hispanic Society collection itself until after Huntington's death in 1955. There they sat untouched until Parker came upon them in 2011.

Assisted by a grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, Parker and two of his former advisees including Rachael Ball, an Ohio State alumna, then spent the summer of 2012 carefully sorting and cataloguing the documents.

What they found was astounding. This forgotten collection included important letters, notes and administrative documents, many written by Phillip himself, which had not been opened since they were first filed away more than 400 years ago.

Parker's new book on King Phillip II is the first biography to take into account this incredible discovery. *Imprudent King: A New Life of Phillip II*, is indeed a "new" life, showing that just when you think you know everything about a subject — there is always something new to take your breath away.

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