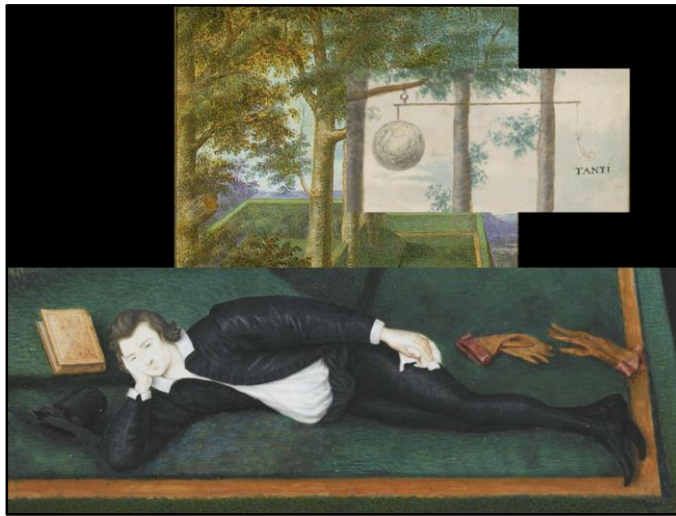




- The Tudors loved secrets, puzzles and word play and a lot of time and effort has gone into trying to understand what it all meant.
- In order to decode the secrets of Tudor art we must try to put ourselves back into the minds of the Tudor courtier.
- There were concepts that are alien or unknown to us today on which the interpretation hinges.
- Some of the most important are the divine right of kings, magnificence, chivalry and melancholia.
- I will start with one of the most puzzling – melancholia.

Notes

1. Melancholy
2. The Accession Day Tilt
3. The Impressa
4. Symbolic meaning in Tudor art
5. Nicholas Hilliard, *Young Man Amongst Roses*.
6. Isaac Oliver, *A Man Against a Background of Flames*.
7. Nicholas Hilliard, Henry Percy, Earl of Northumberland
8. Ditchley Portrait, reject the Renaissance conventions of space and time
9. Armada Portrait
10. The Origins and Functions of the Portrait Miniature
 - See shafe.uk 'Tudor: The Origins and Functions of the Portrait Miniature'
 - Holbein, Mrs Jane Small
 - Simon Bening
 - Lucas Horenbout
 - Nicolas Hilliard, 'Young Man Amongst Roses', the *Art of Limning*
 - Isaac Oliver, Hilliard's pupil and Limner to Queen Anne of Denmark 1604, Lord Herbert of Cherbury.
 - Levina Teerlinc



Nicholas Hilliard (1547–1619), *Portrait of Henry Percy, Ninth Earl of Northumberland*, c. 1594-1595, miniature on parchment, 25.7 x 17.3 cm (slightly small than A4), Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam

Secret Knowledge

- In order to explain what I mean by 'secret knowledge' I have **selected one** Elizabethan miniature and will spend some time analysing its many levels of meaning. It is perhaps the most cryptic of all Elizabethan images.
- It was **commissioned** by **Henry Percy**, the '**Wizard Earl**', 9th Earl of Northumberland, a well known **Elizabethan intellectual**, towards the end of the Elizabethan period in 1594 or 5. His library was the largest in England and he used a telescope to map the moon months before Galileo. He may have been the first person to observe sunspots.
- It is unusual as it is **not a homage to Elizabeth** except that he is dressed in Elizabeth's colours—black and white. More significant is that **black is the colour of melancholy** and adopting the attitude of melancholy was a **fashion** of the period. It is unusual as the melancholic was associated with untamed, **wild nature** but here he is within a **cultivated garden**. This may be to signify that melancholic genius can be associated with rational thought and the measurement and control of nature.

What is Melancholy?

- I need to explain more about the **nature of melancholy** to understand the significance of this. The ancient Greeks reduced personalities to four types melancholic (despondent), sanguine (cheerful), choleric (emotional) and phlegmatic (unemotional) and these were associated with four humours or fluids of the body, black bile, blood, yellow bile and phlegm, with the four elements, earth air, fire and water, and four planets, Saturn, Jupiter, Mars and the Moon, and a person with an excess of the humour was associated with a type of personality. So a melancholic had excess black bile and was associated with the element earth and the planet Saturn.
- It was **Aristotle** who first linked the **melancholic with genius** when he wrote '**Why is it that all men who are outstanding in philosophy, poetry or the arts are melancholic?**' The melancholic was also associated with an interest in mathematics, measuring, numbering, counting and acquiring assets. Later writers distinguished between someone who was a melancholic because of an excess of black bile and **genial melancholy** that was associated with **genius**. If taken too far however, melancholy could lead to madness.

The Meaning

- This picture is an **impresa**. An impresa is a picture containing symbols and a word or short phrase that signify **some conceit** and propose some **general instruction or message** to everyone. It should not be too obscure or too simple to work out.
- In the picture there is an inconsistency in the perspective and the hedge walls do not make sense. Hanging on a branch of the nearest tree in the inner right hedge is a pair of scales. Suspended from the left arm is a globe or a cannon ball balanced by a feather on the longer right arm. Near the feather is the word — 'TANTI'.
- It has been suggested that the balance in the tree is a **visual pun** in which the words 'sphere' (O.F. espere) and 'feather' (pene) are pun's on the words 'hope' (espoir) and 'affliction' or 'pain' (peine). The pun is made by Rabelais (1494-1553) and links to Northumberland's family motto '**Esperance en Dieu**' (Hope in God) written round a crescent moon (perhaps signified by the sphere). Also note that green is the colour of hope.
- The globe balanced by the feather also links to **Archimedes's** famous dictum 'give me a place to stand on and I will move the earth.' Archimedes was explaining the principles of the lever and it can be seen in the picture that the fulcrum point is much nearer the sphere. Note that **Galileo** had recently discovered the work of Archimedes and in 1586 he wrote a treatise called 'The Little Balance'.
- The word '**tanti**' is difficult to interpret. In Latin it means 'so much' referring to a trifling amount and in Italian the 'pene' (feathers) are 'tanti' in the sense of 'so many', numerous and excessive.' It could be that 'tanti' simply means 'worth so much' or 'this much I weigh'.
- There is also a **political interpretation**. The affliction could be the **beheading of both his uncle and great uncle** signified by the '**beheaded**' branch on the left. This is balanced by hope and between the sphere and the feather there are two trees referring to the two generations of ancestors dishonoured. The impresa could therefore refer to the family's precarious balance between hope and affliction or it could demonstrate his learning through its reference to a theorem of Archimedes.

Notes

- In William Shakespeare's *Love Labour's Lost* (1594) a 'School of Night' is mentioned which is thought to refer to a group that **met at Syon House** that included Christopher Marlowe, John Dee and Walter Raleigh. The School of Night combined esoteric and scientific studies, with hermetic and cabalistic studies. Henry Percy, 9th Earl of Northumberland's southern estates were Petworth and **Syon House**. The secret knowledge studied by Elizabethan scholars included magic, occultism, numerology, alchemy, astrology, Cabbala and Neo-Platonism. What we call science today was only gradually becoming distinct from these areas of knowledge and the distinguishing attribute was that science is based on observation and measurement of the world rather than interpretation of texts.
- The painting may relate to a poem dedicated to Percy that associates secret knowledge with 'pleasant fieldes' that are 'unaccessible' (on a mountain top as here) where 'divine science and Phylosophie' may be contemplated, as shown in this painting.
- The garden contains a **square with a square** which was associated with an architectural

design called the *ad quadratum* system that was used by the Romans and for Hampton Court and Shakespeare's Globe theatre. It is based on various forms of interlocking squares particularly where one square is set diagonally inside another square. The diagonal of a unit square is the square root of two which the ancient Greeks knew is an irrational number, that is it cannot be written as a fraction.

- If we consider the design of the trees we see the tree with the 'beheaded' branch is the seventh tree, perhaps referring to the Seventh Earl who was beheaded. Opposite is the feather ('peine') and its pun 'pena' are words for 'sorrow' and 'affliction' and for 'legal penalty'. In this way Northumberland is saying the beheading was the correct legal penalty but it has left his family balanced between hope and despair.
- The figure of Northumberland on the ground could also be a subtle symbol according to Peacock. The book near the head referring to the intellectual effort associated with science and mechanics while the gloves at the other end of his body and near his hand signify the manual labour of scientific experiment and so the complete symbol signifies the balance between theory and practice in all science. The debate about whether the science of mechanics was an intellectual or manual activity was much debated in the sixteenth century as Aristotle had said the intellectual arts are nobler than the manual arts.
- The artist Hilliard was also associated with passing on secret messages through his miniatures and he may have worked with Percy to create this set of messages. Unfortunately, all of this is speculation as we do not have the key. What we do know is that secret messages and **secret knowledge** was **very important** to the Elizabethans.

Patronage

- This is arguably the most cryptic Tudor cabinet miniature. It is likely that it was commissioned by Henry Percy the Ninth Earl of Northumberland (1564-1632), a well known Elizabethan intellectual and cultural figure. He was known as the 'Wizard Earl' because of his scientific and alchemical experiments and his large library. In 1594 Henry Percy married Dorothy Devereux sister of Robert Devereux, Second Earl of Essex.
- His southern estates were Petworth and Syon House, the latter he acquired through his marriage to Dorothy Devereux. He was a non-Catholic but argued for Catholic toleration and tried to negotiate with James VI of Scotland to reduce Catholic persecution when he became king of England. This did not happen and Henry's second cousin and agent Thomas Percy became one of the five conspirators in the Gunpowder Plot of 1605. As a result Henry Percy suspected of complicity and spent the next 17 years in the Tower of London and was financially ruined by a fine of £30,000.

Date

- The most likely date for the painting is between 1593 and 1595, probably 1594-5. According to Roy Strong the style appears to be influenced by Oliver which suggests a date later than 1593. In 1593 Henry Percy became Knight of the Garter but there is no Knight's insignia in the painting suggesting an earlier date. However, two other paintings of Cumberland and Essex do not show their Knights insignia so it appears that this was acceptable.

Description

- The programme for the miniature would have been specified by the Earl to show him as a

student of 'deep philosophical and mathematical studies but imbued with Renaissance occultism and hermeticism.'

- It is also unusual because the conventional representation of a melancholic man such as Oliver's painting of Edward Herbert shows the melancholic in an uncultivated greenwood, beneath a tree and often beside a brook. Hilliard shows (or rather Henry Percy specified) a melancholic within a cultivated garden. This raises complex issues about whether the deep thought of the melancholic genius is a return to untamed nature (explored in the eighteenth century by Jean Jacques Rousseau) or associated with the construction of rational thought and the taming of nature. Here we have a melancholic genius associated with rational thought and the measurement and control of nature as indicated by the impresa and the cultivated garden. Roy Strong suggests the rectangular hedge is meant to be square and is a reference to the mathematical arts and one of the 'four guides to religion' of which the others are Love, Art and Magic.
- The painting of Henry Percy does not appear to link to Elizabeth although one of her representations as Astraea, the just virgin of the golden age, was associated with Saturn and Saturn is associated with melancholia.
- The elements of the painting would have been specified by Henry Percy and include:
 - Henry Percy, shown reclining in the pose of a melancholic man with a discarded book, hat and gloves. He is dressed in black and white and his shirt is in disarray.
 - A cultivated garden on the top of a hill or mountain. The garden consists of a rectangular or square of trees and clipped hedges within a rectangular or square outer clipped hedge. An analysis based on conventional rules of perspective suggest an inner hedge parallel to an outer hedge with a vanishing point in the sky above the top of the picture. This makes the garden look as though it is tilted up or we are looking down on it from a great height. If we are looking down then the background is inconsistent, in fact there is no consistent interpretation based on the rules of perspective. This uncertainty is increased by the base of the far outer hedge becoming the inner wall of the right outer hedge and then the top of the near outer hedge. Henry Percy's toe rests on the top of the near outer hedge causing difficulties regarding the interpretation of its height. Alternatively this light brown area can be regarded as a path. The single tree in the nearest hedge has a sawn branch and there are four trees in the receding hedge and two trees beyond the far outer hedge.

Impresa

- William Camden defines in Remaines (pp. 366-7) an impresa as:
 - *An Impress (as the Italians call it) is a device in Picture with his Motto or Word, borne by Noble and Learned Personages, to notify some particular conceit of their own, as Emblems. . . do propound some general instruction to all. . . . There is required in an Impress . . . a correspondency of the picture, which is as the body; and the Motto, which as the soul giveth it life. That is the body must be of fair representation, and the word in some different language, witty, short and answerable thereunto; neither too obscure, nor too plain, and most commended when it is an Hemistich [a half line of verse], or parcel of a verse.*
- The balance in the tree is a type of impresa although John Peacock suggests it is a visual

pun in which the words 'sphere' (O.F. *espere*) and 'feather' (*penne*) are pun's on the words 'hope' (*espoir*) and 'affliction' or 'pain' (*peine*). The pun is made by Rabelais (1494-1553) and links to Northumberland's family motto 'Esperance en Dieu' (Hope in God) written round a crescent moon (perhaps signified by the sphere). Also note that green is the colour of hope.

- The globe balanced by the feather also links to Archimedes's famous dictum 'give me a place to stand on and I will move the earth.' This statement is meant to have been made to King Hiero and was based on his work on levers in which he concludes — "Proposition 3: Unequal weights will balance at unequal distances, the greater weight being at the lesser distance" and "Proposition 6: Commensurable magnitudes balance at distances reciprocally proportional to the magnitudes."
- Archimedes texts had been translated in 1269 by Moerbeke including a translation of *De canonio* concerning the problems of the steelyard or Roman balance (i.e. the balance of unequal arm lengths).
- The word 'tanti' is difficult to interpret. It is either Latin or Italian with opposite meanings and is the plural form. In Latin it means 'so much' referring to a trifling amount which is suggested by its scornful use in Marlowe's *Edward II* (Northumberland was a friend of Marlowe). In Italian the 'pene' (feathers) are 'tanti' in the sense of 'so many', numerous and excessive.' Constance Kuriyama suggests 'tanti' simply means 'worth so much' or 'this much I weigh'.
- Peacock suggests the affliction is the beheading of both his uncle and great uncle signified by the 'beheaded' branch on the left. This is balanced by hope and between the sphere and the feather there are two trees referring to the two generations of ancestors dishonoured. Because two is not many there could even be a suggestion that his father's death in the Tower was a government murder rather than a suicide. The *impresa* could therefore refer to the family's precarious balance between hope and affliction or it could demonstrate his learning through its reference to a theorem of Archimedes. Note that between 1583 and 1589 Galileo discovered Archimedes and in 1586 he wrote a treatise called 'The Little Balance'.

"Secret Knowledge"

- Shakespeare's *Love Labour's Lost* (1594) mentions a 'School of Night' that met at Syon House and included Christopher Marlowe, John Dee and Walter Raleigh. The School of Night combined esoteric and scientific studies, with hermetic and cabalistic studies. Hermeticism is ancient knowledge based on the writings of Hermes Trismegistus and thought to pre-date Plato and be based on ancient Egyptian texts. It includes alchemy, astrology and magic and its own religious beliefs in creation, reincarnation and morality. It is related to Rosicrucianism. The Cabala (Kabbala or Qabalah) is based on interpretations of the Hebrew Bible and classical Jewish texts and became popular following the writings of Rabbi Isaac Luria (1534-1572).
- The secret knowledge studied by Elizabethan scholars included magic, occultism, numerology, alchemy, astrology, Cabbala and Neo-Platonism. What we call science today was only gradually becoming distinct from these areas of knowledge and the distinguishing attribute was that science is based on observation and measurement of the world rather than interpretation of texts.

- Maybe a clue to the painting is provided in George Peele's poem the *Honour of the Garter*, dedicated to Northumberland and including the lines:

*Through uncouth ways and unaccessible,
Doost pass into the spacious pleasant fieldes
Of divine science and Phylosophie.*

- This describes 'pleasant fieldes' that are 'unaccessible' (on a mountain top) where 'divine science and Phylosophie' may be contemplated.
- The secret garden contains a rectangular tended inner sanctum that could be intended to be square as the square represents wisdom. In fact it would then be a square within a square which may refer to the technique of *ad quadratum* design based on a double square. This is described by Jonathan Foyle in the design of Hampton Court and it appears likely that Shakespeare's Globe was based on an *ad quadratum* system of interrelated squares when it was reassembled from the Burbage's Theatre in 1599.
- The symbolism of squares also included the idea of stability and as the square is 'firm and constant' so a 'constant minded man, even equal and direct on all sides.'
- The tree trunks in the painting could relate to the straight tree as a symbol of constancy. However, this is not a lovesick man in Arcadia contemplating Elizabeth so the constancy may be the constancy of the contemplative life.
- If we consider the design of the trees we see the tree with the 'beheaded' branch is the seventh tree, perhaps referring to the Seventh Earl who was beheaded. Opposite is the feather ('peine') and its pun 'pena' are words for 'sorrow' and 'affliction' and for 'legal penalty'. In this way Northumberland is saying the beheading was the correct legal penalty but it has left his family balanced between hope and despair.
- The figure of Northumberland on the ground could also be a subtle symbol according to Peacock. The book near the head referring to the intellectual effort associated with science and mechanics while the gloves at the other end of his body and near his hand signify the manual labour of scientific experiment and so the complete symbol signifies the balance between theory and practice in all science. The debate about whether the science of mechanics was an intellectual or manual activity was much debated in the sixteenth century as Aristotle had said the intellectual arts are nobler than the manual arts.

Conclusion

- The programme for the painting would have been constructed by Northumberland possibly in discussion with Hilliard because of his experience in the French Court. Northumberland was one of the scholars of the period and cryptic messages were loved by the Elizabethans so many level of meaning would have been expected.
- We have seen the secret garden on a mountain top contains reference to Northumberland's learning, his melancholic pose and his knowledge of many classical sources both theoretically and practically. The combination of the theoretic and the practical references a new approach to learning that is the beginning of what we understand as science.
- Northumberland also possible includes references to his dishonoured family and how this has left him balanced between hope for the future and despair. We know that the balance tilted to despair as he spent years in the Tower (1605-1621) because of his cousin involved

in the Gunpowder Plot and Northumberland ironically died on 5th November 1632.

- 'Hilliard's miniatures were often linked with spy missions...Hilliard's miniatures were considered somehow appropriate...for this kind of undercover work...Sidney's sonnet devices and Hilliard's limning devices are in a way themselves — "ciphers" ...Both poet and limner in developing an artifice of secrecy were — "On Her Majesty's Secret Service."' "
- Unfortunately, we have lost the key and are left with tantalizing glimpses of hidden meanings.

Provenance

- 9th Earl of Northumberland; to his son Algernon, 10th Earl (1602-68); to his son Joceline, 11th Earl (1644-70); to his only child Elizabeth who married Charles Seymour, 6th Duke of Somerset (the 'Proud Duke') documented by George Vertue in 1728, to Charlotte daughter of his second wife Charlotte who married Heneage, 3rd Earl of Aylesford in 1750, then it descended in the family of the Earls of Aylesford until sold by Christie's, London, 23-VII-1937, no. 45 to Dr. N. Becvh, Amsterdam, then sold by Fred. Muller, 9-IV-1940, no. 66, as a portrait of Sir Philip Sidney, to Dr. M.E. Kronenberg, Rotterdam. The Rijksmuseum bought the miniature in 1981; its catalogue number is RP-T-1981-2.

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Albrecht Dürer (1471–1528), *Melencolia I*, 1514, engraving, 18.6 × 23.8 cm

- This work has been **subject to many interpretations**, possibly more than any other engraving.
- The “I” in “Melencolia I” most likely refers to the first type of melancholia defined by German humanist writer Cornelius Agrippa which is one in which the imagination of the artist predominates over reason.
- The picture contains the following elements:
 - The **magic square** contains the date ‘1514’ in the bottom row and the rows, columns and four quadrants add up to ‘34’.
 - The **truncated rhombohedron** with a faint human skull on it. A rhombus is a four sided figure with sides of equal length and a rhombohedron consists of six rhombuses. In this case the top and bottom corners have been sliced off and the figure has become known as Dürer’s solid.
 - The **female figure represents genius** and she is shown surrounded by the tools of geometry and architecture.
 - The **hourglass** shows time running out.
 - The scales are empty.
 - In the sky there is what might be a comet and a rainbow and the sign ‘Melancolia I’ carried by a bat.
 - Mathematical knowledge is referenced by the use of the symbols: compass, geometrical solid, magic square, scale, hourglass
- The most famous interpretation is by the art historian Erwin Panofsky. He remarks that its influence extended all over Europe for three centuries and all representations of melancholy owe a debt to Dürer. Others have said it is the ‘most written-about image in the history of art’ (Guilia Bartrum).
- Melancholia was a Latin translation of the Greek word meaning black bile and it was seen as an imbalance in the humours, in particular an excess of black bile. Aristotle though melancholia was a condition of ‘greatness’ and all great poets, statesmen and philosophers were melancholic. Marsilio Ficino (1433-1499) writing in the fifteenth century reinforced the idea of ‘divine melancholia’ and ‘melancholic genius’. Ficino revived Neoplatonism and was the most influential

humanist of the early Italian Renaissance. He distanced melancholia from insanity and associated it with genius and greatness. Saturn, god of the earth and of melancholia, was associated with works on the earth in wood and stone.

Melancholia

- The best known melancholic of this period is **Shakespeare's Hamlet** whose contemplation of alternative possible paths of action leads to madness and inaction.
- Melancholia derives from the classical belief that our state of health is derived from the mix of four humours, black bile, yellow bile, phlegm and blood. An excess of any one gave rise to a particular temperament. An excess of black bile made the person melancholic (despondent, quiet, analytical, serious), yellow bile choleric (ambitious, restless, easily angered), phlegm phlegmatic (calm, thoughtful, patient, peaceful) and blood sanguine (courageous, hopeful, playful, carefree).
- The ancient Greeks associated the four humours with the four elements and four planets and a person with an excess of the humour was associated with a type of personality. In 190AD Galen associated these types with four temperaments.

• Element	Earth	Air	Fire	Water
• Humour	Black bile	Blood	Yellow bile	Phlegm
• Planet	Saturn	Jupiter	Mars	Moon
• Personality	Despondent	Cheerful	Emotional	
	Unemotional			
• Temperament	Melancholic	Sanguine	Choleric	Phlegmatic
- **Erwin Panofsky** wrote *Saturn and Melancholy* in 1964 about the emergence of melancholy as an artistic temperament. An early writer on this aspect of melancholy was **Marsilio Ficino** who wrote *De Vita Libri Tres* (1480) and *De Vita Sana (On a Healthy Life)*. He was the first Renaissance writer to interpret **melancholy positively** and link it with genius although it was Aristotle who asked 'Why is it that all men who are outstanding in philosophy, poetry or the arts are melancholic?' Aristotle concluded that for great intellectuals it was not as a result of overheated humours but a disposition to melancholy and he cited Socrates and Plato as examples of particularly gifted sufferers. Ficino links this with Platonic ideas about different kinds of mania. As a result, in the Ficinian tradition, genial melancholy is distinguished from melancholy associated with black bile which is said to cause not prodigious aptitude but madness. The melancholic was also associated with an interest in mathematics, measuring, numbering, counting and acquiring assets.
- There were three types of melancholy—of the imagination (artists), of the reason (philosophers) and of the spirit (theologians and saints).



Isaac Oliver, Edward Herbert, 1st Baron Herbert of Cherbury, 1610-1617

Isaac Oliver, *Edward Herbert, 1st Baron Herbert of Cherbury*, 1610-1617

- This painting was produced during the Stuart period but is shown as a further illustration of melancholy. It shows that melancholy continued as a knightly virtue throughout the Tudor period and into the Stuart period.
- Edward Herbert is wearing his **Accession Day costume** and his **tilt armour** is with his **squire is in the background**. The casual pose, the babbling brook, the greenwood, the untied laces round his collar all indicate he is melancholic. There are many portraits of courtiers in their tilt costume so they were clearly very proud of them and they cost a small fortune.
- During the later 16th and early 17th centuries, a curious cultural and literary cult of melancholia arose in England. In the visual arts, this fashionable intellectual melancholy occurs frequently in portraiture of the era, with sitters posed in the form of "**the lover, with his crossed arms** and floppy hat over his eyes, and **the scholar**, sitting with his **head resting on his hand**"—descriptions drawn from the frontispiece to the 1638 edition of Robert Burton's *The Anatomy of Melancholy*, which shows such stock characters. These portraits were often set **out of doors** where Nature provides "the most suitable background for spiritual contemplation" or in a gloomy interior.

Notes

- Edward Herbert, 1st Baron Herbert of Cherbury (1583-1648)
- Painted around 1610-17. Isaac Oliver (c.1565 – 1617) was a French-born English miniature portrait painter. Born in Rouen, he moved to London in 1568 with his Huguenot parents, Peter and Epiphany Oliver, to escape the Alvan religious persecution in France



Nicholas Hilliard (1547-1619), *Portrait of George Clifford, Earl of Cumberland*, c. 1590, 25.2 x 17.5 cm, National Maritime Museum

- A knight was not just a melancholic figure, above all they were **someone who followed the chivalric code**.
- The **chivalric code** was associated with a code of conduct adopted by medieval knights between 1170 and 1220, about the time of Richard the Lionheart (1189-1199) and the Third Crusade (1189-1192). It was a synthesis of earlier Roman and Carolingian traditions and a moral system combining military bravery and honour, knightly piety and courtly manners.
- The chivalric code was still alive in Tudor England but was dying out as fewer knights engaged in hand-to-hand combat as the battlefield became dominated by infantrymen and cannon. Elizabeth I ended the tradition that a knight could create another knight and made it the sole prerogative of the monarch.
- The chivalric code included a knight's duties to his lord, to God and to women. To his lord he served with courage, valour and fairness and he vowed to protect the weak and the poor and be willing to give his life for another, be it his lord or a poor man in need of protection. To God he would remain faithful and protect the innocent as the champion of good against evil obeying God above his lord. His duties to women were defined by the code of **courtly love** which defined how he would be **gentle and gracious** to all women and in particular **the lady he served**.
- This was explained in ballads and later in courtesy books that served as guides to the behaviour of 'gentlemen'.
- The reality of **knightly behaviour** did not always **correspond to the ideal**. **Outside of the Virgin Mary and aristocratic women**, women were looked down upon. The ideal of courtly love is a form of **medieval Mariology** and women in general were seen as a **source of evil**. **Elizabeth I's role** in courtly love therefore closely related to her as a **metaphor for the Virgin Mary**. As Elizabeth was divinely appointed and was God's representative on earth she could act as mediator to God in an analogous way to the

Virgin Mary.

- The Accession Day Tilts celebrated the day Elizabeth took office on **17 November 1558**. They were held annually and were also called Queene's Day. From the 1580s they became the most important Elizabethan court festival and became 'gigantic public spectacle eclipsing every other form of court festival'. Although it was a day of jousting it was predominantly a theatrical event with the knights competing to outdo each other in verse and costume to praise the Queen. The pageants were held in the tiltyard at the Palace of Whitehall and thousands of the public attended for a fee of a shilling (when a Shakespeare play could be seen for one penny).
- The Queen's champion was **Sir Henry Lee of Ditchley** until 1890 when he handed over to **George Clifford**, 3rd Earl of Cumberland (shown here).

Accession Day Tilt

- **George Clifford** is attired as the Knight of Pendragon Castle for the Tilt of 1590. His pageant shield leans against the tree. The Queen's "favour", a glove, is attached to his hat. Clifford wears tilting armour as Elizabeth I's Champion
- This painting shows his costume at the famous 1590 Accession Day tilt when **Sir Henry Lee retired** as the Queen's Champion and Cumberland took over. Note the topographic view in the background, unusual in Tudor paintings. It shows the tiltyard at Whitehall, now Horseguard's Parade. Cumberland has **armillary spheres on his sleeve**. The armillary sphere was the most sophisticated scientific device available for use as a navigational aid so it was a **symbol of learning** that suggests the celestial sphere, the universe, overseas discovery and empire.
- The tilt was a formal, stylized event for the very rich, a bit **like polo today**. It was **dangerous** but was **not a combat intended to injure** or kill, injuries were due to accidents such as being knocked off a horse. **Henry II of France died** in 1559 because he had left his visor open and a wooden splinter went through his eye into his brain. The lances were made of light wood that splintered easily to avoid knocking the other person off their horse and injuring them. The winner was the person with the **most broken lances**. We still have a scorecard showing the number of broken lances for the contestants. The tilt was an **anachronism** in Elizabethan times as it was a revival of medieval jousting. Such revivals took place throughout the medieval period and only died out in the early seventeenth century.
- Cumberland has **Elizabeth's glove on his hat** and a **pasteboard shield with his impresa** (pronounced 'im-pray-sa'). These shields were placed in the Shield Gallery at Whitehall after the tilt so that visitors could **discuss the meaning** of the image and motto. This one has the motto '**Hasta Quan**' meaning 'When the spear' suggesting that he will use his lance to defend the Queen until the image comes about. The image shows the **Sun, Earth and Moon aligned** suggesting this both a solar and lunar eclipse at the same time, that is it **will never occur** so he will **defend her until the end of time**. He is wearing a smock over his armour which

was removed before the joust. He also had a real shield that was used during the joust.

Impress

- 'An Impress (as the Italians call it) is a device in Picture with his Motto or Word, borne by Noble and Learned Personages, to notify some particular conceit of their own.'

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http://www.shafe.uk/home/art-history/tudor_contents/tudor_13_-_tournaments_and_royal_progresses/



Marcus Gheeraerts the Younger, *The Ditchley Portrait*, c.1592, 241.3 x 152.4 cm, National Portrait Gallery

- **You might be wondering what happened to Henry Lee after he retired.**
- Elizabeth I is shown **bestriding England** and replacing a storm of lightning with the peace and calm of heavenly light breaking through the clouds.
- It might be thought that this was a **propaganda** piece used by Elizabeth to promote her image but we think the reason for the painting was very different.
- The Ditchley Portrait seems to have always been at the Oxfordshire home of Elizabeth's retired Champion, Sir Henry Lee of Ditchley, and likely was painted for (or commemorates) her **two-day visit to Ditchley in 1592**. The painting is attributed to Marcus Gheerearts the Younger, and was almost certainly based on a sitting arranged by Lee, who was the painter's patron.
- National Portrait Gallery website: Known as the 'Ditchley Portrait', this painting was **produced for Sir Henry Lee** who had been the Queen's Champion from 1559-90. It probably **commemorates** an elaborate **symbolic entertainment** which Lee organised for the Queen in September 1592, and which may have been held in the **grounds of Lee's house** at Ditchley, near Oxford, or at the nearby palace at **Woodstock**. After his retirement in 1590 **Lee lived at Ditchley with his mistress Anne Vavasour and they had a child**. This led to a feud with Anne's guardian and a duel, three fights and two murders. Lee entertained the Queen and gave her this painting to seek her forgiveness for becoming a 'stranger lady's thrall'.
- The portrait shows Elizabeth standing on the globe of the world, with her feet on Oxfordshire. The stormy sky, the clouds parting to reveal sunshine, and the inscriptions on the painting, make it plain that the portrait's **symbolic theme is forgiveness**. The three fragmentary Latin inscriptions can be interpreted as: (left) 'She gives and does not expect'; (right) '**She can but does not take revenge**', and (bottom right) 'In giving back she increases (?)'. The sonnet (right), perhaps composed by Lee, though fragmentary, can mostly be reconstructed. Its **subject is the sun**, symbol of the monarch.

Notes

- Suspended close to the Queen's left ear is an armillary sphere. It represents the ever-changing but timeless heavens that the Queen controls. Following the defeat of the Spanish Armada in

1588 many Europeans assumed that God supported Elizabeth and the patriotism of the English people was enhanced. It was, as here, a victory of protestant light and goodness over Catholic darkness and evil.

- Many versions of this painting were made, likely in Gheeraerts' workshop, with the allegorical items removed and Elizabeth's features "softened" from the stark realism of her face in the original. One of these was sent as a diplomatic gift to the Grand Duke of Tuscany and is now in the Palazzo Pitti.



Marcus Gheeraerts II, *Portrait of Captain Thomas Lee*, 1594, 230.5 x 150.8 cm, Tate Britain

- I thought I would show you this portrait as it is often misunderstood.
- It shows **Thomas Lee** (1552/3-1601) who was related to **Sir Henry Lee, Elizabeth I's Champion** and creator of imagery for her annual **Accession Day celebrations**. Henry may have helped devise the **complex symbolism** of this portrait. Thomas served in the English colonial forces in Ireland. His **bare legs** are a **fantasy evocation** both of the **dress of an Irish soldier**, and that of a **Roman hero**.
- He stands in the shelter or **lee** of an oak referring to his kinsman. The landscape indicates he is in Ireland and the armed men in the wood by the water on the right refer to his exploits at the battle of Erne ford the previous year.
- The Latin quotation on the tree comes from Livy's *History of Rome* and roughly translates "both to act and to suffer with fortitude is a Roman Part" referring to a Roman hero Gaius Mucius Scaevola, who stayed true to Rome even when among its enemies. When he was discovered in the enemy's camp thrust his right hand into a sacrificial fire. Thomas was suspected of treachery to Elizabeth and visited London in 1594 partly to refute this. His drooping wrist exposes a scar running horizontally across the base of the hand which he obtained in Ireland and the Latin quotation links this to Scaevola. The implication is that his **faithfulness has led to his injury**.

Notes

- Thomas Lee was a bit of a misfit who was typical of army officers who tried to make their name fighting to colonise Ireland. Lee's distinction is that he was a friend of Hugh O'Neill, an Irish chieftain and eventually an arch traitor. Thomas Lee was also cousin of Sir Henry Lee, Elizabeth's champion.
- Using these connections Lee tried to set himself up as chief negotiator but being rash, impulsive and had a reputation for both bravery and banditry. He also earned enemies among senior courtiers by accusing them of corruption. His mission to become negotiator failed and he returned to Ireland and his doomed career as a captain. In the

wake of the *coup d'état* by his master the Earl of Essex he was condemned as a traitor and executed at Tyburn on 13 February 1601.

- This picture was painted in 1594 when he seriously tried to become chief negotiator. The bare legs indicate his fighting spirit as an Irish or Roman soldier. The expensive shirt, armour and weaponry indicate his status as a gentleman.
- It has been suggested it is a marriage portrait as his wife had recently died.
- Sir Henry Lee was chief patron of Marcus Gheeraerts and organised Elizabeth's court spectacles. He loyally supported Thomas Lee to the end.
- The portrait resembles images in well-known emblem books such as Alciati's *Emblemata* (1550) which show a single figure in a landscape. Such figures often hold a weapon and are often positioned by a tree
- The painting was later extended on all four sides but during the recent cleaning the extensions at the base, left and right sides were removed.
- Thomas Lee was a **cousin of the half blood** of Sir Anthony Lee's eldest son and heir, the courtier Sir Henry Lee.

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Karen Hearn, *Dynasties: Painting in Tudor and Jacobean England 1530-1630* (1996)

Tate Britain website



Hans Holbein, *The Merchant Georg Giese* (1497-1562), 1532, 86.2 x 97.5 cm, Gemäldegalerie, Berlin

- Returning to the reign of **Henry VIII**. **Not all paintings were produced for aristocrats** and even paintings of merchants contained hidden messages.
- Georg Giese (or Giese pronounced “geezer”) was a Hanseatic merchant who was born in the Polish city of Danzig (Gdańsk). The Hanseatic League was a confederation of merchant guilds based around the Baltic.
- Holbein painted this large portrait at the beginning of his second period in England in search of work, and it may be intended as a virtuoso showpiece for his gifts in portraiture and the depiction of objects and textures. It is the most sumptuous of his series of portraits of mainly German merchants of the Steelyard, a complex of offices, warehouses, and residences on the north bank of the Thames in London. Familiar with Holbein's wider reputation, the merchants were quick to take advantage of his presence in London. The Danzig merchant Georg Giese (or Giese) is shown among the paraphernalia of his trade: money, pen, seal, inkpots, balance, boxes, scissors, keys. On a table covered with a Turkey rug stands a vase of carnations, perhaps symbolising his betrothal (Giese married Christine Krüger in Danzig in 1535).
- On the surface, the picture appears **super-realistic**; but on closer inspection it contains a series of deliberate **optical paradoxes**. The **walls**, for example, are **not at a right angle**, and the **table**, as shown in the bottom right of the painting, where objects overhang its edge, is **not rectangular**. Certain **objects on the table** are **not painted flat** to the surface, and the vase and the money tin are **precariously positioned**. The **overlapping of the book by the note**, or cartellino, fixed to the wall by sealing wax, is an **optical illusion** given the bulk of the book. The balance hangs unstably from the shelf; and next to it is inscribed Giese's motto: "Nulla sine merore voluptas" (no pleasure without regret), implying a symbolic connection with the scales.
- **Money is evident everywhere** in the painting from the expensive Turkish carpet to the goldwork.
- Young man's **name appears three times** in the picture – next to his personal motto “no joy without sorrow”, on the letter he is holding
- Contrast between his wealth of personal detail and his **disconcerted look** that suggests we should not be looking into his personal realm invading his privacy.

- Contrast between the richly worked objects and the cramped walls in which he is confined. What is Holbein telling us and what hiding.
- The emphasis is on correspondence, the letters on the wall, the dispenser, the strips of parchments with ready to use seals, he even distorts Giese's arm so we can see them clearly and the letters are perfectly legible. The letters tell us **Giese is a London based merchant** in touch with other merchants in Europe, Hans Stolten is mentioned.
- What does this merchant deal in? The **massive keys** indicate he has goods stored somewhere in a warehouse.
- There are many official seal and the documents are signed with unusual symbols. Why this focus on seals and signatures?
- He has an office at the **Steelyard** in London (where Canon Street Station now stands). The Hanseatic League operates in Cologne, Hamburg, Lubeck, Visby and Gdansk and they make money by communicating with other where there is a surplus of goods in one place and a need in another. They make money by buying cheaply when there is a surplus and selling where there is a need. It is risky however as ships can be delayed, goods, perish and ships founder.
- This means his boast is that he has information other men do not have but in letting us in he is allowing his secret information to be discovered.
- The sign at the top says **"This picture of Georg that you see records his features, such lively eyes, such cheeks he has, in the year of his age 34"**. Old for a bachelor as the Hanseatic guild demands, time is passing as the clock reminds us.
- The flowers have a definite meaning **Hyssop** (*Hyssopus*) was believed to protect against the plague, so he takes care of his health; the **carnation** (*Dianthus*) signifies **bethroyal**; and the **rosemary** (*Rosmarinus*) stands for **fidelity**. So is the portrait a gift for his future wife? Three years later he went home and married **Christine Krüger** so he may have been bethroyed. X-rays examination show Holbein repainted the picture. Previously the right-hand wall was bare and Giese was looking to the right. Perhaps there was a companion picture of his bethroyed as the convention is that the man is on the left and the woman on the right.
- Holbein painted **eight other portraits** of the Hanseatic League members but this is by far the **most detailed and the largest**. Why was Holbein out to impress? It was the first in the series so did Holbein paint this first as a sales tool for getting the other portraits. At this point his sponsor Thomas More had been executed and he was not in favour in the court so he was looking for work elsewhere.
- Portraits showing the profession where a new think. In the past noblemen had no tools to display, just their wealth. Now professionals wanted the tools of their trade shown. However, the Hanseatic League had strict religious rules and the wealth and details shown in this portrait may have offended them. Religious artworks were being destroyed. The Hanseatic League also asked Holbein to paint a mural for their hall called **The Triumph of Poverty** as if they were ashamed at their wealth and asking God's pardon. They also commissioned *The Triumph of Riches* (copies of both are in the Ashmolean Museum). Merchants and bankers had a taste for pictures that satirized their professions showing the evils of greed and avarice and the need to focus on religion and prayers. Taking this idea further the scales in Giese's portrait might refer to the scales used at the Last

judgement, in which case he has been judged as one pan is far lower than the other.



Hans Holbein, *Double Portrait of Jean de Dinteville and Georges de Selve ("The Ambassadors")*, 1533, oil and tempera on oak, National Gallery

- This is another Holbein painting that contains **a wealth of potentially symbolic meaning**.
- We see Jean de Dinteville, Seigneur of Polisy (1504–1555), French ambassador to the court of Henry VIII for most of 1533 and Georges de Selve (1508/09–1541), Bishop of Lavaur who we know was visiting London in 1533.
- It has been suggested that the two shelves of instruments and globes **represent their wealth**. The wealthy would stack shelves with gold and silver plate to demonstrate their wealth and magnificence. However, although the instruments are expensive they are not equivalent to gold plate. It could be that by analogy they represent the wealth of their knowledge.
- If the instruments are examined carefully there are many **discrepancies** that could be mistakes or could imply a meaning. As Holbein had to meticulously paint each item and therefore plan and decide on its orientation and configuration it is unlikely that they are simply mistakes. However, if there is a meaning it is now lost.
- **John North**, Professor of the History of Science, and an expert on medieval scientific instruments, has analysed them and **suggested a solution**.
- We must remember that this was a time of a belief in **witchcraft, astrology, magical charms and in demonical possession** all supported by an extensive literature relating these to theology and metaphysical philosophy supported by classical references. Although the table is covered by what we would call scientific equipment there was no conception of what we understand by the scientific method.
- It has been suggested that the floor is a copy of the Cosmati pavement in the area in front of the high altar at Westminster Abbey. However, it is not an accurate copy and may represent a generalised Cosmati floor. Cosmati were a Roman family who specialised in mosaic floors, especially for churches. They worked between 1190 and about 1300 and the Westminster Abbey floor was laid in 1268 for the connoisseur king Henry III.
- The instruments on the top of the table seem to suggest the heavens and those on the shelf below the earth.

- The dagger Dinteville is holding is inscribed with his age, 29, in 1533 and the book de Selve is leaning on gives his age as 25.
- Dinteville is wearing a medallion of St Michael, the archangel who fought the Devil in the Book of Revelation and so it could represent the triumph of good over evil.

Notes

John North, *The Ambassadors' Secret*

- Thomas Cromwell (p. 29) was ruthless and responsible for Thomas More's execution in 1536. Cromwell was executed in 1540. Cromwell directed Henry VIII's propaganda in the 1530s. Holbein was probably appointed through Cromwell.
- Kratzer (p.69) collaborated with Holbein on the Greenwich ceiling in 1527.
- Dinterville (p.93) wears lynx fur trimming which shows he was upper nobility. He also wears a sword.
- 'Polity' (p.103), Dinterville's home town is shown on the globe (although London is not). Was this flattery or part of a scheme?
- **The Celestial Globe.** To use it we imagine ourselves at the centre and the horizontal line around it is the horizon. The north pole is towards us and around it is a dial marked in hours. The globe is not wrongly set for London as others have claimed and North thinks it shows 11 April 1533, which was Good Friday.
- **Cylinder Dial.** This is a type of sundial. The gnomon is set to the time of the year and its vertical shadow gives the time. The sun is 74° over the viewers right shoulder (from the shadow of the table) and, other instruments show, the sun is 15.5° south of west so the table is north-south, so we are facing east and it is about 3:45 in the afternoon. We could be in a courtyard or a house with large windows or Holbein could have just painted the affect of the sun he wished to create.
- **Compound Solar Instrument.** This is an unusual instrument that we also see in Holbein's portrait of Kratzer and we see the other side. It measures the time like a sundial or it can be used to measure the sun's altitude if we know the time. This instrument is not critical to North's interpretation.
- **The Quadrant.** This has a white face and it tells the time by equal hours. It shows the time in a striking way. The sun's altitude is found by allowing the light from one pinhole to fall on the other. The plumbline then falls across the altitude.
- "The Ambassadors was painted in the Spring of 1533 during the preparations for the coronation of the pregnant Anne Boleyn, who had married Henry VIII secretly in the January. Henry and Anne had visited France in the autumn of 1532 to gain Francis I's help and support for the annulment of Henry's marriage to Catherine of Aragon, and his recognition of Henry's relationship with Anne. Francis I responded by ordering French cardinals to negotiate secretly with Pope Clement VII to persuade the Pope to accept Henry's request for the annulment. England was on the brink of breaking with Rome and France was suffering from religious divisions, with many calling for reform in the Church." (theanneboleynfiles.com website)

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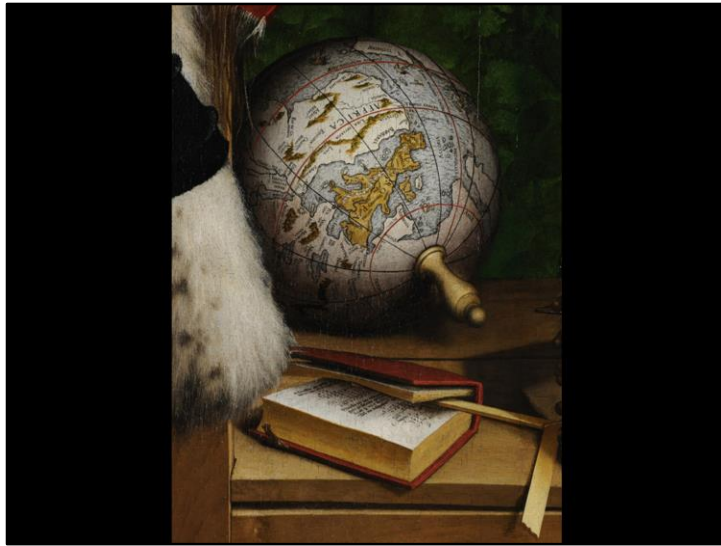


- Starting with the two individuals shown in the painting.
- Before the publication of Mary F. S. Hervey's *Holbein's Ambassadors: The Picture and the Men* in 1900, the identity of the two figures in the picture had long been a subject of intense debate.
- In 1890, Sidney Colvin was the first to propose the figure on the left as **Jean de Dinteville**, Seigneur of Polisy (1504–1555), French ambassador to the court of Henry VIII for most of 1533. Shortly afterwards, the cleaning of the picture revealed that his seat of Polisy is one of only four places marked on the globe. Hervey identified the man on the right as **Georges de Selve** (1508/09–1541), Bishop of Lavaur, after tracing the painting's history back to a seventeenth-century manuscript. According to art historian John Rowlands, de Selve is not wearing episcopal robes because he was not consecrated until 1534. De Selve is known from two of de Dinteville's letters to his brother François de Dinteville, Bishop of Auxerre, to have **visited London in the spring of 1533**.

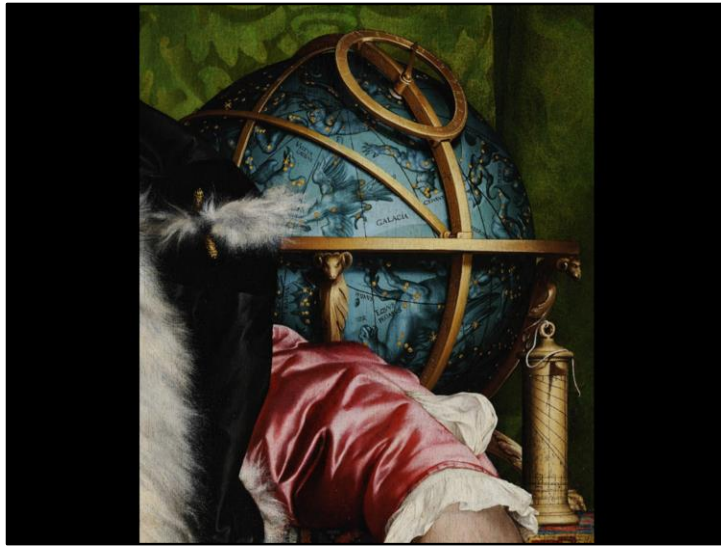


Anamorphic skull

- The **anamorphic skull** at the bottom of the picture **jars** with the detailed and accurate representation of the rest of the painting and Holbein's other paintings. It is **making a statement** but it is not clear what it is. It has been suggested it is a signature using a play on the German words 'hohles Bein' (Hollow bone) although this is unlikely as it is so **large and intrusive** that the patrons Jean de Dinteville and Georges de Selve, who, we can assume, paid for the work are unlikely to have found it acceptable.
- John North draws two sight lines through the painting that meet at a point outside the painting at the point where the distorted skull can be seen correctly. Golgotha, or Calvary, was the place of the skull where Christ was crucified and according to tradition Adam was buried. We thus look up to the blood of Christ which cleans the sins of Adam below.
- The skull, rendered in anamorphic perspective, another invention of the Early Renaissance, is meant to be a visual puzzle as the viewer must approach the painting nearly from high on the right side, or low on the left side, to see the form as an accurate rendering of a human skull. While the skull is evidently intended as a vanitas or memento mori, it is unclear why Holbein gave it such prominence in this painting. One possibility is that this painting represents three levels: the heavens (as portrayed by the astrolabe and other objects on the upper shelf), the living world (as evidenced by books and a musical instrument on the lower shelf), and death (signified by the skull). It has also been hypothesized that the painting is meant to hang in a stairwell, so that persons walking up the stairs and passing the painting on their left would be startled by the appearance of the skull. A further possibility is that Holbein simply wished to show off his ability with the technique in order to secure future commissions. Artists often incorporated skulls as a reminder of mortality, or at the very least, death. Holbein may have intended the skulls (one as a gray slash and the other as a medallion on Jean de Dinteville's hat) and the crucifix in the upper left corner to encourage contemplation of one's impending death and the resurrection.



- Hand-held terrestrial globe with Dinteville's estate near the **town of Polisy** in France marked. Rome is painted roughly in the centre of the globe and the coast of America is shown.
- The book is a book of arithmetic by Peter Apian propped open with a set square. It was written in 1527. It could be a reference to de Selve's family background as merchants. It is open on a page of three long divisions which could symbolise the division in the church which de Selve was concerned about.



Celestial globe

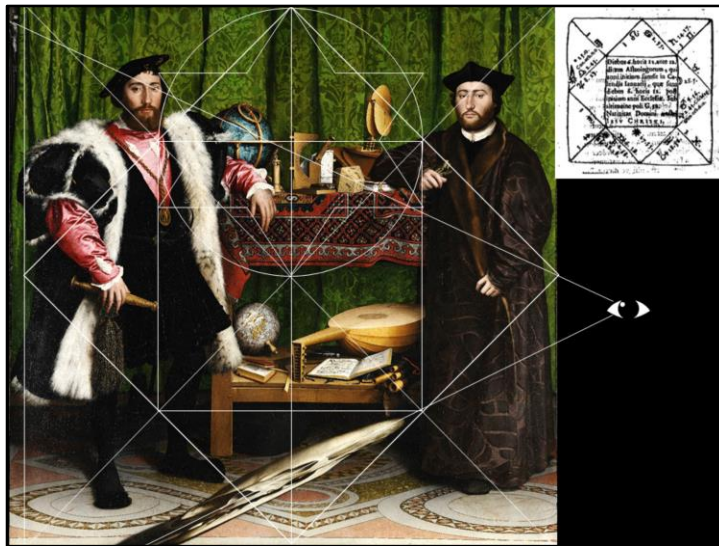
- The celestial globe shows the **constellations** as their pictures. Most obvious constellation is Cygnus the Swan which is shown as a cock-like bird labelled 'Galacia', perhaps symbolising France. Cygnus is traditionally associated with the cross of Christ as its stars form a Latin cross.
- The globe is supported by ram's heads and on 11 April 1533 the sun entered the sign of Taurus and the constellation of Aries, the Ram, was mostly in Taurus. Jesus Christ is often referred to as a ram and Christ as the Lamb of God is often shown with horns, that is as a ram.
- The globe is remarkably accurately painted **and John North believes the ring is set for the latitude of London** although disagree and think it is set for Rome. The cylinder sundial is set for London and shows the time of 8:15am or 3:45pm Good Friday, 11 April 1533.
- In conclusion, **North calculated the time given in the portrait as 3:45pm on Good Friday, 11 April 1533, 1500 years exactly after the Crucifixion.**



- An eleven string lute with a **broken string**, a pair of dividers, a Lutheran hymnal and a case of flutes. Music is one of the four disciplines of the Quadrivium, the four arts taught in medieval universities which also included arithmetic, geometry and astronomy which are all shown in the painting.
- The broken string of the lute and the **missing flute** may signify the **discord in the church**.
- The Lutheran hymnal is the second edition of Johannes Walther's *Little Hymn Book* (1525) **open at two of Martin Luther's own hymns in German** which can be translated as "'Come, Holy Ghost, God and Lord'" and "Man, if thou wouldst live a good life and remain with God eternally ...". It was noticed long ago that the two hymns do not occur next to each other in the book. The second hymn is numbered 19 which was the number of Easter as the dates for Easter repeat in a 19 year cycle. The line through the hymnal passes through the number 19.
- **Why would a Catholic show Luther's hymns?** The **broken string might indicate the reason**. De Selve in later life thought he could reconcile the Roman Catholic and Protestant elements of the church and the broken string might represent the lack of harmony of Luther's teaching which if correctly interpreted would bring them back into the Catholic fold.



- The white quadrant shows the same time as the cylindrical sundial.
- Left universal equinoctial dial (disassembled), invented about 1600 and common throughout Europe. It is a form of sundial used to tell the time.
- The Polyhedral sundial, can be mounted high up and read when viewed horizontally unlike a normal sundial. It is a puzzle as it seems to show different times on different faces and is set to the latitude of North Africa not London. Perhaps it indicates Golgotha, Jerusalem?
- At the back is a torquetum, a form of computer used to convert measurements made in three sets of coordinates. Thought to have been invented in the 12th or 13th century by Jabir ibn Aflah but the oldest surviving example is from the 16th century. It has been set to the latitude of London, 51.5°.
- The edge of the book records the age of Georges de Selve.
- The date represented by these devices is Good Friday, 11 April 1533 when the angle of the Sun above the horizon was 27° at a few minutes past four in the afternoon. The angle of 27° occurs many times in the painting, it is the precise angle of the anamorphosed skull at the bottom. It is the angle of the Sun just after four on Good Friday 1533. Twenty seven is thrice thrice the three of the Trinity.



Hans Holbein, *Double Portrait of Jean de Dinteville and Georges de Selve ("The Ambassadors")*, 1533, oil and tempera on oak, National Gallery

- The skull partly obscures a hexagram on the floor and John North posits other hexagrams in the painting. The hexagram is the Star of David and Seal of Solomon which was a signet ring the enabled Solom to speak to animals and command demons.
- It has been argued that the two levels of instruments simply symbolize the quadrivium of the four sciences – astronomy, geometry, arithmetic and music.
- Once we start to place lines on a painting we are in dangerous territory as many relationships can be found to support virtually any theory. However, in this case to pursue and simplify some of the detailed arguments in North's interesting book I have drawn two line. The upper line passes through the left eye of Christ, the left eye of Dinteville, the star Vega in Lyra, the star Deneb in Cygnus, the north point of the horizon, the Sun on the globe and the zero point of the quadrant. It crosses the lower line through the skull at the exact point the skull must be viewed to see it in true perspective.
- The diagonal and two squares was the way that horoscopes were presented at this time. In other words there is a hidden horoscope square. They looked like this ([Click](#)) a horoscope for Jesus published by mathematician and inventor Italian Girolamo Cardano in 1554.
- An eye placed at the point shown will look down to the skull and up past the sun to Christ's left eye. **It is Good Friday, 1533.** What does this suggest? Many believe that Christ was crucified when he was 33. **So this painting represents Good Friday 1,500 years later.** A time many believed was the **Last Judgement Day**, the end of the world.

Notes

- There is no year zero in the Biblical calendar as when the calendar was created zero was not recognised as a number.



Hans Holbein, *Double Portrait of Jean de Dinteville and Georges de Selve ("The Ambassadors")*, 1533, oil and tempera on oak, National Gallery

- The painting has many conflicting interpretations:
 - a double portrait of two friends showing their interests;
 - a *memento mori*, a reminder of death and our mortality;
 - a symbolic representation of the division and disharmony in the Church and the centrality of Rome;
 - a reminder of the sacrifice of Christ at Easter and that Good Friday in 1533 was 1500 years after the crucifixion;
 - Christ's victory over death;
 - the contrast between heavenly and earthly realms;
 - Luther believed it was Christ's sacrifice which gives us salvation and our faith not our good works and actions.
- This enigmatic painting has as many meaning as interpreters. Most art historians avoid assigning complex meanings to paintings as we have lost most of the context. There is also a deeper point. A masterpiece often holds many contradictory meanings in balance. There is no single meaning. Like life we are presented with possibilities, some more likely than others and each viewer can find within it the meanings that satisfy them.

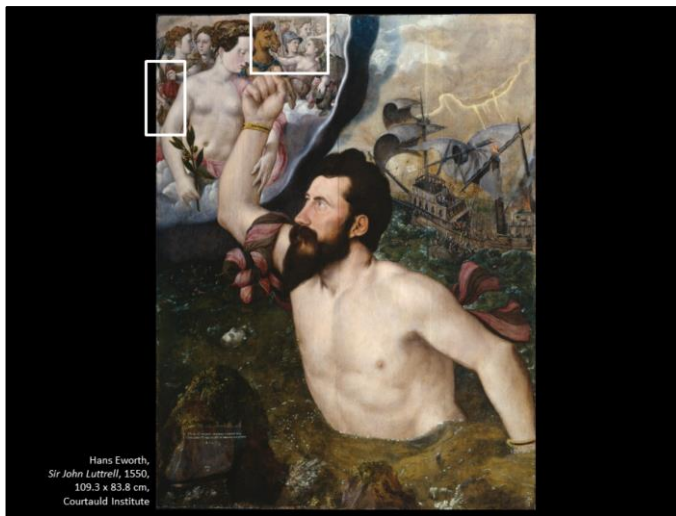


Anon, attributed to William Scrots (fl. 1537–1554), *Henry Howard Earl of Surrey at age 29*, 1546, 222.4 x 219.9 cm, National Portrait Gallery

- Symbolism could **sometimes lead to trouble**.
- Henry VIII charged Henry Howard with treason on the grounds that he had illegally used the arms of King Edward the Confessor as part of his own blazon, thereby confirming that he had pretensions to the throne of England. Howard made the argument that King Richard II had granted his ancestor, Thomas Mowbray, the right to carry the arms of Edward the Confessor and that the right had, therefore, descended to him. Although true Henry VIII did not agree and thought Howard was too ambitious. Henry was concerned about the peaceful succession of his own young son Edward and so Henry Howard was executed.

Notes

- Henry Howard (?1517-1547) was the eldest son of the 3rd Duke of Norfolk, the premier nobleman in England. He was one of the first poets, like Sir Thomas Wyatt, to write following the Italian model such as the sonnet. He was also the first poet to use blank verse, in his translation of Virgil's *Aeneid*.
- He accompanied Henry VIII to France in 1532 and spent eleven months in the French court. He was accused of **inordinate pride** in his ancestry and was eventually **beheaded for treason** in 1547.
- This innovatory portrait was unusually painted on canvas rather than panel so it may be a later copy of a lost original. The grisaille surround is based on an engraving of the 1540s (unknown artist, School of Fontainebleau) and the fashion for these very distinctive prints was short-lived making the date on the painting of 1546 a possible date it was painted. X-ray analysis shows the grisaille was painted at the same time as the portrait but is painted in a freer, more open technique so it may be the work of two artists.
- Howard was also accused of wearing foreign dress and the costume is in the Italian fashion. The sword and dagger were the height of fashion in 1546 and are convincingly painted, which is not often the case with later copies of a painting.
- The format is unique and this is a period when full-length portraits were very rare.



Hans Eworth, *Sir John Luttrell*, 1550, 109.3 x 83.8 cm, Courtauld Institute

- Other paintings have been a **complete puzzle**.
- The allegorical explanation of this painting remained a mystery until Frances Yates's compelling explanation in 1967. She argues it is an allegory of the **Treaty of Boulogne in 1550** (the date of the painting) which brought to an end the war between England and France. **England handed Boulogne to France** in exchange for **two payments made to Edward VI**. This is shown in the sky where a female figure holds a bag of money but reaches into her purse for another. On the right Venus is bridling a war horse. The central female figure is Peace holding an olive branch and touching Luttrell's arm.
- The treaty also brought peace between England and Scotland. Luttrell had fought the Battle of Pinkie-Musselborough in 1547 and Inchcolm Island defending the Firth of Forth and he was captured and imprisoned. The sinking ship and floating drowned corpse might refer to these battles and the inscription on Luttrell's bracelet, translated, reads, "**neither swayed by love of gain nor deterred by danger**". The inscription on the rock refers to his steadfastness and courage.
- His unusual appearance, naked to the waist in the sea, is similar to a Triton on the Canning jewel (V&A) which also has bracelets on his wrists.

Notes

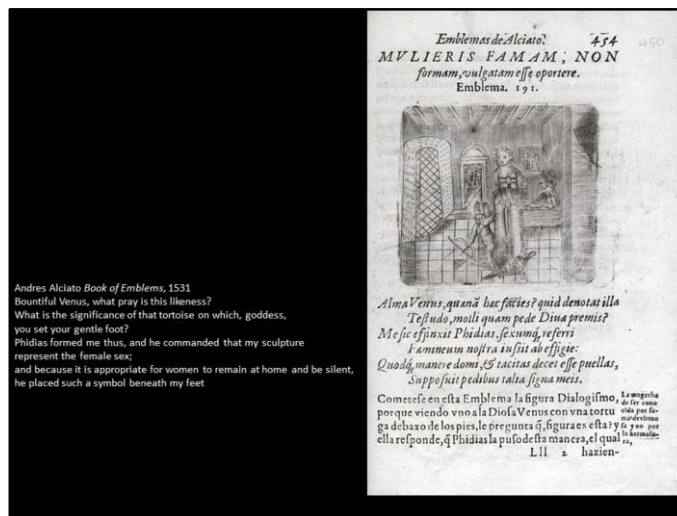
- Sir John Luttrell (c. 1518/19 – 10 July 1551) was an English soldier, diplomat, and courtier under Henry VIII and Edward VI. He served under Edward Seymour, Earl of Hertford (later Duke of Somerset and Lord Protector) in Scotland and France. His service is commemorated in an allegorical portrait by Hans Eworth.
- The painting is in poor condition and has been damaged by restoration work but its original appearance can be gauged by a copy at Dunster Castle which was originally thought to be the original.
- Such sophisticated mannerist allegory is rare in England at this stage and suggests the School of Fontainebleau but it could well have been Eworth as he is documented for painting allegorical pieces. It is signed EW, his monogram, and is one of his earliest known pictures.



Attributed to Isaac Oliver (1556–1617) and Marcus Gheeraerts the Younger (1561–1636), *The Rainbow Portrait of Queen Elizabeth I*, c. 1600–1602, 127 × 99.1 cm, the collection of the Marquess of Salisbury, Hatfield House

Notes Inscribed left: NON SINE SOLE/ IRIS. (No rainbow without the sun.)

- These motifs could have **more than one meaning**, and the disembodied eye is an example of this. In one representation of Queen Elizabeth I, the "Rainbow" portrait of ca. 1603, the queen wears a mantle covered with detached eyes and ears. It has been suggested by Frances Yates that these symbolic appendages are drawn from the female personification of *Ragione di Stato*, or "reason or Interest of State" as personified in Cesare Ripa's *Iconologia*. In the 1603 edition of the *Iconologia*, this figure wears a helmet, and breastplate armor, as well as a skirt scattered with eyes and ears.
- In the same book the symbol of eyes and ears on a woman's dress is used to mean **jealousy**.
- In Edmund Spenser's poem *The Faerie Queen* (1590–96), the figure of Envy is described as wearing a garment covered with eyes. However, the heavy-lidded eyes on embroidered on the gauntlets of the Museum's gloves almost certainly relate to another emblem with yet another meaning.



- Andres Alciato's *Book of Emblems* (Alciati Emblematum liber), Emblem 196 (Emblema CXCVI)
- Many of the symbols used in paintings were **more obscure**.
- In this Book of Emblems, the reputation of a woman, not her beauty, ought to be proclaimed. In the form of a dialogue:
 - Bountiful Venus, what pray is this likeness?
What is the significance of that tortoise on which, goddess, you set your gentle foot?
 Phidias formed me thus, and he commanded that my sculpture represent the female sex;
 and because it is appropriate for women to remain at home and be silent,
 he placed **such a symbol** beneath my feet.
- **Phidias' statue of Aphrodite** with one foot on a tortoise, set up at Elis, is mentioned by Pausanias (110-180 CE), *Periegesis* 6.25.1 (a Greek traveller who described the ancient Greek world).
- The tortoise is a symbol of ideal female domesticity, as it keeps silent and never leaves its house see Plutarch (45-120 CE, a Greek historian who became a Roman citizen) *Coniugalia praecepta* 32.
- The **tortoise** is a symbol with a classical reference to a certain type of woman. The *Book of Emblems* presents many conflicting types and situations and is a **reference book** of aphorisms and symbols **not a guide to living**.
- Note that **Latin** was a language spoken and read across Europe so a book printed in one country could quickly spread to other countries.

Notes

- Latin
 - Alma Venus, quaenam haec facies? quid denotat illa
 Testudo, molli quam pede Diva premis?
 Me sic effinxit Phidias, sexumque referri
 Foemineum nostra iussit ab effigie:
 Quodque manere domi, et tacitas decet esse puellas,
 Supposuit pedibus talia signa meis.



Isaac Oliver, *An Allegorical Scene*, c.1590-5 watercolour and gouache on vellum on card, 11.3 x 17 cm, State Art Museum, Copenhagen

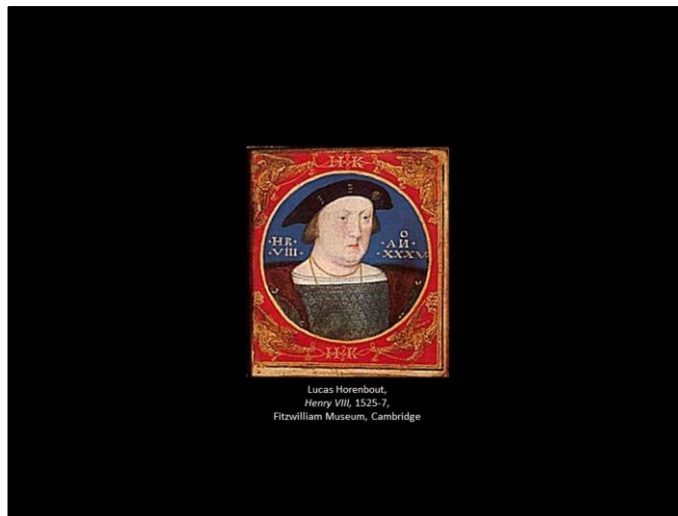
- This is another example of a **very common symbol**. A **dog** typically symbolises fidelity but it depends on the context.
- This miniature is probably an allegory on conjugal love (love involving intimacy and commitment without passion). The strolling figures can be read as making moralising comments on different types of love, particularly **married love on the left and unmarried love on the right**. Comparison is invited by the dignified man holding out his left arm on the left and the gold-clad female on the right.
- **The left** represents **true love and fidelity** and the figures are dressed soberly and walk with deportment along the path of righteousness. **The couple** below the **man's outstretched arm** may represent a **mother and son and maternal love**.
- In contrast the gaudy, pleasure seeking group on the **right illustrates misguided wantonness**, transient amusement and **moral laxity**. The young man in an undignified posture is surrounded by **symbols of decadence**, wine, grapes and **women in revealing attire**. He may represent the prodigal son among the harlots, a popular theme in Netherlandish art of the late 16th and early 17th century.
- The dogs in the centre continue the confrontation, the **lap dog on the right being a fashionable, frivolous pet**. We therefore have two dogs with opposed meaning.

Notes

- The idea for the narrative may have come from Sir Thomas Hoby's *The Book of the Courtier* (1561) a translation of Castiglione's book on courtly manners.
- This mixture of landscape and allegory is unique in Oliver's oeuvre but appears to be a mixture of Netherlandish engravings he could have seen. Outdoor scenes of merrymaking were rare at this period in English painting.

References

Karen Hearn, *Dynasties: Painting in Tudor and Jacobean England 1530-1630* (1996)



Lucas Horenbout, *Henry VIII*, 1525-7, Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge

- The other form of secrecy was paintings that could be hidden.
- **This is an early miniature** attributed to Lucas Horenbout as he was thought to be the only portrait miniaturist at the time who could have painted it. The angels in the corners are typical of Flemish decoration of the period. There is real gold on top of brown ochre paint, set against red. The face is painted by using an underlayer in a pinkish colour (known at the time as an opaque carnation ground). On top one can see the transparent properties of watercolour being used to build up the flesh tones and for light and shade. This is very typical of the Flemish tradition. This miniature is tiny: 53mm x 48mm
- They're **not called miniatures because of their size**. Isaac Oliver's miniature of the Earl of Dorset, for example, in the V&A is A4 size – it's called a cabinet miniature (because that's where they were usually displayed). Miniature comes from the **Latin word 'minium' meaning red** lead which was the colour painters used for the important parts in **manuscript illumination** texts – the capital letter in particular — hence the expression '**red letter days**' in common use today.
- The term 'miniature' was not recognised until the 17th century. The **Tudors used the term 'limning'** from the word 'illumination' for all manuscript illumination and portrait miniatures. Nicholas Hilliard, for example, wrote a book entitled *The Art of Limning*.
- The earliest miniature seen in the UK was during Henry VIII's reign in the 1520s. The style and technique was developed in the Flemish workshops of Ghent and Bruges.
- They were only later painted on enamel, originally they were painted using watercolour on vellum and then pasted onto card, like manuscript illumination.

The Function of Portrait Miniatures

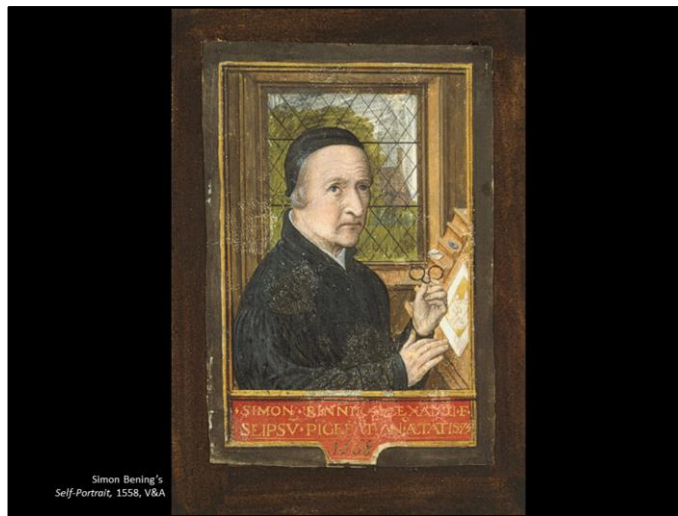
- In the 16th century there was an increased interest in large scale portraits and miniatures.. So what is it about portrait miniatures which differentiate them from oil

painting?

- Firstly, their **portability** — they can easily be carried about the person.
- Secondly, you can **choose who sees it** — it can be a public or private object.
- Thirdly, they were often used in **illicit relationships** they could be **secreted about the person** or closed up if they were being used in a locket

Notes

- **Gerard Horenbout was a great Flemish illustrator** who worked for the Hapsburgs until he came to England in the 1520s and was on Henry's payroll from 1528-31. No-one is quite sure what he actually did, though. His daughter, Susannah, was also an accomplished illuminator and it is said that Dürer bought a few illuminations from her in 1521.
- But it was **his son, Lucas**, (c1490-1544) who rose through the ranks at Henry VIII's court and was referred to as a Pictor-maker in accounts. He was at court from 1525-44. He was made the **King's painter** — as indeed was Holbein so this indicates that Holbein really wasn't considered anyone special at the time. In fact Horenbout was paid more.
- Few portrait miniatures are dated or signed, unfortunately, so historians have to try to match names to style of painting.



Simon Bening's *Self-Portrait*, 1558, V&A

- This is a rare picture of an artist at work.
- A clue to his profession is the **glasses, for close work**. He is working by natural light. The book propped up, not flat. There's no evidence to suggest that these manuscript illuminators/portraitists needed much magnification, though and many worked into old age. They dressed very plainly.
- **Note the hat** — worn indoors either to keep warm or to keep everything around them clean — it wouldn't do for any loose hairs, for example, to drop onto the delicately-painted miniature whilst it was drying
- His daughter, **Levina Teerlinc** was also an illuminator who came to London in the 1550s. She was a favourite of Mary Tudor and Elizabeth I. In England gifts were exchanged at New Year rather than Christmas and Levina gave Elizabeth an illumination every year for nine years.



Levina Teerlinc (1510/20-1576), *Portrait of Elizabeth I*, c. 1565, Collection of Welbeck Abbey

Levina Teerlinc (1510/20-1576), *Portrait of Elizabeth I* [1533-1603, so aged 32], c. 1565, Collection of Welbeck Abbey

- **Levina Teerlinc** (b. Bruges, 1510–1520?; d. London, 23 June 1576) was a Flemish Renaissance miniaturist who served as a painter to the English court of Edward VI, Mary I and Elizabeth I.
- Teerlinc was the second eldest of five sisters, the **children of Simon Bening** (sometimes written as Benninc or Benninck), the renowned illuminator of the Ghent-Bruges school. Bening probably trained his daughter as a manuscript painter. Teerlinc may have worked in her father's workshop before her marriage.
- In 1545, she moved with her husband, George Teerlinc of Blankenberge, to England. She then served as the **royal painter to Henry VIII**, whose royal painter, Hans Holbein the Younger, had recently died. **Her annuity** for this position was **£40** - rather **more than Holbein** had been paid. Later she served as a gentlewoman in the royal households of **both Mary I and Elizabeth I**.



Hans Holbein, *Mrs Jane Small, formerly Mrs Pemberton*, c.1540 by Holbein. She was the wife of a London merchant.

- This is a very beautiful miniature.
- V&A website. When Holbein painted this image in **1536**, it was **virtually unknown** in England for **anyone other than courtiers to be recorded** in a portrait. Until then **portraiture** had been a **part of the funeral traditions of the powerful** rather than a celebration of more modest lives. This beautiful miniature, however, shows that almost from the **moment of its invention** the portrait miniature was not exclusively a court art.
- There was a **puzzle** over the identity of the sitter. A coat of arms, painted on a piece of vellum long associated with this portrait and set in the lid, identifies the sitter as '**Mrs Pemberton**'. This identification had always been something of a puzzle, since Mrs Pemberton appeared to be **the wife of an obscure country gentleman** living in a Northamptonshire village, far from both the court and Holbein's practice in London. **Recently, however**, the evidence has been reinterpreted, and the **more likely explanation** is that the sitter was **Mrs Jane Small**, whose **maiden name was Pemberton**. Jane was the **wife of a prosperous London merchant, Nicholas Small**, and they were **close neighbours of Holbein**.
- It is not known if she was painted for a particular occasion, or why she is shown wearing a **red flower** and **two ears of corn** and **holding a leaf**.

Notes

- Very reminiscent of his *The Lady with a Squirrel and a Starling* 1526-8. Beautifully executed. It has a blue background and a gold frame—there is a playing card image on the reverse. Only a small number of extant portraits have their original settings. It is very sculptural which is to do with the way it is painted. **Holbein makes the strokes follow the contour** of what is being painted — for the chin, for example, the strokes curl round. Note the hands, they look much more like those in an oil painting than in a portrait miniature.



Nicholas Hilliard, *Young Man Among Roses*, 1585-95, Victoria & Albert Museum
 Marcus Gheeraerts the Younger (1561-1636), *Robert Devereux (1565-1601), 2nd Earl of Essex*, c. 1596. National Portrait Gallery

- Portrait miniature of *A Young Man Leaning Against a Tree Amongst Roses*, possibly **Robert Devereux, 2nd Earl of Essex (1566-1601)**
- In his last years in England, Hans Holbein had learned to paint miniatures. '**Holbein's manner of limning**', Hilliard wrote, '**I have ever imitated, and hold it for the best.**' From Holbein's late style Hilliard developed the flat, linear, two-dimensional aesthetic which was to be the hall-mark of Elizabethan painting. Hilliard was miniaturist to the Queen and she too had very pronounced views on the art of portraiture. When she sat Hilliard describes how she placed herself, like the 'Young Man', 'in the open alley of a goodly garden' so that the light should be an open, even and direct one without any use of dramatic 'chiaroscuro'.
- V&A website, 'They were a combination of word and pictured image aimed at expressing the bearer's personal ideals and dilemmas. Unfortunately for us they were **meant to be puzzling and obscure**, for, to the Renaissance mind, such '**imprese**' should be **understood only by those whose intellect was sufficient to fathom their meaning**. The Queen led the fashion by surrounding herself with the most elaborate symbolism in her portraiture, pageantry and in the poetry celebrating her rule. It was the deliberately created intellectual language of an 'in-set'.
- The '*Young Man Among Roses*' belongs to this world. It is such an 'impresa', a statement of the aspirations of this love-lorn gallant in the language of Elizabeth's court. We need to **study every detail** of dress, attribute and motto in order to understand the message of the miniature. The **white roses, the tree, the black and white costume and the Latin motto**, 'Dat poenas laudata fides' ('**My praised faith procures my pain**'), speak to us in a lost language, that of Renaissance symbolism.
- **The roses** which entwine the 'Young Man' are single, **five-petalled roses**, known to the

Elizabethans as the **eglantine**. Roses, of course always alluded to the Crown, the Virgin Queen in whose blood mingled the white rose of York with the red of Lancaster. **Eglantine** even more than the rose was celebrated as **her personal flower**. The poetry and court pageantry of the reign is garlanded with symbolic eglantine. Sometimes she appears in her portraits flanked by branches of Tudor roses balancing branches of eglantine.

- At a tournament held on her **Accession Day**, November 17th, in 1590, a column was erected in the tiltyard of Whitehall Palace **entwined by eglantine**. Five years after George Peele exhorts her subjects to celebrate the same day bidding them :

... Wear eglantine,

And wreaths of roses red and white put on In honour of that day.

- The 'Young Man' is declaring his **secret passion**, therefore, **for the Queen**. We gather this also from the colours he wears, for **black and white** were ones **personal to her**, worn symbolically in her honour as tributes to her **constancy and chastity**. A rival courtier to the 'Young Man', Sir Walter Raleigh, was painted at about the same time also in black and white, but his dress in addition is scattered with virgin pearls and a crescent moon nearby alludes to his worship of his mistress as Cynthia, Lady of the Sea.
- Of the young man's constancy there is no doubt, for **the tree is a common emblem of steadfastness**.
- **The motto** at the top of the miniature comes from a half verse of a famous speech out of the Roman poet Lucan's 'De Bello Civili'. Ben Jonson translates the passage as:
*... a praised faith
Is her own scourge, when it sustains their states
Whom fortune hath depressed.*
- The **reference is to Pompey the Great**, with whom the 'Young Man' is, by inference, **identifying himself**. The Elizabethans were most familiar with Pompey through Sir Thomas North's translation of Plutarch's 'Lives', which Shakespeare used as a source for his Roman plays. **Pompey** was a great military commander, a general at the age of 23, awarded two Roman triumphs by 25, besides being a **popular hero**. All the evidence points to the sitter being a **very young courtier** (his moustache is just sprouting) with **military ambitions** who, at the same time, was sustaining a **platonic affair with the Queen**. In 1976, when this article was first published, **Roy Strong** (Director of the V&A) argued that at the close of the 1580s, when this miniature was painted, **only one person** satisfactorily met all these demands, **Robert Devereux, 2nd Earl of Essex**.

Notes

- Robert Devereux, 2nd Earl of Essex, (1565–1601) was an English nobleman and a favourite of Elizabeth I. Politically ambitious, and a committed general, he was

placed under house arrest following a poor campaign in Ireland during the Nine Years' War in 1599. In 1601, he led an abortive coup d'état against the government and was executed for treason.

References

<http://www.vam.ac.uk/content/articles/y/nicholas-hilliards-young-man-among-roses/>



Nicholas Hilliard (1542- 1619), *Portrait of an Unknown Man Claspig a Hand from a Cloud*, c. 1588 or 1600, watercolour on vellum stuck on card, V&A

- The medium and techniques of miniature painting, or limning as it was traditionally called, developed from the art of illustrating sacred books (also called limning). **Nicholas Hilliard** first trained as a **goldsmith** and introduced to this watercolour art innovative techniques for painting gold and jewels. In this miniature we see his characteristic curling and scrolling calligraphy, painted in real gold and then burnished.
- Though the man is unidentified, and the inscription is obscure - "Attici amoris ergo" (translates literally as 'Therefore by, with, from, through, or of the love of Atticus') - it has love as its middle word, and it seems to be a lady's hand that descends from the cloud to hold the gentleman's. Getting both hands and the tuck of cloud into this little world is a squash. Some have speculated that this is one of Elizabeth I's lovers.
- Another theory elucidated by Leslie Hotson is that the phrase means 'Athenians for love' or 'Athenians because of love' and the figures represent, or stand in for, Apollo (the original Athenian) and Mercury. In the sixteenth century true friendship was a powerful connection which was seen to make each friend a god to the other.
- This work beautifully illustrates the role of the miniature in the **chivalrous atmosphere** of dalliance and intrigue at the court of Elizabeth I, where secret gestures of allegiance could become public display depending on the whim of the wearer.
- Unlike large-scale oil paintings, which were painted to be displayed in public rooms, miniatures were usually painted to be worn, to be held, and to be owned by one specific owner. Although we do not know who this miniature was painted for, it is a very intimate image as the gentleman is depicted effectively in a state of undress.

References

- Leslie Hotson, *Shakespeare by Hilliard*, Chapter 5, 'The Unequal Gods of Friendship'
- <http://www.theanneboleynfiles.com/attici-amoris-ergo-is-this-a-portrait-of-arthur-dudley-by-melanie-taylor/#ixzz3IXpCR6hV>



Nicholas Hilliard, *Drake's Jewel*, 1586 or 1588, Victoria & Albert Museum, gold, onyx cameo, enamel, table-cut pearls, diamonds, pearls; miniatures painted in watercolor on vellum and parchment, miniature inscribed 'Ano Dni 1575' (originally '1586') 'Regni 20'

- **Courtly Love.** I have not explained how Elizabeth kept her male court in order. From the beginning the relationship between Elizabeth and her courtiers was of a lady and her suitor controlled by the **conventions of courtly love**. The knight, suitor would find more and more exotic ways to praise the lady and the lady would issue requests to the knight which he was **honour bound to obey**.
- As part of this complex relationship the courtiers would entertain Elizabeth, give her presents including paintings and occasional Elizabeth would give a gift in return.
- On 26 September **1580**, *Golden Hind* sailed into Plymouth with Drake and 59 remaining crew aboard, along with a rich cargo of spices and captured Spanish treasures. The Queen's half-share of the cargo **surpassed** the rest of the **crown's income** for that entire year.
- This is the **Drake Jewel** which was given to Sir Francis Drake either in **1586**, the date on the miniature or, **1588** in commemoration of the **defeat** of the **Spanish Armada**.
- Inside the cover that hides the miniature is a picture of a **phoenix**, a common symbol associated with Elizabeth representing **chastity, rebirth and continuity** and the fact that there is only ever one phoenix alive at one time. It is also connected with virginal purity and purity in religion.
- This was the time, in the 1580s, it became very fashionable to **wear a locket** containing a miniature of your loved one and many people wore lockets containing Elizabeth's portrait. This one was produced by Elizabeth to give to Drake, an **enormous honour**, in fact the first time a **commoner** had been granted such a privilege. It is not surprising in 1580 when Drake returned to Plymouth on the *Golden Hind* the Queen's share of his cargo was more than the crown's income for the entire year.
- The **cameo** is interesting as the two layers of **coloured stone** have been skilfully cut to create the two heads in contrasting colours. It has been suggested that the black male head may represent **Saturn** (associated with black and a black cube), and the white female head **Astraea**, the virgin goddess. The cameo was perhaps intended to proclaim that Elizabeth's reign would be a return to the legendary **Golden Age**, when **Saturn ruled** over a period of peace and prosperity and **Astraea distributed blessings**.

Notes

- Family tradition records that Elizabeth I gave this jewel to Sir Francis Drake (about 1540-1595). Although the date on the jewel appears to be 1586, it is possible that the gift was made later, in commemoration of Drake's role in the defeat of the Spanish Armada in 1588. He is shown wearing the jewel in a portrait painted in 1591. Inside are two miniatures, of Elizabeth I, and of her emblem, the phoenix.
- The cameo is set into the front while the reverse opens to reveal a miniature of Elizabeth I (reigned 1558- 1603) with the inscription, which misleadingly now reads 'Anno Dni 1575 Regni 20', implying that the miniature was painted in 1575, the 20th year of Elizabeth's reign. Close examination has shown that the inscription was incorrectly restored in the past and formerly gave a date of 1586. The inside of the lid contains a damaged parchment lining painted with a phoenix.
- The **phoenix**, painted on parchment inside the lid, was a symbol associated with Elizabeth. According to legend, the phoenix died every 500 years and was reborn from its own ashes. It became a Christian symbol of re-birth and renewal, and symbol of chastity.
- The profile heads of an African man and a European woman make an ingenious use of the brown and white bands of the sardonyx (a variety of quartz). The cameo is one of a number from this period that depict black people. In this case the man is shown wearing *apaludamentum*, the mantle worn by Roman emperors and generals. Elizabeth may have selected it to show her imperial ambitions.
- Drake was hailed as the first Englishman to **circumnavigate** the Earth (and the second such voyage arriving with at least one ship intact, after Elcano's in 1520).
- The Queen declared that all written accounts of Drake's voyages were to become the **Queen's secrets** of the Realm, and Drake and the other participants of his voyages on the pain of death sworn to their secrecy; she intended to keep Drake's activities away from the eyes of rival Spain. Drake presented the Queen with a jewel token commemorating the circumnavigation. Taken as a prize off the Pacific coast of Mexico, it was made of enamelled gold and bore an African diamond and a ship with an ebony hull.
- For her part, the Queen gave Drake a jewel with her portrait, an unusual gift to bestow upon a commoner, and one that Drake sported proudly in his 1591 portrait by Marcus Gheeraerts now at the National Maritime Museum, Greenwich. On one side is a state portrait of Elizabeth by the miniaturist Nicholas Hilliard, on the other a sardonyx cameo of double portrait busts, a regal woman and an African male. The "Drake Jewel", as it is known today, is a rare documented survivor among sixteenth-century jewels; it is conserved at the Victoria and Albert Museum, London.
- Drake receives knighthood from Queen Elizabeth. Bronze plaque by Joseph Boehm, 1883, base of Drake statue, Tavistock.
- Queen Elizabeth awarded Drake a knighthood aboard Golden Hind in Deptford on 4 April 1581; the dubbing being performed by a French diplomat, Monsieur de Marchaumont, who was negotiating for Elizabeth to marry the King of France's brother, Francis, Duke of Anjou. By getting the French diplomat involved in the knighting, Elizabeth was gaining the implicit political support of the French for Drake's actions. During the Victorian era, in a spirit of nationalism, the story was promoted that Elizabeth I had done the knighting.
- When the Protestant Dutch leader, William the Silent, was assassinated in 1584, the fears for the Queen's safety were such that her council drew up an oath for loyal Englishmen to

pledge to protect her. It was around this time that the fashion for wearing the Queen's image developed - images made in precious metals, as cameos, and as miniatures.

- The Drake Jewel is on long-term loan at the V&A room 57A.

References

http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/british/tudors/elizabeth_portrait_01.shtml



Nicholas Hilliard (1542-1619), *Heneage Jewel*, c. 1595-1600, 7 x 5.1 cm, V&A

Nicholas Hilliard (1542-1619), *Heneage Jewel*, c. 1595-1600, 7 x 5.1 cm, V&A

- Miniatures as jewels were **not always a love token**. This locket encloses a miniature of Elizabeth I (1558-1603). According to tradition, the jewel was **given by the queen to Sir Thomas Heneage**. He was a Privy Counsellor and Vice-Chamberlain of the Royal Household. The jewel remained in the possession of the Heneage family until 1902. It has sometimes been called the Armada Jewel. However, it was probably made in about 1595, some years after the defeat of the Spanish Armada in 1588.
- The reverse shows a **ship holding steady** on a stormy sea. It symbolises the **Protestant church steered by Elizabeth** through religious turmoil.
- Enamelled gold, set with table-cut diamonds and Burmese rubies. Obverse, a bust in gold under rock crystal of Elizabeth I, apparently a version of the Garter Badge of about 1585, surrounded by inscription. Inside, a miniature of the Queen by Nicholas Hilliard. The hinged back of the locket is enamelled outside with the Ark of the English Church on a stormy sea and an inscription. The back of the locket is enamelled inside with a Tudor rose encircled by leaves and an inscription.

Notes

- The Heneage or Armada Jewel, English, about 1595
- According to tradition, the jewel was given by Elizabeth I to Sir Thomas Heneage (died 1595), a Privy Counsellor and Vice-Chamberlain of the Royal Household. The jewel remained in the possession of the Heneage family until 1902.

Marks and inscriptions

- 'ELIZABETHA D.G. ANG. FRA. ET. HIB. REGINA' Elizabeth, by the grace of God Queen of England, France and Ireland)
- 'SAEVAS. TRANQUILLA. PER. VNDAS' peaceful through the fierce waves
- 'Hei mihi quod tanto virtus perfusa decore non habet eternos inviolata dies' Alas, that so much virtue suffused with beauty should not last for ever inviolate
- The inscription 'Hei mihi quod ...' appears on the reverse of the Phoenix medal of 1574.
- The inscription 'SAEVAS. TRANQUILA ...' is an allusion to the Queen's role as Defender of the

Faith



Nicholas Hilliard or Isaac Oliver, *Young Man Against a Background of Flames*, c. 1600, 6 cm tall, Victoria & Albert

Notes

- Based on Andrew-Graham Dixon's essay (2001)
- The sitter is unknown but the quality of the work means it is **undoubtedly an Elizabethan nobleman**. The miniature is the size of a child's hand and the detail is extraordinary. The **flames contain gold leaf** that duplicates the scintillating light from a real fire.
- It is pasted on a **playing card**, which was normal Elizabethan practice, but in this case it is the **ace of hearts**, which might hold a hidden meaning. It is likely to have been commissioned by to express his **burning passion for a woman** and given to her as a **love token**. He wears a lace-trimmed linen **nightshirt almost open to the waist**. His slight stubble and tousled hair suggest he has been up all night sleepless with desire. He is melancholic and his slightly raised eyebrow gives a questioning and intelligent look.
- The Elizabethan sonnet form mirrors the compactness of the miniature. Shakespeare's Sonnet 24 is relevant:
*"Mine eye hath play'd the painter and hath steel'd
 Thy beauty's form in table of my heart;
 My body is the frame wherein 'tis held..."*
- The lover has gazed with such intensity that **her image has been engraved** on the table (tablet) of his **heart**. With his left hand he **holds a locket** which we can assume contains a miniature of the lady. He does not need to look at it as the image is within the very frame of his being.
- "A Frenchman by birth, Isaac Oliver was from a Protestant family who sought refuge in England from religious persecution. Thanks to his travels in Italy, he was able to introduce Elizabethan patrons to the unfamiliar subtleties of High Renaissance art. The miniature shown here is an English equivalent to the Italian Renaissance medal, itself a classically inspired revival of antique commemorative bronzes and coins. Renaissance medals have

two sides, the front showing the patron's head, the reverse displaying his *impresa* or emblem, a pictogram or heraldic device of a learned and frequently tantalising nature. Because a miniature only has one side, Oliver combined both portrait and *impresa* – the young man together with the raging fires of love which he has adopted as his emblem – within a single image. The source for this Italianate innovation is admittedly to be found in miniatures by Oliver's teacher, Nicholas Hilliard. But there is no equivalent in Hilliard, or in the work of any earlier English artist, to the softness and delicacy of Oliver's painting style. His *sfumato* blending of light and shade suggests familiarity with the work of Leonardo da Vinci. So does the subtly sad half-smile which plays, *Mona Lisa*-like, on the lips of the anonymous young man. He seems on the point of speech."



SECRET AND
PUZZLING
TUDOR ART

Dr. Laurence Shafe
art@shafe.uk
www.shafe.uk

- The notes for this talk can be found on my website.
- I run a weekly art history class in Hampton and details of this are also on my website or just email for more information.