



Exhibition Exhibits

1. Nicholas Hilliard (c. 1547-1619), *Self-Portrait aged 30*, 1577, V&A. Sixteenth century self-portraits are rare.
2. The role of the miniature, *Drake Jewel*, 1586
3. Quote from *The Art of Limning with Queen Elizabeth I*, by Nicholas Hilliard, 1572. Photograph: National Portrait Gallery
4. Nicholas Hilliard (c. 1547-1619), *Richard Hilliard*, 1576-77, his father who married **Laurence Wall** (his master's daughter) and had eight children
5. Nicholas Hilliard (c. 1547-1619), *Alice Hilliard (née Brandon)*, 1578, first wife of Nicholas Hilliard, his master's daughter
6. Nicholas Hilliard (c. 1547-1619), *Elizabeth I Playing a Lute*, c. 1575
7. Nicholas Hilliard (c. 1547-1619), *Sir Francis Drake*, 1581, he owned the *Drake Jewel*, 1586
8. Nicholas Hilliard (c. 1547-1619), *Sir Christopher Hatton*, 1588-91, full length, experimented in 1580s with different formats, also see
9. Nicholas Hilliard (c. 1547-1619), *George Clifford, 3rd Earl of Cumberland*
10. Nicholas Hilliard (c. 1547-1619), *Young Man Among Roses*, c. 1587, V&A
11. Nicholas Hilliard (c. 1547-1619), *Young Man Claspings a Hand from the Clouds*, 1588

12. Nicholas Hilliard (c. 1547-1619), *Young Man Against Flames*, c. 1590-1600, V&A
13. Nicholas Hilliard (c. 1547-1619), *Elizabeth I*, c. 1600. based on Coronation Portrait painting (Anon, c. 1600)
14. Nicholas Hilliard (c. 1547-1619), *Self-portrait aged 30*, Victoria & Albert Museum
15. Nicholas Hilliard (c. 1547-1619), *Sir Walter Raleigh*, c. 1585, National Portrait Gallery
16. Nicholas Hilliard (c. 1547-1619), *Henry Percy, 9th Earl of Northumberland*, 1590-93
17. Isaac Oliver (c. 1565-1617), *Self-Portrait*, c. 1590, National Portrait Gallery,
18. Isaac Oliver (c. 1565-1617), *Self-Portrait*, c. 1590
19. Isaac Oliver (c. 1565-1617), *Elizabeth I*, c. 1589
20. Isaac Oliver (c. 1565-1617), *Elizabeth I and the Three Goddesses*, c. 1588, see Hans Eworth, *Elizabeth I and the Three Goddesses*, 1569, Royal Collection
21. Isaac Oliver (c. 1565-1617), *Unknown Girl Aged 4*, 1590. Portraits of children are extremely rare (page 133)
22. Isaac Oliver (c. 1565-1617), *Young Man Seated Under a Tree*, 1590-95
23. Isaac Oliver (c. 1565-1617), *Henry Wriothesley, 3rd Earl of Southampton*, c. 1596
24. Isaac Oliver (c. 1565-1617), *The Browne Brothers*, 1598, Burghley House Collections, Burghley House, Stamford, Lincolnshire, Page 150
25. Isaac Oliver (c. 1565-1617), *Sir Edwards Herbert, later 1st Baron Herbert of Cherbury*, 1610-14
26. Isaac Oliver (c. 1565-1617), *An Allegory*, 1590-95

References

- 'Exhibition catalogue' refers to Catharine MacLeod, *Elizabethan Treasures: Miniatures by Hilliard and Oliver*, 2019, National Portrait Gallery
- <https://www.britishmuseum.org/pdf/3-Coombs-A%20kind%20of%20gentle%20painting.pdf>
- <https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2019/feb/24/elizabeth-treasures-miniatures-by-hilliard-oliver-review-national-portrait-gallery-london>
- <https://www.apollo-magazine.com/art-diary/elizabethan-treasures-miniatures-by-hilliard-and-oliver/>
- <https://astrofella.wordpress.com/2019/03/09/elizabethan-treasures-national-portrait-gallery/>



Attr. to Lucas Horenbout or Hornebolte (c. 1490/95-1544), *Katherine of Aragon*, watercolour on vellum, c. 1525, 3.8 cm diameter, National Portrait Gallery

Hans Holbein the Younger (1497/8-1543), *Portrait of a Lady*, perhaps Katherine Howard (1520-1542), circa 1540, watercolour on vellum laid on playing card (the four of diamonds), 6.3 cm diameter

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

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Background

- The earliest miniatures are from a version of the Greek Iliad from the 3rd century and the Vatican manuscript of Virgil from the 5th century. By the end of the 14th and beginning of the 15th century in France and the Low Countries miniatures begin to exhibit a greater freedom. The Flemish school attained its highest excellence by the end of the 15th century. Portrait miniatures first appeared in the 1520s, at the French and English courts. Like medals, they were portable, but they also had realistic colour. The earliest examples were painted by two Netherlandish miniaturists, Jean Clouet working in France and Lucas Horenbout in England.

Henry VIII

- Hans Holbein the Younger (1497/8-1543)
- Lucas Horenbout (c. 1490/95-1544), Flemish artist who moved to England in the mid-1520s and worked there as "King's Painter" and court miniaturist to King Henry VIII from 1525 until his death
- **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 Henry VIII, Edward VI, Mary I and Elizabeth I. She was the most important miniaturist at the English court between Hans Holbein the Younger and Nicholas Hilliard. 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**.

Elizabeth I

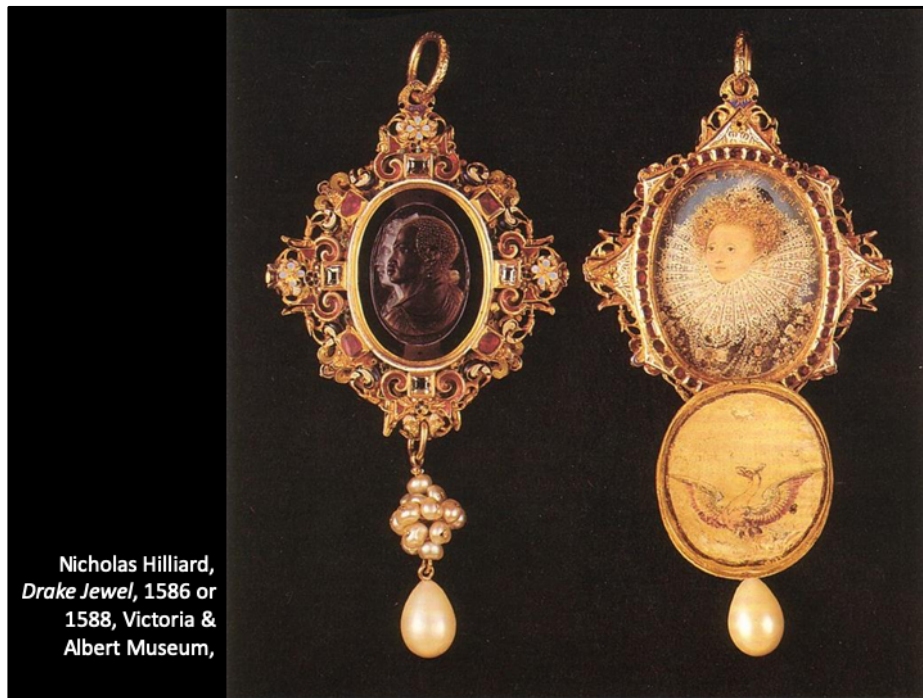
Nicholas Hilliard (c. 1547-1619), burst on the scene in the 1570s
Isaac Oliver (c. 1565-1617)

KEY WORD: MINIATURE

- Developed out of illuminated manuscript illumination
- Latin *miniare* 'to colour with minium' (that is red lead)
- Most of the miniatures are watercolour and bodycolour with gold and silver on vellum laid on playing card

- A portrait miniature painting is usually executed in gouache, watercolour, or enamel. Portrait miniatures developed out of the techniques of the miniatures in illuminated manuscripts, and were popular among 16th-century elites, mainly in England and France, and spread across the rest of Europe from the middle of the 18th-century, remaining highly popular until the development of daguerreotypes and photography in the mid-19th century. They were usually **intimate gifts** given within the family, or by **hopeful males in courtship**, but some rulers, such as James I of England, gave large numbers as **diplomatic or political gifts**. They were especially likely to be painted when a family member was going to be absent for significant periods, whether a **husband or son going to war or emigrating, or a daughter getting married**.
- The first miniaturists used watercolour to paint on stretched **vellum**, or (especially in England) on **playing cards** trimmed to the shape required. During the second half of the 17th century, vitreous enamel painted on copper became increasingly popular, especially in France. In the 18th century, miniatures were painted with watercolour on ivory, which had now become relatively cheap. As small in size as 40 mm × 30 mm, portrait miniatures were often fitted into **loquets, inside watch-covers or pieces of jewellery** so that they could be carried on the person. Others were framed with stands or hung on a wall or fitted into snuff box covers.

- The word miniature, which is derived from the **Latin verb *miniare*** ("to colour with minium," a red lead).
- Vellum is any prepared animal skin, usually calfskin. The word is derived from the Latin word vitulinum (pronounced vit-u-LEE-num') meaning "made from calf". Parchment is another word for the same thing although vellum is used to indicate a higher quality calfskin from a young animal rather than a parchment goat, cow or sheep skin. The word parchment evolved from the Latin pergamenum, the name of the city of Pergamon, which was a thriving centre of parchment production during the Hellenistic period (death of Alexander the Great 323 BC to Battle of Actium in 31 BC). The city so dominated the trade that a legend later arose which said that parchment had been invented in Pergamon to replace the use of papyrus which had become monopolized by the rival city of Alexandria. This is unlikely as parchment had been used long before the rise of Pergamon.
- Body colour or gouache is an opaque pigment. White bodycolour is mixed with watercolour to make it opaque.
- Playing cards originated in the mid-fifteenth century and probably originated in Rouen in France. There was an Act of Parliament in the reign of Edward IV (1442-1483, reigned 1461-1470 and 1471-1483) banning the import of playing cards. Most packs were destroyed by the Puritans and only about a dozen packs from the Elizabethan period survive. They were used as a backing for miniatures as they were widely available. The vellum was glued onto the playing card to give it the right rigidity for painting. It is possible hearts were chosen for a miniature that was to be a love token.



Nicholas Hilliard,
Drake Jewel, 1586 or
1588, Victoria &
Albert Museum,

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

Why Did the Miniature Become So Popular?

- Personal and portable
- Small and discreet
- One's (secret) lover
- A token of loyalty/respect/love
- Courtly love in Elizabeth's court
- **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 issues 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.
- The **cameo** is interesting as the two layers of **coloured stone** have been skilfully cut to create the two heads in contrasting coloured. 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

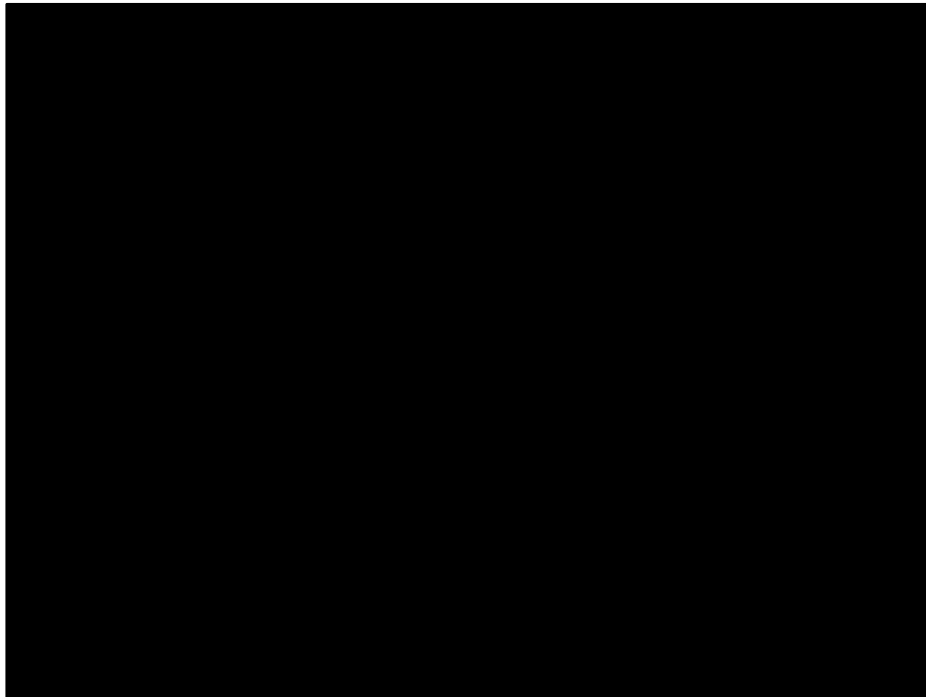
- Family tradition records that Elizabeth I gave this jewel to Sir Francis Drake (about 1540-1595). Although the date on the jewel appears to be 1586, it is possible that the gift was made later, in commemoration of Drake's role in the defeat of the Spanish Armada in 1588. He is shown wearing the jewel 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



- Video introduction to the National Portrait Gallery's exhibition ***Elizabethan Miniatures: Nicholas Hilliard and Isaac Oliver***.
- The introduction includes **Queen Elizabeth I** painted by Nicholas Hilliard and a self-portrait of **Isaac Oliver** (that we will see later).
- Described as '**a thing apart from all other painting or drawing**', the portrait miniatures of the Elizabethan and Jacobean periods are some of the greatest works of art to be produced in the British Isles. Hilliard and Oliver were compared by their contemporaries to Michelangelo and Raphael, and gained international fame and admiration.



Nicholas Hilliard (c. 1547-1619), *Self-portrait*, 1577. Sixteenth century self-portraits are rare.

- The portrait miniatures of Nicholas Hilliard and Isaac Oliver are among the greatest works of art of the English Renaissance. Described by him as “a thing apart from all other painting or drawing”, the portrait miniatures of Hilliard (1547-1619) and his sometime pupil Isaac Oliver (1565-1617) are not just a unique contribution to the evolution of British painting, but among the **great works of European art**. Hilliard was the first English artist to be “much admired”, a contemporary wrote, “amongst strangers”. **Prized by Medicis, Hapsburgs and Bourbons, he was compared to Raphael**. John Donne, homing in on the genius of his miniatures in comparison to enormous history paintings, wrote that “a hand, or eye/ By Hilliard drawn, is worth an history,/ By a worse painter made”. (Laura Cumming, The Guardian, 24 Feb 2019)
- See BM article below. ‘**Limning ... A Kind of Gentle Painting**’ (Nicholas Hilliard quote about 1600), ‘**gentle**’ means ‘**gentlemanly**’, a difficult term to define but associated with status. Limning **uses watercolour** as opposed to oil it was **therefore clean and so fit for a gentleman**. It could be **left at any time** and so was not the master of one’s time. **England led Europe** in limning, i.e. watercolour

painting which culminated in the work of J. M. W. Turner.

- Edward Norgate about **1627** wrote the definitive treatise and **used the term miniature for the first time.**
- “Only one or two uses of the word 'miniature' can be found in the English language in the late 16th century, and these reflect knowledge on the part of the writers of the Italian origin of the word 'miniatura', Italian for the art of decorating handwritten books.' The root of this word is the Latin verb 'miniare', to decorate with red lead. In medieval England, however, the **word for this art was 'limning', and in France, 'enluminer'** — both words coming from the Latin 'luminare', to give light. This is the same **origin as the word 'illumination', still used today** for manuscript encompassing both the idea of illuminating meaning through the use of images and the effect of the bright colours and silver and gold used in this art. Thus in his treatise Hilliard referred to 'limning' not 'miniature'. “ (BM article)
- Artists **self-portraits from the sixteenth century in England are rare**, only three self-portrait miniatures (this Hilliard and two of Isaac Oliver) and two self-portrait paintings (Gerlach Flicke and George Gower) are known. There is a lost self-portrait of Holbein the Younger known from a copy. This self-portrait and the Olivers are unusual as they are **showing themselves as gentlemen** rather than craftsmen with their tools of the trade. We only know it is a self-portrait because of his monogram and its unusually complete provenance.
- It is possible he presents himself as a gentleman because of his discovery of the superior status enjoyed by artists in France where he painted this during his visit between 1576 and 1578.
- In his *Treatise on the Arte of Limning* (c. 1600) he wrote “**none should meddle with limning, but gentlemen alone, for that it is a kind of gentle painting [...] it is a thing apart from all other Painting or drawing and tendeth not to common mens vsse.**”
- The inscription is “Ano Dni 1577” on the left and “Aetatis Suae 30” (pronounced ‘eye-tartis sue-ay’, means aged 30) on the right. The monogram on the right is ‘NH’.

Bio:Hilliard

- Nicholas Hilliard (c. 1547-1619) born in Exeter to a goldsmith.
- 1555-1559 his **Protestant family fled from Exeter during Mary’s reign** (1553-1558) and they lived in Northern Europe where he noted “**Germany breedeth or might breed more than a hundred’ painters for every one bred in England**”.
- **1559 he became a goldsmith’s apprentice in London.**
- **1572 (aged 25) painted a portrait of Elizabeth I** without shadows. Hilliard required three sessions of his sitters lasting from two to six hours and recommended ‘discreet talk or reading, quiet mirth or music’ to stave off boredom and help the artist capture ‘those lovely graces, witty smilings, and those stolen glances which suddenly like lightning pass’.

- 1587 *Young Man Amongst Roses*.
- Hilliard was constantly in debt and it only in 1599 that the careful queen granted him an annuity.
- 1600 *Unknown Man against a Background of Flames*
- **1617 thrown into debtor's prison aged 70.**
- 1619 died and was buried in St Martin-in-the-Fields. His loyal son Laurence spent 52 shillings providing him with a funeral that suited a would-be gentleman. 52 shillings or £2 12 shillings was the price of a cow or 52 days wages for a skilled tradesman.

References

- Exhibition catalogue, page 63.
- <https://www.spectator.co.uk/2019/02/the-first-great-english-artist-the-life-and-art-of-nicholas-hilliard/>



... when first I came in her Highness's presence to draw ... she noted great difference of shadowing in the works, and the diversity of drawers of sundry nations, and that the Italians, who had the name to be the cunningest and to draw best, shadowed not ...

A Treatise Concerning the Arte of Limning
by Nicholas Hilliard

Nicholas Hilliard, *Elizabeth I*, 1572, watercolour on velum, 51 × 48 mm, National Portrait Gallery, Hilliard's earliest portrait of Elizabeth I painted when she was 38. Nicholas Hilliard (in R. Thornton & T. Cain (eds), *A Treatise Concerning the Arte of Limning* by Nicholas Hilliard (1981), pp.85-87):

- "This makes me to remember the words also reasoning of Her Majesty when first I came in her Highness's presence to draw; who after showing me how **she noted great difference of shadowing** in the works, and the **diversity of drawers of sundry nations**, and that the **Italians**, who had the **name to be the cunningest and to draw best, shadowed not**, required of me the reason of it, seeing that best to show oneself needeth no shadow of place, but rather the open light. The which I granted, and affirmed that shadows in pictures were indeed caused by the shadow of the place, or coming in of the light only one way into the place at some small or high window, which many workmen covet to work in for ease to their sight, and to give unto them a grosser line, and a more apparent line to be discerned; and **maketh the work emboss well**, and show very well afar off, **which to limning work needeth not, because it is to be viewed of necessity in hand near unto the eye**. Here her Majesty conceived the reason, and **therefore chose her place to sit in for the purpose in the open alley of a goodly garden, where no tree was near, nor**

any shadow at all, save that as the heaven is lighter than the earth, so must there be that little shadow that was from the earth. This Her Majesty's curious demand hath greatly bettered my judgement, besides divers other like questions in art by her most excellent Majesty, which to speak or write of were fitter for some better clerk."

- The queen wears a diamond and emerald band in her hair which is painted with thin strokes of orange directly on the vellum. The undershirt and sleeve are covered by a light, transparent material indicated by diagonal strokes of white paint.



Nicholas Hilliard (c. 1547-1619), *Elizabeth I Playing a Lute, c. 1575*

- No other portrait shows Elizabeth (1533-1603) **playing a musical instrument**. She is shown half length in front of an ornate throne. The flattened throne, table in the foreground and the figure of Elizabeth is in contrast with the accurately observed lute which is shown in correct perspective with precise details of the woodgrain and fretwork and with an accurately observed fingering of a chord.
- The original has been damaged around the face and the **silver has oxidised**. The particular throne cannot be identified but the **pomegranates on the arms** was a symbol introduced by Catherine of Aragon and used by Mary I. The fruit **symbolised fertility, chastity and the Resurrection of Christ** and remained popular during Elizabeth's reign.
- Elizabeth was a talented musician and played to visiting ambassadors as an honour and a way of gaining an intimate relationship. In 1592 **when she was 59** she played for Count Frederick of Wurttemberg and in a **private letter he remarked that she could be mistaken for a 'girl of sixteen'**.
- Her **'sweet' and 'skilful' performances** symbolised her eternal maidenhood and the 'very dignified, serious and royal look' the divinely ordained social and political harmony of her rule.

Representations of Elizabeth

- Virgin Queen, associated with the Virgin Mary and 'married' to England.
- Pallas Athena, an early representation in which she outranks Venus, Juno and Athena
- Eliza Triumphas from Spenser's *Shepherd's Calendar* 'April' eclogue, praising the 'flowre of Virgins' after the final attempt at marriage failed in 1579
- Diana (or Cynthia, or Belphebe or many other variants), the moon goddess, associated with Elizabeth's chastity, emerged in the 1580s and 90s
- Vestal Virgin as shown in the 'Sieve' portrait (1879-83) Judith or Deborah
- Astraea, the just virgin queen of the golden age as described in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. The age was ruled by Saturn and men gathered food without labour and it was eternal spring. It was followed by the silver age when the seasons appeared and farming began, then the brass age which was sterner and finally the iron age when evil was let loose and modesty, truth and faith fled the earth, war came and Astraea, last of the immortals, abandoned the earth. She is Astraea-Virgo in the zodiac positioned between Leo the lion and Libra, the balance. Virgil predicts Astraea will return to bring about a new golden age. Virgil is referring to the time of Augustus Caesar and it is Emperor Constantine who first associates Astraea with the Virgin Mary who gives birth to Christ during this period to usher in a new golden age of Christianity. The Renaissance was seen as the re-birth of the golden age and in England Elizabethan Protestantism was seen as restoring a new golden age of pure imperial religion. The division of power between Pope and Emperor was seen to have failed to be replaced by a new single imperial sovereign that combined church and state.

References

Exhibition catalogue, page 102



Nicholas Hilliard (c. 1547-1619), *Sir Francis Drake*, 1581, watercolour and bodycolour, silver and gold on vellum, laid on card, 28mm diameter, National Portrait Gallery
Inscribed Aetatis Suae 42 ('in the year of his/her age'), Anno Dni 1581
He owned the *Drake Jewel*, 1586

- One of the **great heroes of English naval history**, renowned for his **circumnavigation of the globe in 1580** and his part in **defeating the Spanish Armada in 1588**. His bravery is today balanced against his **ruthlessness** and his early **participation in the slave trade**.
- Elizabeth **knighted him in 1581** and this portrait is probably in memory of that event. The dubbing was actually performed by a French diplomat negotiating to marry Elizabeth to the King of France's brother. By asking him to perform the ceremony she was cleverly getting the French to endorse Drake's actions against the Spanish.

References

Exhibition catalogue, page 70.



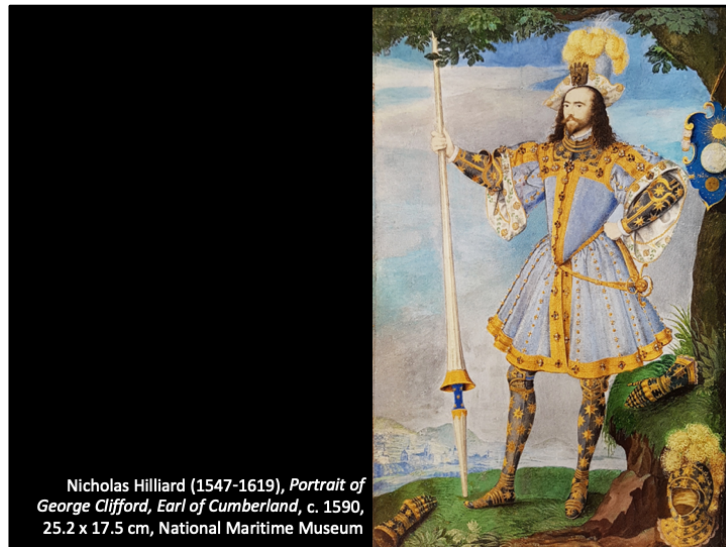
Nicholas Hilliard (c. 1547-1619), *Sir Christopher Hatton*, 1588-91, Victoria and Albert Museum

- This is **unusual as it is a full-length portrait**. Sir Christopher Hutton was a favourite of Elizabeth and this portrait miniature was probably produced to commemorate being made a Knight of the Garter as he is wearing the collar and garter of the order. He was made Lord Chancellor in 1587 and is wearing the robes of office with his seal bag and mace on the table beside him. He left Oxford University without a degree and never qualified as a lawyer but his good looks resulted in his rapid promotion eventually to Lord Chancellor, the most senior judge in England. He became rich through many schemes and rights conferred upon him and he was the first private owner of Corfe Castle.
- In the late 1580s Hilliard experimented with full-length portraits and *Unknown Woman Standing in a Room* (1589, Royal Collection) is also of this period. This squashed format was unsuccessful and quickly abandoned.
- The dog at Hatton's feet was probably intended as a symbol of loyalty and it is possible that this miniature was intended for the Queen. Hatton in his youth was famed for his good looks and was one of the Queen's favourites. In old age she remained as devoted to her servant as he was to her.

- It is seen as a challenge to Isaac Oliver but Hilliard has got the perspective wrong if the angle of the table and the chair are examined.

References

Exhibition catalogue, page 80



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

- Based on medieval tradition a knight would **follow 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 including courtly love.
- 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 Queen'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 knight would enter dressed as some heroic or romantic figure from classical or Arthurian legend. Their squire would present a pasteboard shield decorated with the *impresa* and explain the significance of the costume and *impresa* in poetry read from the steps leading to the queen. The poem may have been written by a professional poet and would praise the queen and make her and her ladies laugh. Entrants went to considerable expense, sometimes several thousand pounds, particularly if they had aroused the Queen's displeasure. Any member of the public could attend by paying 12d and would stand to see the performance.
- 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.

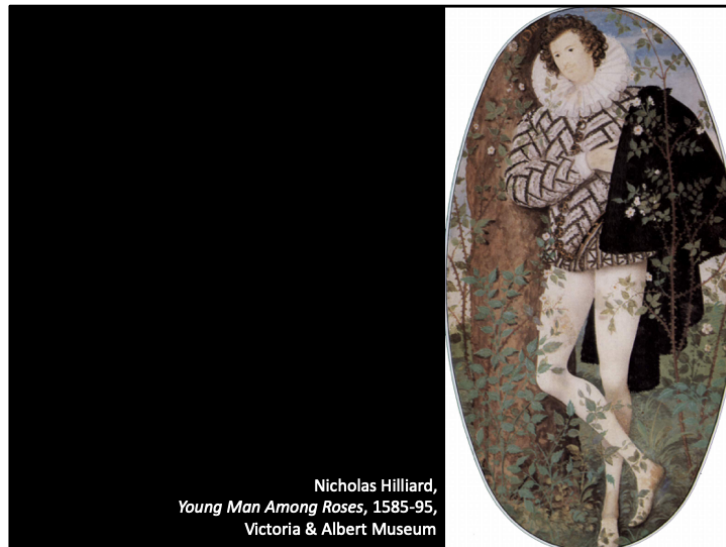
Impress

- '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.' *Imprese* the text reads *Hasta quan[do]* 'until when', i.e. until the moon, sun and earth align (an eclipse or an impossible conjunction?)

References

See page 84 of the exhibition catalogue.

[http://www.shafe.uk/home/art-history/tudor_contents/tudor_13 - tournaments and royal progresses/](http://www.shafe.uk/home/art-history/tudor_contents/tudor_13_-_tournaments_and_royal_progresses/)



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** (or dog rose). 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.*
- Which is difficult to interpret, but Roy Strong describes it as 'faithful love and loyalty bring their own pain and suffering. Our passionate and loyal lover is doubtful of the fruits of his devotion. The wilfulness of the goddess Fortuna could ruin the faithful devotion of this knight, however much commended by his sovereign.'

- 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
Claspng a Hand from a Cloud*,
c. 1600, watercolour on vellum
stuck on card, V&A

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

- The meaning of this picture has not been satisfactorily explained. It typifies the symbolism and mystery that was encouraged by Elizabeth and was a key element of her Accession Day joists. On this day she received the homage of young knights who presented her with an *impresa* containing a picture and a motto. In the same way this miniature bears a coded message.
- 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

- See exhibition catalogue, page 96
- 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/#ixzz3lXpCR6hV>



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

Isaac Oliver (Rouen c.1565 & London 1617), *A Man Consumed by Flames*, Ham House, National Trust. Inscribed above his head: *Alget qui non ardet* (he becomes cold who does not burn). Apparently was written on the back: Earl of Leicester, but Horace Walpole wrote: "But not the least like him, more like Lord Herbert [of Cherbury]. The 'Impresa' device as elucidated by Roy Strong in his work "Portrait as Impresa" suggests it would have been given as a love token. The lover burning up in the flames of his own passion is a familiar symbol in sixteenth-century love poetry. The identification of the portrait miniature with Robert Devereux, 2nd Earl of Essex, KG (1566 - 1601) is also plausible.

Notes

- 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."

References

- Exhibition catalogue, page 94
- Andrew-Graham Dixon's essay (2001)



Nicholas Hilliard (c. 1547-1619), *Elizabeth I*, c. 1600. based on Coronation Portrait painting (Anon, c. 1600)

Anon, *Elizabeth I in Her Coronation Robes*, c. 1600-1610 possibly a copy of a lost c. 1559 original, possibly original

Anon, *Richard II*

- **Coronation Portrait.** Portrait of Elizabeth I of England in her coronation robes. This may be a c. 1600–1610 copy of a lost original of c. 1559.
- **The Central problem** for Elizabeth was that she was a woman. The accepted and expected solution was that she would soon marry, as Mary had done, but to a Protestant.
- **Three phases of Elizabeth's portraits.** We shall see there were three main phases her image went through:
 1. **Poor quality** portraits reproduced to satisfy the demands for her image all over Europe, from 1558 to 1563.
 2. **Fashionable** portraits of Elizabeth when her advisors were looking for a suitable husband, from 1563 to 1573.
 3. **Propaganda** portraits associating Elizabeth with positive **symbols** that did not involve marriage, the Virgin Queen, Empress of the Seas and head of the state and the church. I think this portrait may give a **clue** to these later **symbols**. Unfortunately it is a copy that was made at the end of her reign of a lost

original painted the year of her coronation but I think it tells us what we need to know.

- **Two bodies.** But even before the coronation Elizabeth was tackling the problem. The day before her coronation on 15 January 1559 she had made a **speech** to her Council that reinstated the **medieval** notion of the **two bodies** of the monarch, she said,
 - (Click), *'I am but one body naturally considered, though by His permission a body politic to govern'*. This, I believe, was her way of dealing with being a woman. She knew that the whole Council and the country were worried about having a **woman** as monarch as it was thought that a queen must marry and the choice of king was a risk to the country as Elizabeth might choose to marry a Catholic. The country had come very close to becoming a **province** of the **Spanish empire** during Mary's reign. What Elizabeth was saying was that **although** her physical body was that of a woman her body politic was **ageless**, timeless and that of a monarch ordained by God.
- (Click) **Medieval link.** To reinforce this message her portrait is not like a Holbein or an Antonio Mor but harks back to the medieval portrait of **Richard II** that was in **Westminster Abbey**. Compared to the other portraits we have seen these two are different and remarkably similar. It is as if she told the artist to copy the portrait of Richard.
- Elizabeth had already **divided** herself in two, her physical body might be a woman but her **body politic** was that of a **monarch** and **sexless**.

Notes

- Mary had established the principle of a female English monarch but she married a year later and Philip became King. It was now up to Elizabeth to establish the qualities that would enable a woman to be accepted as monarch.
- The quotation can be related to her speech to the troops at Tilbury in 1588 when she said, *'I know I have the body of a weak, feeble woman; but I have the heart and stomach of a king'*.
- **Accession Day.** In 1568, the tenth anniversary of Queen Elizabeth's accession was marked with the ringing of bells and **17 November** became known as "Queen Elizabeth's Day" or "Queene's Day". As her reign progressed, it was celebrated with increased fervour and it continued to be observed as a day of Protestant rejoicing and expression of anti-Catholic feeling for about 300 years. The observances included triumphal parades and processions, sermons against Catholicism and the **burning of the Pope in effigy**.
- Elizabeth became queen at the age of 25, and declared her intentions to her Council and other peers who had come to Hatfield to swear allegiance. The speech contains the first record of her adoption of the mediaeval political theology of the

sovereign's "two bodies": the body natural and the body politic:

*My lords, the law of nature moves me to sorrow for my sister; the burden that is fallen upon me makes me amazed, and yet, considering I am God's creature, ordained to obey His appointment, I will thereto yield, desiring from the bottom of my heart that I may have assistance of His grace to be the minister of His heavenly will in this office now committed to me. And **as I am but one body naturally considered, though by His permission a body politic to govern**, so shall I desire you all ... to be assistant to me, that I with my ruling and you with your service may make a good account to Almighty God and leave some comfort to our posterity on earth. I mean to direct all my actions by good advice and counsel.*

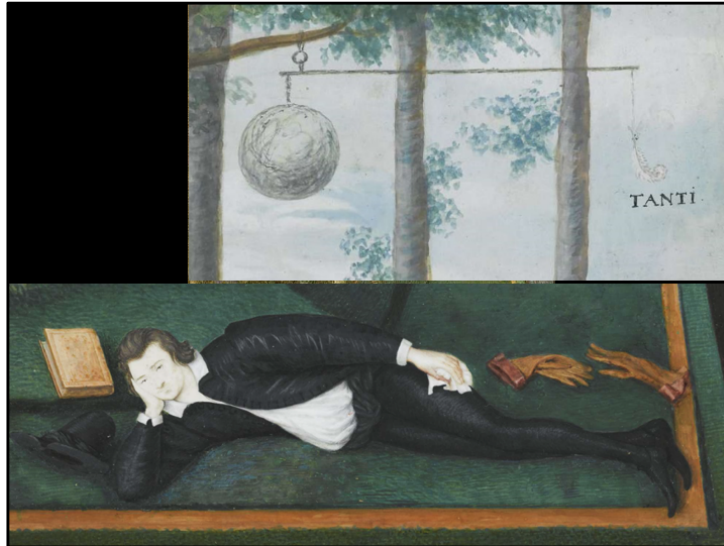
References

Ernst H. Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies: A Study in Mediaeval Political Theology* (1957, Princeton University Press)



Nicholas Hilliard (c. 1547-1619), *Sir Walter Raleigh* (1554-1618), c. 1585, watercolour and bodycolour with gold and silver on vellum laid on card, 4.8 x 4.1 cm, National Portrait Gallery

- Raleigh is the ideal Renaissance man—soldier, sailor, explorer, scholar and poet—and he was a favourite of Elizabeth.
- However, he was frequently rash and this made him enemies which led to his downfall. At the point this was painted he was at the height of his power. Elizabeth nicknamed him 'Water' and rewarded him handsomely and he wrote poetry dedicated to her.
- He did not support the accession of James VI of Scotland and after he became James I of England Raleigh was imprisoned in the tower as a traitor. In the Tower he wrote various works including *History of the World* (1614). He was released in 1616 to undertake a voyage to discover the fabled El Dorado. The failure of the expedition and his violence against Spanish settlers at a time of peace with Spain led to his imprisonment and execution.
- This was probably painted at the time he was knighted by Elizabeth and Hilliard shows him as the ideal courtier dashing, handsome and wealthy.



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' (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.' 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 Philosophie' 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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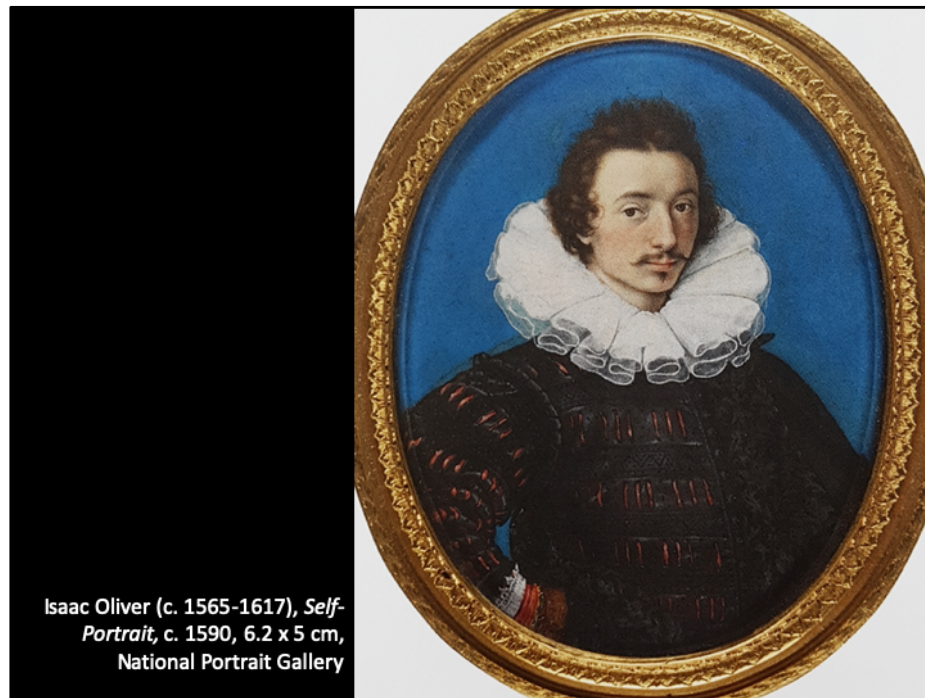
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Isaac Oliver (c. 1565-1617), *Self-Portrait*, c. 1590, 6.2 x 5 cm, National Portrait Gallery

- This remarkable self-portrait belonged to Horace Walpole and is in very good condition. Walpole wrote, “... **he was a genius ... The art of the master and the imitation of nature are so great in it, that the largest magnifying glass only calls out new beauties.**”
- The portrait, like Hilliard’s gives no indication of his profession. He is wearing silk which was recommended by Hilliard as it ‘**sheddeth least dust or hairs**’.
- Oliver was French and his Protestant father had fled Catholic France to London.
- Oliver was educated in continental art and rejected Hilliard’s flat likeness in favour of using shadows. His patrons included the Queen Consort, Anne of Denmark, and Henry, Prince of Wales, but his style lost him the patronage of Queen Elizabeth, rejected the haggard woman in his unfinished portrait of 1589 and reverted to Hilliard’s tried and tested ‘mask of youth’ formula which turned an ageing spinster into a Virgin Queen.

References

Exhibition catalogue, page 136



Isaac Oliver (c. 1565-1617), *Elizabeth I*, c. 1589, 8.2 x 5.2 cm, V&A

- This is a very unusual portrait. The face shows the three-dimensional shading that Oliver was known for. The lines on her forehead and around her mouth indicate it was drawn from life. It is a sketch that is thought was a **demonstration piece** that was never intended to be finished as it is not possible to trim it to a regular oval.
- It is thought it was intended as a **pattern for prints** rather than for painting. This likeness can be seen in an engraving of 1589, *Eliza Triumphans*. This was a time when Hilliard was still maintaining a monopoly on miniatures of the queen. Oliver must have been recommended highly as the portrait of the queen predates portraits of her courtiers. However, Oliver did not secure regular royal patronage until James I came to the throne. It is possible *Elizabeth I and the Three Goddesses* (c. 1588) helped him secure the commission (see next slide).

References

Exhibition catalogues, page 110



Isaac Oliver (c. 1565-1617), *Elizabeth I and the Three Goddesses*, c. 1588, 11.5 x 15.7 cm, National Portrait Gallery

Hans Eworth, *Elizabeth I and the Three Goddesses*, 1569, 62.9 x 84.4 cm, Royal Collection

- This cabinet miniature shows a reinterpretation of the classical myth of the **Judgement of Paris**. Paris was asked to select the fairest goddess from Aphrodite (Venus), Hera (the wife of Zeus, Roman Juno) and Athena (Roman Minerva). He chose Venus who gave him the love of Helen of Troy as a gift and this led to the Trojan War. Here the three goddess look abashed at Elizabeth as she eclipses their virtues of beauty, majesty and wisdom.
- The queen already owned the same image painted by Hans Eworth in 1569. Oliver has updated her portrait and the fashions the women are wearing perhaps to celebrate the victory over the Spanish Armada the same year. It is likely Oliver had not yet met the queen and based his portrait on one by Hilliard.
- It is possible it was a gift to the queen although it is not listed in the new Year's gift rolls.
- The elegant contrapposto figure of Juno in the centre shows how much Oliver has learnt from the Continental style.

References

Exhibition catalogue, page 108



Isaac Oliver (c. 1565-1617), *Unknown Girl Aged 4*, 1590, Victoria & Albert Museum

Isaac Oliver (c. 1565-1617), *Unknown Girl Aged 5*, 1590, Victoria & Albert Museum

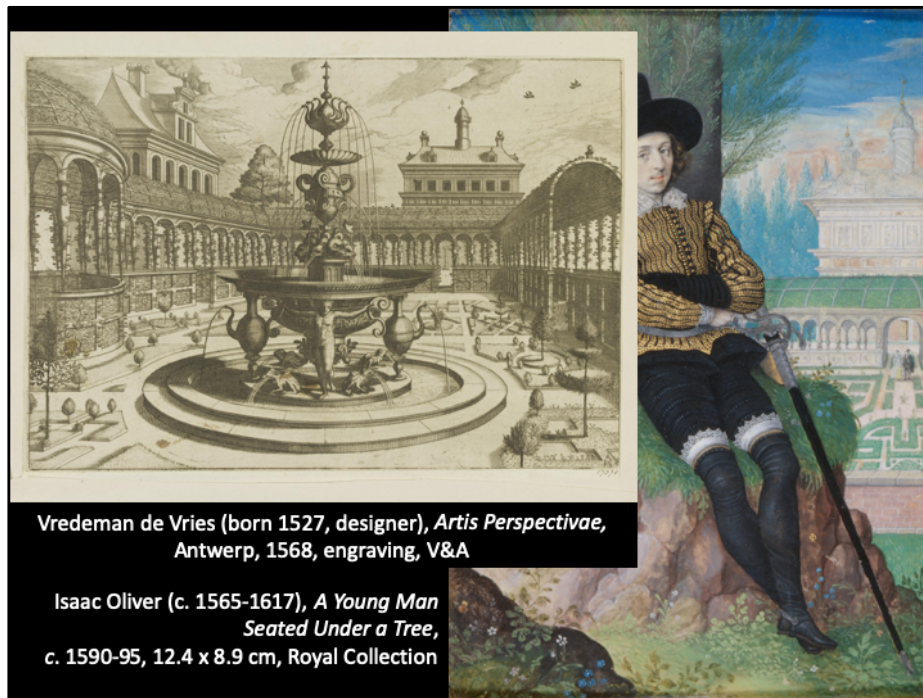
Isaac Oliver (c. 1565-1617), *Unknown Girl Aged 4*, 1590, Victoria & Albert Museum
Isaac Oliver (c. 1565-1617), *Unknown Girl Aged 5*, 1590, Victoria & Albert Museum

- **Portraits of Elizabethan children are extremely rare.** Half a dozen portraits of royal children survive so it is thought these must be high status children, but **we don't know who they are**. The black dresses and lack of jewellery apart from one ring suggests that they are from a **wealthy middle-class family**. It has also been speculated that they might be related to Oliver as such a commission is so unusual. The full frontal pose is also unusual and reminds us of German portraits such as Hans Holbein's portrait of Anne of Cleves.
- Both are inscribed in gold 'Ano Dm 1590' ('The year of Our Lord 1590'). One is inscribed 'Aetatis Suae 4' ('aged 4'), the other 'Aetatis Suae 5' ('aged 5'). Although the dresses of the two children are alike, it is notable that their ruffs are in different styles. The younger child does not smile and **holds an apple**. The elder has a slight smile, **holds a carnation** and wears a ring on the fourth finger of the left hand. An apple (the fruit that Eve took from the tree of knowledge in the Garden of Eden) stood for the biblical story of the Fall of Man and stands for the redemption of sin. A **carnation symbolised marriage** and in a religious context the Virgin Mary. But how these applied to these two girls is now unclear. The

significance or otherwise of the ring is also unknown.

References

Exhibition catalogue, page 133.



Isaac Oliver (c. 1565-1617), *A Young Man Seated Under a Tree*, c. 1590-95, 12.4 x 8.9 cm, Royal Collection

Vredeman de Vries (born 1527, designer), one of six plates from a suite of seventeen entitled *Artis Perspectivae*, Antwerp, 1568, engraving, V&A

The printmake was Lucas van Doetechum and the publisher Gerard de Jode (1509-1591)

- **One of Oliver's finest works** and the subject to much speculation over the years. Oliver is using the full-length format developed by Hilliard in the 1580s allowing a detailed background and therefore a narrative element to be included.
- His posture and clothing show that he is depicting the **fashionable malady of melancholy**. The **discarded glove** is likely to have had symbolic significance at the time but this is now lost. We know that gloves were regarded as a very personal item and had erotic associations. The couple walking in the background may be part of the story and it has been suggested that the pose with crossed arms signifies the melancholic lover rather than the melancholy of genius.
- The identification of the sitter as Sir Philip Sidney and the house as Penshurst Place, Kent have both long been shown to be false.
- The date of 1590 makes this the first of Oliver's large-scale portrait miniatures. It

may have been painted in response to Hilliard's *Young Man Among Roses*.

- The **building appears to have been copied** from a pattern book called *Artis Perspectivae* by Vredeman de Vries and we know the painter Marcus Gheeraerts the Elder owned a copy and was Oliver's neighbour. Gheeraerts daughter married Oliver in 1602. The flowers and the strangely sprouting tree reflect early English tapestry design.

References

- Exhibition catalogue, page



Isaac Oliver (c. 1565-1617), *Henry Wriothesley, 3rd Earl of Southampton*, c. 1596, private collection

- Henry Wriothesley (pronounced 'risley'), 3rd Earl of Southampton was one of the **most glamorous men at court and his hair style was flamboyant** even in his own time. It appears to have been **left unfinished intentionally** as Oliver's usual practice was to work up the background more before putting this much detail into the hair and face. It was possibly as a pattern for other portraits but no others based on this image are known.
- Following the death of his father Henry Wriothesley was brought up by Lord Burghley, Elizabeth's most powerful minister. Wriothesley was well educated and well connected and provided Shakespeare with some patronage but it is unlikely he was the subject of the poet's poems as has sometimes been alleged.
- Hilliard painted Wriothesley a few times but he switched his patronage to Oliver perhaps wishing to support the more avant garde and up-and-coming artist rather than one associated with the Queen and the Establishment.
- Wriothesley was a close friend of Robert Devereux, 2nd Earl of Essex, a key patron of Oliver. Wriothesley's friendship almost ended in his execution when Essex was tried and executed for treason when he was found guilty of a rebellion against

Elizabeth in 1601. Wriothesley was sentenced to life imprisonment but was released two years later by James I.

References

Exhibition catalogue, page 147



Isaac Oliver (c. 1565-1617), *The Browne Brothers*, 1598, 24 x 26 cm, Burghley House Collections, Burghley House, Stamford, Lincolnshire

- One of the most **ambitious of all Oliver's portraits**. Family group portraits were **extremely unusual** at this period and when they were produced they showed a stiff line of figures in a line or round a table. Oliver has solved the problem of representing multiple figures through grouping three with the outer two facing inwards and using their arms to link them together. The arrangement may have been inspired by Continental portrait groups or by representations of the Three Graces.
- The **central brother is Anthony Maria Browne, 2nd Marquess Montagu, aged 24**. Although the family were devout Catholics they had proved their loyalty to Elizabeth by raising a troop of horsemen to defend against the Spanish Armada. The queen was lavishly entertained by the family at their home, Cowdray in Sussex. Under the Stuarts he was imprisoned on suspicion of being involved in the Gunpowder Plot as Guy Fawkes had been one of his employees. He was released only after paying a heavy fine. John, on the left, aged 21, married Ann Gifford and their descendant was the last Viscount Montagu. William on the right, aged 18, became a Jesuit lay brother in France.

- The Latin motto above the door ‘Figura Conformis Affectus’ can be translated as **“The character is similar to the appearance”**.
- The **unidentified fourth figure** who looks out at the viewer rather than the brothers **is a mystery** and may be an attendant or a visitor.

References

Exhibition catalogue, page 150



Isaac Oliver (c. 1565-1617), *Henry Frederick, Prince of Wales* (1594-1612), c.1610-12, 13.2 x 10.0 cm, Royal Collection

- **Henry Frederick** was the eldest child of James I of England and Anne of Denmark. When James became king on the death of Elizabeth Henry was invested with the Order of the Garter which he is shown wearing here.
- Oliver made two portraits of which this is the principal image and it is one of Oliver's most important works. Henry was a keen young patron of the arts and collected mainly Netherlandish and Italian painting and sculpture. Oliver was knowledgeable in the techniques of European art and both were important catalysts in introducing Renaissance art into England.
- Henry is wearing a **suit of gilt armour** (c. 1570) with embossed ornaments. Behind the curtain is a military encampment with soldiers and an artillery piece. There are classical elements in the armour decoration and the soldiers may be in classical or medieval dress. The relevance of this is that Henry took part in masques and in 1610 performed in one set in the time of King Arthur.

References

Exhibition catalogue, page 189



Isaac Oliver (c. 1565-1617), *The Browne Brothers*, 1598, 24 x 26 cm, Burghley House ,
Edward Herbert, 1st Baron Herbert of Cheshire, 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 included in 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
- <http://www.nationaltrustcollections.org.uk/article/magic-and-mystery-the-secrete-conceit-of-a-jacobean-cabinet-miniature>



Isaac Oliver, *Portrait of a lady, masqued as Flora*, c. 1605, 5.3 x 4.1 cm, ownership transferred to Rijksmuseum Amsterdam in 1885, lent to Royal Picture Gallery Mauritshuis, Nicholas Hilliard (1547-1619), *Portrait miniature of Princess Elizabeth, daughter of James I, later Queen of Bohemia*, watercolour on vellum, 1606-09, V&A

- **In the Stuart period the Elizabethan love of puzzles and symbolism was transferred to the masque.** These were expensive court entertainments with dance, music, poetry and prose performed by courtiers and even members of the royal family. The aim was always to convey in as many different ways as possible the virtue, power and honour of the **monarch James I** and his family, especially Queen Anne of Denmark. Prince Henry, her eldest son, also commissioned masques. They were written by the greatest cultural figures of the day, **Ben Johnson** wrote many and Inigo Jones designed the sets. Isaac Oliver with his close connection to Queen Anne was commissioned to record the extravagant costumes.
- This is an unknown woman dressed as Flora, the Roman goddess of spring and flowers. The detail, the glinting light and the delineation of the detail including individual hairs owes a lot to Hilliard but the shading is more obvious. The

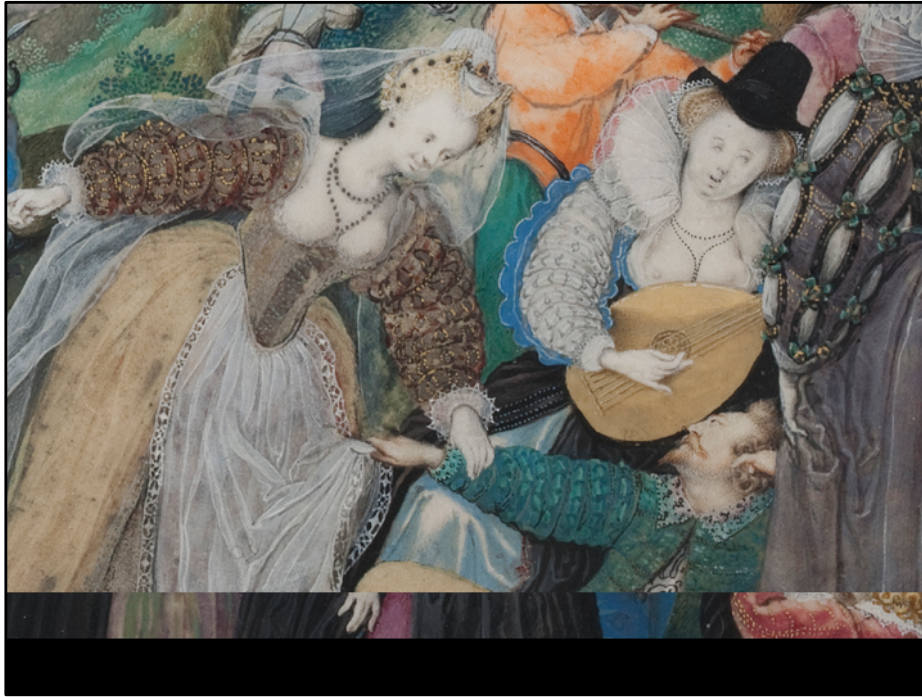
transparency of the veil over her head and chest distinguishes Oliver from the more opaque rendering of fabric by Hilliard.

- The portrait of Princess Elizabeth is one of Hilliard's finest works of the Stuart royal family. Although now faded it is delicately modelled and Hilliard has added his trademark fresh flower, either lavender or a bluebell. Elizabeth was James I's only daughter, born in 1596 and named after her godmother Elizabeth I. She was the only daughter to survive infancy and was **beautiful and charming and so eminently marriageable**. She married the Protestant **Frederick V, Count Palatine**. In 1619 he was offered the position of **King of Bohemia** and they moved to Prague but after only a year he was **deposed** by the Hapsburgs. Having lost the Palatinate as well they spent the **rest of their lives in exile** in The Hague. Her **grandson became George I**, the first Hanoverian king of Great Britain.

References

Isaac Oliver exhibition catalogue, page 197

Nicholas Hilliard, exhibition catalogue, page 190



Isaac Oliver (c. 1565-1617), *The Browne Brothers*, 1598, 24 x 26 cm, Burghley House, *An Allegorical Scene*, c.1590-5 watercolour and gouache on vellum on card, 11.3 x 17 cm, State Art Museum, Copenhagen

- This is an example of a **very common symbol that can have different meanings depending 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.

- A **dog** typically symbolises fidelity but it depends on the context. The dogs in the centre continue the confrontation, the dog on the left represents fidelity but the **lap dog on the right is a fashionable, frivolous pet**. We therefore have two dogs with opposed meanings and it is likely that the hunting dogs in the background have no symbolic 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.

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