

Lecture (2 hours with a 15 minute break)

- When Elizabeth came to the throne in 1558 she was besieged by problems. There had been terrible harvests in the previous two years and rampant inflation partly caused by Henry VIII's reducing the silver content of coins. In the previous eleven years the country had veered from extreme Protestantism to extreme Catholicism and in 1558 the country had lost Calais, its last remnant of French territory. In addition to all this Elizabeth was a woman and it was assumed she would soon marry with the danger of the country being run by a foreigner for their own country's interests.
- Yet, by the end of her reign, England was a world power. Pope Sixtus V could not understand it: "She is only a woman, only mistress of half an island, and yet she makes herself feared by Spain, by France, by all".
- How did she do it? She was intelligent, shrewd, chose her advisers well and became popular by creating and reinforcing powerful images of herself. This talk explores those images and we start by comparing two.

Notes (Wikipedia and other sites & books)

- **Education.** The nobility had a different education from us, Lady Elizabeth for example, was taught grammar, theology, history, rhetoric, logic, philosophy, arithmetic, literature, geometry, music and above all **languages**. By the age of eleven Elizabeth was able to speak fluently in six languages - French, Greek, Latin, Spanish, Welsh and of course English.
 - Many of her closest **advisors** were similarly **schooled** and Elizabethans loved puzzles, word play, and decoding obscure references.
- **Purpose and meaning.** While Italian Renaissance artists were advancing the representation of the physical, with perspective and modelling using shadows and light, English artists were interested in the visual arts as a form of text to be read by the viewer.
 - The Renaissance historian Dame **Frances Yates** pointed out that the most complex

symbolic portraits may all commemorate **specific events** or have been designed as part of elaborate themed entertainments. The most familiar images of Elizabeth—the **Armada, Ditchley, and Rainbow** portraits—are all associated with unique events in this way. To the extent that the contexts of other portraits have been lost to scholars, so too the keys to understanding these remarkable images as the Elizabethans understood them may be lost in time. Even those portraits that are not overtly allegorical may be full of meaning to a discerning eye. Elizabethan courtiers familiar with the **language of flowers** and the Italian **emblem books** could have read stories in the **blooms** the queen carried, the **embroidery** on her clothes, and the **design** of her jewels.

Simplified Summary of Elizabeth I

- Born 17 September 1533 at Greenwich Palace and died on 24 March 1603, aged 69, at Richmond Palace.
- She became queen on 17 November 1558 and this accession day became known as Queen's Day and was celebrated long after her death and it involved burning the Pope's image.
- She avoided wars and was careful in her spending as the country was close to bankruptcy.
- She was extremely intelligent and well educated.
- In modern terms she could be seen as beautiful when younger with a slim figure and high cheekbones.
- Her worst legacy was the way she handled Ireland.
- She had good advisors who unusually, even uniquely, worked as a team.
- She was not a religious fanatic and tried to adopt a middle ground ('I do not seek a window into men's souls').
- She used the etiquette of courtly love to manage her advisors and suitors as under this protocol she could make requests of her 'lover' that he was honour bound to obey (i.e. issue orders).
- Her advisors created and named the concept of the British Empire.
- She supported the pirates/privateers Sir Francis Drake and John Hawkins against Spain.
- She once told an envoy, 'If I follow the inclination of my nature, it is this: beggar-woman and single, far rather than queen and married'.
- In 1563 she caught smallpox and nearly died.
- Elizabeth's unmarried status inspired a cult of virginity. In poetry and portraiture, she was depicted as a virgin or a goddess or both, not as a normal woman.
- One of her mottoes was "*video et taceo*" ("I see, and say nothing"). She was tolerant and willing to take advice from her advisors.

Elizabeth's Image

- According to Roy Strong,
 - *Fear of the wrong use and perception of the visual image dominates the Elizabethan age. The old pre-Reformation idea of images, religious ones, was that they partook of the essence of what they depicted. Any advance in technique*

*which could reinforce that experience was embraced. That was now reversed, indeed it may account for the Elizabethans failing to take cognisance of the optical advances which created the art of the Italian Renaissance. They certainly knew about these things but, and this is central to the understanding of the Elizabethans, chose not to employ them. Instead the visual arts retreated in favour of presenting a series of signs or symbols through which the viewer was meant to pass to an understanding of the idea behind the work. In this manner **the visual arts were verbalised, turned into a form of book, a 'text' which called for reading by the onlooker.** There are no better examples of this than the quite extraordinary portraits of the queen herself, which increasingly, as the reign progressed, took on the form of collections of abstract pattern and symbols disposed in an unnaturalistic manner for the viewer to unravel, and by doing so enter into an inner vision of the idea of monarchy."*

- Images of Elizabeth took on a semi-mystical, icon-like quality—badges of Elizabeth were worn for protection; an attack on Elizabeth's picture was seen as a direct and harmful attack on her person. For example in France, under The Catholic League, Elizabeth's portrait was publicly burnt and even hung upon a gallows.
- The demand for royal images and the icon-like regard for them can be partly explained by the vacuum left after the removal of religious images from Churches as part of the Anglican Reformation. In the Elizabeth image **cult** that emerged, the **Virgin Queen** took over many of the functions and attributes of the **Virgin Mary** and many traditional religious symbols and concepts were incorporated into Royal Portraiture, such as the cherries and the thornless rose.
- Later in her reign Elizabeth, or her advisors, became extremely sensitive about the way she was portrayed. Sir Walter Raleigh, in the introduction to his *History of the World*, records how she caused all portraits of her made by unskilful "common Painters" to be cast in the fire. This no doubt refers to the action of the Privy Council in July 1596. All public officers were ordered to aid the Queen's Serjeant Painter in seeking out unseemly portraits of her which were to her "great offence".
- Themes include:
 - **Return of the Golden Age**, Geoffrey of Monmouth's 12th century *History of the Kings of Britain* was accepted as correct and Britain was founded and named by Brutus, the descendent of Aeneas who founded Rome. The Tudors are of Welsh descent and so the most ancient and descended directly from Brutus and the Trojans. The Golden Age was a period before history described in Ovid's *Metamorphosis*. It was a period of peace, harmony, stability and prosperity and was followed by the Silver, Bronze, Heroic and then the present Iron age, a period of decline.
 - **Early portraits** (1558-1570) were painted for prospective suitors and for courtiers to hang at home. Early portraits include a prayer book for piety and a rose (white, red or Tudor) for chastity. In this short period she was represented as a human being before being transformed into a goddess. There were also miniatures produced by Levina Teerlinc but most are now lost. Nicholas Hilliard (who may have been trained by Teerlinc) was appointed limner and goldsmith in 1572.
 - **Empress of the Seas**, following Elizabeth's excommunication in 1570 tension

increased with Spain and battles over the New World increased. A series of portraits based on imperial domination based on control of the seas. Three versions of the *Armada Portrait* of 1588.

- **The Virgin Queen**, the *Sieve Portrait* (George Gower, 1579 and more influential the Quentin Metsys version of 1583) and the *Darnley* face pattern. Purity is represented in the *Ermine Portrait* of 1585.
- **The Cult of Elizabeth**. Combined many symbols in complex ways in poetry, painting and pageantry. Courtiers all wore her portrait. The *Ditchley Portrait*, c. 1592 and the *Rainbow Portrait* of c. 1600-2.
- **The Mask of Youth**. Following Isaac Oliver's portrait unseemly portraits were sought out and burnt. All portrait from 1596 to her death in 1603 are based on Hilliard's face pattern.
- She was represented as the **Virgin Queen** who was married to the country and with its obvious association with the Virgin Mary, **Cynthia** (a Greek goddess called Diana by the Romans, a virginal goddess of the hunt and also Cynthia from Raleigh's unfinished and unpublished poem), **Belpheobe and Gloriana** (both from Edmund Spenser's poem *The Faerie Queene*, 1589 and Gloriana suggests an earlier Golden Age of peace and prosperity), **Minerva** (or Pallas Athena the virgin goddess of war who preferred peace), **Astraea** (virgin goddess of justice, innocence and purity), **Tuccia** the Vestal Virgin, **Good Queen Bess**, **Deborah** (the only female judge in the Bible and one who led a counterattack), **Judith** who beheads Holofernes, and occasionally **Pandora** (as the name means one who gives 'all the gifts') or **Flora** (Roman goddess of nature, spring and flowers).
- Symbols include the **Tudor rose** (Lancaster red and York white) and the rose was the medieval symbol for the Virgin Mary;
 - the **pelican**, one of her favourite symbols, the pelican pecked her own breast to feed her young on her blood before dying, it was also a symbol for Jesus;
 - the **phoenix**, a mythical bird that never dies and after 500 years it is consumed by fire and is reborn, a symbol of the Resurrection;
 - the **ermine**, stands for purity as legend maintained it would rather die than soil its white coat;
 - a **sieve**, symbol of virginity and purity from the vestal virgin, Tuccia who proved her purity by carrying water in a sieve, it associated England with the Roman Empire;
 - **moons and pearls**, represent Elizabeth as goddess of the moon, Cynthia (also known as Diana) who was a virgin, Sir Walter Raleigh wrote a long poem entitled 'The Ocean's Love to Cynthia';
 - an **armillary sphere** or celestial globe represented study and wisdom and the good relationship between Elizabeth and her courtiers who revolved around her like the heavens around the earth;
 - **dogs** represent faithfulness and the breed associated with the Tudors was the greyhound;
 - **gloves** represent elegance and they were a common gift;
 - **olive branches** peace;
 - And **crowns, orbs and sceptres** represent monarchy.

Elizabeth's Education.

- Elizabeth was talking in complete sentences by 18 months. Though she seems to have been by nature sensual, affectionate, and charming because of the many conspiracies against her she became cautious, secretive, and suspicious. In religion she steered a middle course and was less concerned about what men believed in their hearts as long as they conformed outwardly and acknowledged her legitimacy as Queen.
- Roger Ascham's (1515-1568) was Elizabeth's tutor in Greek and Latin and he served in the administration of Edward, Mary and Elizabeth. His most widely known and accepted educational device was the art of double translation. Roger Ascham wrote that Elizabeth developed a style that
" grows out of the subject; chaste because it is suitable, and beautiful because it is clear [...] Her ears are so well practised in discriminating all these things and her judgement is so good, that in all Greek, Latin, and English compositions there is nothing so loose on the one hand or so concise on the other which she does not immediately attend to, and either reject with disgust or receive with pleasure as the case may be."
- The daily lessons were divided into the morning lesson and the afternoon lesson. Cicero and Livy were closely studied. Ascham praised Elizabeth for her aptitude in learning languages and her retentive memory.
- Elizabeth was often considered a serious child due to her amazing capacity for and her love of learning. But she also enjoyed playing, just like other children. Her education also included non-academic subjects befitting a lady of her rank and status. These other lessons included sewing, embroidery, dancing, music, archery, riding and hunting. Roger Ascham also remarked that Elizabeth had the intelligence of a man and this held her in good stead in the years of her reign. Her handwriting was beautiful and her elegant style can be seen from examples of her signature.

Elizabeth's Appearance.

- We do not know as descriptions are biased and her portraits are flattering or iconic. However, she was said to look like her mother, Anne Boleyn, with her father's colouring. She did not fit the Elizabethan idea of beauty which was small and doll-like but with generous curves. By modern standards she might have been beautiful as she had bright red hair, a very thin figure, high cheekbones and dramatic colouring. However, after the smallpox attack that nearly killed her she was disfigured by marks on her face and neck. She may have lost all her hair and wore wigs. She was very proud of her hands and her long fingers which were not disfigured by smallpox.
- There was no Elizabethan civil service, no police force and no standing army. Propaganda was disseminated by the Church and the government ordered its parish priests to read tracts against rebellion and preach sermons condemning crime and disorder. The government also did its best to impress its subjects with its power and authority by elaborate ceremonies and the queen rewarded obedience by patronage from titles to bishoprics and monopoly rights. Elizabeth's use of patronage was skilful and balanced power between many advisers and courtiers. Parliament was weak, it could only propose bills to Elizabeth and on average it sat for only three weeks a year.

Elizabeth and Marriage

- She was expected to marry but never did, why? Did she know she was infertile? Did Thomas Seymour put her off? She once told an envoy, 'If I follow the inclination of my nature, it is this: beggar-woman and single, far rather than queen and married'.
- She considered suitors until she was about 50. They included Philip II, King Eric XIV of Sweden, Archduke Charles of Austria, two French Valois princes Henry Duke of Anjou later his brother Francis Duke of Anjou. The Dukes of Anjou were promoted by Walsingham as he thought a English-French alliance would protect Protestant Netherlands from Spain.
- In 1563 Elizabeth nearly died of smallpox and was urged to marry to prevent civil war.
- Her last courtship was with Francis, Duke of Anjou, who was 22 years younger.
- By 1559 Elizabeth was in love with Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester. He was given to writing self-protecting, self-righteous letters and was a friend of Lord Burghley. His wife, Amy Robsart, was dying of breasts cancer and Elizabeth wanted to marry him although by 1559 there were several foreign suitors. She died in 1560 by falling down stairs and the scandal resulting from the possibility that her husband had killed her meant that Elizabeth could never marry him. Nobility, such as William Cecil and Nicholas Throckmorton were against it and it has been suggested they arranged the 'accident'. Robert Dudley was made Earl of Leicester in 1564 and remarried in 1578. Elizabeth created scenes and hated his wife Lettice Knollys. He had married Lettice, Countess of Essex secretly and they had a son also called Robert Dudley who died when he was 3. Robert Dudley also had an illegitimate son called Robert Dudley by Douglas Sheffield an English noblewoman.

Elizabeth's Advisers

- Her advisors were critical to her success, unusually for any royal court in history her advisors tended to work together as a team rather than engage in in fighting.
- **Sir William Cecil** (1520-1598), Secretary of State, in 1571 he was made Lord Burleigh, Lord Treasurer. Burleigh House (1558-87), Lincolnshire.
 - Burleigh wanted Elizabeth to marry, Walsingham was fanatical Protestant and spy master.
 - Burleigh's son was Robert Cecil, a valued adviser later, after Devereux's execution he took complete control.
 - Burleigh and Elizabeth sometimes disagreed, he pushed through Mary Queen of Scots death warrant.
- **Francis Walsingham** (c. 1532-1590) replaced William Cecil as Secretary of State. Nothing remains of his houses.
- **Thomas Gresham** (c. 1519-1579) was a stingy financier first to Edward VI, then Mary I and the equally parsimonious Elizabeth.
- Sir **Nicholas Bacon** (1510-1579) Lord Keeper of the Great Seal and his son Sir **Francis Bacon** (1561-1626), philosopher and statesman, were another father and son team who serviced Elizabeth.
- Sir Francis Knollys (c. 1511-1596) was a convinced Protestant and his daughter, Lettice Knollys, was Elizabeth's first cousin (grandniece of Anne Boleyn). One of his daughter's sons was Robert Devereux.

Lovers/Suitors

- **Thomas Seymour**, Lord Sudeley (Jane Seymour's brother and Lord Protector Edward Seymour's brother). Catherine Parr married Thomas Seymour after Henry VIII died and Thomas compromised the young Elizabeth until Catherine sent her away. At his home, Chelsea Manor, Thomas compromised Elizabeth by getting into bed with her, stroking her buttocks and cutting her dress. He was executed for treason in 1549.
- She was infatuated with **Robert Dudley** (1532/3-1588), **Earl of Leicester** (Kenilworth Castle). His father John Dudley, 1st Duke of Northumberland was executed for treason after trying to put Lady Jane Gray on the throne. He married Amy Robsart who died falling down stairs, and Lettice Knollys. He died unexpectedly after his success during the Armada of malaria or stomach cancer.
- **Robert Devereux** (1565-1601), 2nd **Earl of Essex** son of Walter Devereux and Lettice Knollys (who later married Robert Dudley). He married Frances Walsingham, daughter of Francis Walsingham and they had three children including Robert Devereux. Vanity, reckless ambition and his failures in Ireland and his subsequent attempted *coup d'état* led to his beheading. He lived in Essex House, London, now demolished.
- Others who charmed her were Sir Christopher Hatton and Sir Walter Raleigh (who fell from favour).
- Philip II of Spain, husband of Mary I from 1554 to her death in 1558. He wished to continue the link with England and so sent Elizabeth a marriage proposal.
- Prince Eric of Sweden was prone to sending Elizabeth passionate declarations of love which amused her. He became insane later and died in prison drinking pea soup laced with arsenic.
- Charles II, Archduke of Austria, proposed by his father Ferdinand I, the Holy Roman Emperor. Negotiations lasted many years but he was a strict Catholic. Elizabeth acknowledged he was the best foreign match but vacillated. He eventually married his niece and had 15 children.
- Other suitors include, The Duke of Saxony, Adolphus, Duke of Holstein, Henry FitzAlan, 12th Earl of Arundel, Sir William Pickering, Francis, Duke of Alençon and later Anjou, Charles, Earl of Angoulême, Archduke Ferdinand of Austria, James Hamilton, Earl of Arran, Prince Frederick of Denmark, Don Carlos, son of Philip II of Spain, King Charles IX of France, Henri de Valois, Duke of Anjou, François de Valois, Duke of Alençon and later Anjou, Lord Darnley, Emanuel Philibert, Duke of Savoy.

Other Kings

- **Charles V**, Holy Roman Emperor (1500-1558), abdicated in favour of **Ferdinand I** (1503-1564) HRE and Philip II of Spain (Habsburg monarchy). The Hapsburgs were Holy Roman Emperors from 1438 to 1740.
- **Francis I** (1494-1515-1547), then **Henry II** (1519-1547-1559) killed jousting, then sickly **Francis II** (1544-1559-1560) who married Mary, Queen of Scots and died 18 months later, then **Charles IX** (1550-1560-1574) whose mother Catherine de' Medici (1519-1589) acted as Regent, then **Henry III** (1551-1573-1589), the last Valois monarch. **Henry IV** (1553-1589-1610) was the first Bourbon king of France, followed by **Louis XIII** (1610-1643) and **Louis XIV** (1638-1643-1715), the Sun-King.

Children of Henry VIII

1. Catherine of Aragon (married Greenwich Palace 11 June 1509; annulled 23 May 1533)

Unnamed daughter (31 January 1510-31 January 1510, miscarriage
Henry, Duke of Cornwall (1 January 1511-22 February 1511), died aged
almost two months

Unnamed son (November 1513), died shortly after birth

Henry, Duke of Cornwall (December 1514), died within one month of birth

Queen Mary I (18 February 1516, queen July 1553-17 November 1558),
married Philip II of Spain in 1554; no issue

Unnamed daughter (November 1518), stillbirth in the 8th month of
pregnancy

2. Anne Boleyn (married Westminster Abbey 25 January 1533; annulled 17 May 1536) beheaded on 19 May 1536

Queen Elizabeth I (7 September 1533, queen 17 November 1558-24 March 1603), never married; no issue

Henry, Duke of Cornwall (August/September 1534)

Unnamed son (29 January 1536), miscarriage of a child, believed male, in the
fourth month of pregnancy

3. Jane Seymour (married York Place 30 May 1536; Jane Seymour died 24 October 1537)

King Edward VI (12 October 1537, king 28 January 1547-6 July 1553),
unmarried; no issue

4. Anne of Cleves (married 6 January 1540; annulled 9 July 1540), no issue

5. Catherine Howard (married Oatlands Palace 28 July 1540; annulled 23 November 1541), beheaded on 13 February 1542, no issue

6. Catherine Parr (married Hampton Court Palace 12 July 1543; Henry VIII died 28 January 1547), no issue

By Elizabeth Blount

Henry Fitzroy, 1st Duke of Richmond and Somerset (15 June 1519-23 July 1536), illegitimate; acknowledged by Henry VIII in 1525; no issue

Topics Covered

- The two earliest images of Elizabeth
- The Queen's two bodies – body natural and body politic
- Flat face images – possible reasons why
- What do we mean by propaganda?
- Control of images and edicts
- Personal preference and discussion with Hilliard regarding Italian painting and shadows
- Coronation portrait (lost original), Accession Day
- Return of the Golden Age
- Symbols – pelican (succour the nation), phoenix (rebirth), ermine (purity), rainbow
- Goddesses Diana (chastity)
- Virgin Queen to justify her unmarried status

- Mask of Youth as she got older
- Empire and the sea

Not covered:

- Uses of Elizabeth's image on coins, medallions, charters and engravings
- Title page of *Bishop's Bible*, 1569
- *Procession Portrait*
- Miniatures by Hilliard 1572 and Teerlinc
- Gower's *Sieve Portrait*
- Other two *Armada Portraits*
- Marcus Gheeraerts the Elder (1520-90), *Queen Elizabeth at Wanstead House*, 1580-85, private collection



William Scrots (?), *Princess Elizabeth*, c. 1546/7, Royal Collection, Windsor Castle
 Marcus Gheeraerts the Younger, *Queen Elizabeth I ('The Ditchley Portrait')*, c. 1592, National Portrait Gallery

- The historian Roy Strong illustrates the wonder of the transformation of images of Elizabeth I by contrasting these two pictures. The first painted when she was a young and virtuous fourteen year old and the other over forty years later when she is seen towering over the realm of England, an image of almost **cosmic power**.
- The first is a demure girl wearing the latest French fashions but **unostentatiously and holding a prayer book**.
- The second is full of symbols and hidden messages that we will **unravel later**.
- So the answer to whether the portraits were **fashion or propaganda** is both. They made a gradual transition from one to the other.
- In order to **explain** how this occurred I must first set the scene by talking about the **Tudor dynasty** and show you **other portraits** of the period but first let's look at one image of Elizabeth to make an important point about the Elizabethan age.

Notes

- Elizabeth was born on 7 September 1533, became Queen of England and Ireland on 17 November 1558 and died on 24 March 1603.



Quentin Metsys (or Massys) the Younger (c. 1543-1589), *The Siena Sieve Portrait*, c. 1583, National Art Museum Siena

- The **Tudors loved puzzles** so their **poetry, pageants and pictures** are full of **hidden symbolism** and references to **classical mythology**.
- I will be pointing this out as we go along but to **set the scene** they mostly believed, or at least enjoyed reading, the story of British history described by **Geoffrey of Monmouth's**, a 12th century historian (who wrote c. 1138, *History of the Kings of Britain*). He traced British kings back to **Brutus** who named and founded Britain and Brutus descended from **Aeneas**, the Trojan who founded Rome. As the Tudors were of **Welsh descent** they were an ancient family and believed by many to be **descended directly from Brutus and the Trojans**.
- The story of Dido and Aeneas, ancestor of Brutus, is shown in the roundels on the pillar behind Elizabeth. This suggests that Elizabeth, like Aeneas, had rejected marriage in order to found an empire.
- But why is she carrying a sieve and who are the people behind her? We will be discussing these elements later.

Notes

- Aeneas was a Trojan hero in Greco-Roman mythology. He was the son of the prince Anchises and the goddess **Venus (Aphrodite)**. He is a character in Greek mythology and is mentioned in **Homer's Iliad**. Aeneas receives full treatment in Roman mythology, most extensively in **Virgil's Aeneid** where he is an **ancestor of Romulus and Remus**. He became the first true hero of Rome. After six years of wandering after leaving the burning Troy he lands at Carthage. He has a year long affair with Queen Dido until the gods remind him he must found Rome so he leaves secretly. Dido curses him and kills herself and the curse will lead to the wars between Rome and Carthage. There were two conflicting founding myths for Rome, the Greek version was based on Aeneas and the Italian myth on Romulus and

Remus. The national epic of mythical Rome, the ***Aeneid* of Virgil**, tells the story of how Aeneas founded Rome. The *Aeneid* was written under Augustus, who claimed **ancestry** through Julius Caesar from Aeneas and his **mother Venus**. Thus Augustus claimed ancestry from the gods as did the Tudor monarchy.

- **Brutus of Troy** was a legendary Roman General who pacified Spain in 138BC, not the Brutus who assassinated Caesar. The legendary Brutus was the grandson or great-grandson of Aeneas. He was linked by various mythologies to either Ham, son of Noah, Japeth, son of Noah or the Greek gods.
- Before the Trojans prehistory was based on Ovid's *Metamorphosis* which divided history into five periods known as **The Golden Age** of peace and prosperity, followed by the Silver, Bronze, Heroic and then the present Iron age, a period of decline. In the Golden Age the world was ruled by the **female goddess Astraea**.
- **Quentin Metsys the Younger** (Quinten or Massys; c. 1543 – 1589) was a Flemish Renaissance painter, one of several of his countrymen active as artists of the Tudor court in the reign of Elizabeth I of England. He was the son of Flemish painter Jan Massys, Matsys, or Metsys and the grandson and namesake of Quentin Massys or Metsys. The younger Quentin was born in Antwerp, where he joined the Guild of St. Luke in 1574; by c. 1581 he was living in London, likely having fled religious persecution in Antwerp as his father and uncle had done. He left England for Frankfurt in 1588 and died there the next year.



Anon, *The Family of Henry VIII*, c. 1545, Royal Collection, Hampton Court

- Let us begin with the earliest portrait we have of Elizabeth. She was about 12 years old, Mary was about 29 and Edward about 8. The painting shows the whole Tudor family, excluding Henry VII. We have the **Lady Mary** (1516-1553-1558), **Prince Edward** (1537-1547-1553), **Henry VIII** (1491-1509-1547), **Jane Seymour** (c. 1508-1536-1537), **Lady Elizabeth** (1533-1558-1603).
- This was painted around 1545 and the clever ones among you may be thinking but Jane Seymour died in 1537 after giving birth to Edward, so how can they be shown together? The answer is that it is a painting and doesn't pretend to show a scene that actually took place but to tell a story. We assume (his third wife) Jane Seymour is shown because she had **provided** him with his long desired **male heir** Edward and his wife at this time, 1545, was Catherine Parr, who Henry married in 1543 but was omitted from the painting.
- This painting is designed to show **magnificence and succession**, two critical elements of a successful monarch.
- But you may be wondering who are those strange people are in the doorways?
- On the left is **Jane Foole** (fl. flourished 1543-1558, jester to Catherine Parr, Mary I and possibly Anne Boleyn), and on the right, with a monkey picking fleas from his hair, is **Will Somers** (d. 1560) – Henry's personal fool.
- We **don't know** who painted this, who commissioned it or why it was painted but the style is heavily influenced by Hans Holbein the Younger (c. 1497-1543). Paintings were **expensive** and were produced for a **reason**, typically, to celebrate an occasion or an event or make a statement. Portraits of the monarch were also in demand as a declaration of loyalty. In this case the painting reinforces Henry's position as a **leading European monarch** by his display of **magnificence** and his **succession**. Outside the doorways we see Whitehall Palace, the largest palace in Europe. Why are the fools shown? Perhaps,

because they are simply part of the furniture—gilded walls, enormous palace, sumptuous clothing, a large family and two fools.

- The painting is in the so-called ‘Haunted Gallery’ at Hampton Court (currently at an exhibition in Buckingham Palace) and shows:
 - **(Click)** Elizabeth as a demure young lady of 12. This is the **earliest** representation of Elizabeth I (1533-1603) when she was still Lady Elizabeth and when no one **expected** her to ever become **monarch** as there were **two** of Henry VIII’s children who would **succeed before** her. She is simply **marriage fodder**.
- **(Link)** We have one other picture of her as a young lady that was painted a year or two later...

Notes

- **Fools. Jane the Fool** (d. 1558+) was as much a fixture at the Tudor court as Henry VIII’s fool, **Will Somers**.
 - John Southworth, in *Fools and Jesters at the English Court* offers evidence that she was there as early as 1537 and may have been there earlier, as the female fool in Queen Anne Boleyn’s household. She was the type of fool known as an **“innocent”**—probably **mentally retarded** and possibly suffering from physical disabilities. She had a “keeper” assigned to her. According to records cited in Carolly Erickson’s *Bloody Mary*, Jane wore beautiful gowns but the hose and shoes of a clown and she had her head shaved regularly at fourpence per barbering. In December 1537 she was in Princess Mary’s household. She was ill in the autumn of 1543 and cost Mary 22s 6d. and another 5s for six ells of cloth to make a pair of sheets for her. It is possible that soon after that she became part of the household of Queen Kathryn Parr, but she was with Mary Tudor after Mary became queen in 1553. Jane the Fool survived into the reign of Elizabeth but then disappears from the records. Biographies: see the chapter on Jane in Southworth’s book. Portraits: Again, following Southworth, Jane is probably the figure on one side of the portrait of Henry VIII and his family at Hampton Court. This makes sense, since the figure on the opposite side is Will Somers. Others argue that the woman is “Mother Jak,” Prince Edward’s nurse, but Mother Jak herself is the object a good deal of confusion. The Holbein sketch labelled “Mother Jak” is actually Margaret Gigs, Sir Thomas More’s foster daughter. Nineteenth-century historian Agnes Stickland suggested that Jak was short for Jackson, but offered no proof. Another unsubstantiated story I’ve seen online is that “Mother Jak” haunts Hampton Court. In reality, the most likely “Mother Jak” was an anonymous wet nurse hired to take care of Prince Edward. She was replaced, when her services were no longer needed to feed the infant prince, by Sybil Hampden, Mrs. Penne, the gentlewoman who was Edward’s chief nurse (a “dry” nurse) from October 1538 to 1544.
 - William **‘Will’ Sommers** (or Somers), **died 15 June 1560**, was the best known court jester of Henry VIII. His last public appearance was Elizabeth’s coronation.
- **Whitehall**. The view through the arches is of the Great Garden at **Whitehall Palace**. The heraldic wooden King’s Beasts with gilt horns are displayed amidst the flower beds, which

are surrounded by low wooden fences and painted in the Tudor colours of white and green. Through the archway on the left can be seen part of Whitehall Palace and the Westminster Clockhouse. Through the archway on the right is the north transept of Westminster Abbey and a single turret of Henry VIII's Great Close Tennis Court.

- **Henry's Palaces.** Henry VII had over **60 houses** by 1547 and the most modern and sophisticated palace was **Hampton Court**. There were tennis courts, bowling alleys and pleasure gardens for recreation, a hunting park of more than 1,100 acres, kitchens covering 36,000 square feet, a fine chapel, a vast communal dining room (the Great Hall) and a multiple garderobe (or lavatory) - known as the Great House of Easement - which could sit 28 people at a time. Water flowed to the palace from Coombe Hill in Kingston, three miles away, through lead pipes. Henry used the palace to impress and in August 1546 Henry feasted and fêted the French ambassador and his entourage of two hundred gentlemen – as well as 1,300 members of his own court – for six days. An encampment of gold and velvet tents surrounded the palace for the occasion.



William Scrots (?), *Princess Elizabeth*, c. 1546/7, Royal Collection, Windsor Castle
Hans Holbein the Younger, *Christina of Denmark, Duchess of Milan*, 1538, National Gallery
Nicolas Denisot (1515-1559), *Thomas Seymour*, 1st Baron Seymour of Sudeley, 1545-49, National Maritime Museum.

- This was painted a year or two later.
- **Appearance.** Elizabeth is wearing the **latest French fashion** but she was not proud of her features, she sent this portrait to her brother noting, '*The face, I grant, I may well blush to offer, but the mind I shall never be ashamed to present.*'
 - Elizabeth has a **pale complexion**, auburn hair like her father, a delicate mouth and a firmly set jaw. Her eyes are black like her mother's, Anne Boleyn.
 - **(Click)** She was said at the time to look like her grandfather **Henry VII** which suggests she may have had high cheekbones which are shown in some later portraits.
 - She displays her **long fingers**, of which she was very **proud** all through her life, and she has been interrupted while **reading** as she still has a finger in a book and another page is marked with a slip of paper. The book is probably a **prayer book** and this suggests to the viewer at the time that she was a good Christian who did not waste her time on idle matters. Of course, at this time there was no thought that Elizabeth would ever become queen as she was third in line after Edward and Mary. She was simply **marriage fodder** to form some useful political alliance with another country in Europe.
- **(Click) 'Thomas Seymour' Affair.** This is the period of the 'Thomas Seymour' affair, if affair is the right word. When Henry VIII died (1547) and Edward VI became king Henry's wife Catherine Parr married Thomas Seymour, brother of Jane Seymour and Edward Seymour, Duke of Somerset and Lord Protector from 1547 to 1549. Thomas and Catherine took Elizabeth into their household at Chelsea. What followed is not known in detail but we do

know that the least he did was to abuse his position by engaging in **horseplay**, he entered her bedroom in his **nightgown**, **tickled her**, even slapped her buttocks and on one occasion cut her dress into a thousand pieces. When Parr found them in an **embrace** the relationship was ended and Elizabeth was sent away (May 1548). Four months later Catherine **Parr died** and Seymour **renewed** his attention towards Elizabeth and this was the **last straw**. Seymour was **arrested** for plotting to marry Elizabeth and was **beheaded** six months later (March 1549).

- **Danger.** Elizabeth admitted nothing despite intense cross examination by an experienced interrogator, Sir Robert Tyrwhitt. Tyrwhitt had been Catherine Parr's master of the horse and so knew a lot about the circumstances and he had a keen mind. Despite threats, flattery, forged letters and false confessions Elizabeth and her two servants said nothing. Elizabeth employed sulking, crying and attacking her accusers including Tyrwhitt. Tyrwhitt said, '*She hath a very good wit and nothing is to be gotten of her except by great policy*'. Elizabeth could speak complete sentences by eighteen months and six languages fluently by the age of 11. Her ability to defend herself at the age of 15 shows she was not only intelligent but politically astute.
- **Artist and style.** This painting is at **Windsor Castle** and is believed to have been painted by **William Scrots** (active 1537–1553) who took over from **Hans Holbein** as the **King's Painter**. Few people have **heard of him** today yet he was paid **twice the salary** Holbein was paid (£62 10s rather than £30/year). He was a Mannerist painter from the Netherlands and continued as King's Painter during Edward's reign but disappeared from the records after that. He was not the most imaginative of painters but he knew all the latest European painting styles and so kept England up-to-date.
 - **(Click)** The painting is typical of the period and we can compare it with Holbein's *Christina of Denmark* in terms of its style. Notice the modelling, such as the shadows on the right side of her face and dress.

Notes

- What did Elizabeth really look like? From various descriptions written at the time we can summarise then as Elizabeth had her father's and grandfather's auburn hair and hooked nose, her mother's dark (described as black) eyes and swarthy complexion, and elegant hands with long, slender fingers. Like her mother, she is not described as a classic beauty, but it seems that also like her mother, her wit and intelligence gave her a certain sex appeal. Writers describe her as an 'admirable beauty' or 'fair and beautiful' or 'comely rather than handsome'.
- 'A US psychologist writing in *The Times* claimed she saw evidence in her look that Elizabeth had been sexually abused by Thomas Seymour (Henry?) as a teenager (child). Such speculation can form no part of a proper art historical analysis.' – Cannot track this down.
- The prayer book may be attached to the belt round her waist, known as a girdle book, to show that it was always with her to be read at any spare moment. This was a common convention all over Europe. Note that it has a bookmark in it and she even has a finger marking a page showing it is a well read book that she has been interrupted reading for

the painting to be done.

- To her right is another much larger book and a stand and she is ready, we feel to return to her Latin or Greek. The large book is probably the Bible and the fact that it has no text on the page (we know from microscopic analysis that it has not worn off) was simply a convention of the time rather than a political statement about the Bible.
- She wears the latest French hood revealing the face, unlike the English gable headdress. Her dress is open at the front revealing an underskirt embroidered in gold and her hood, necklace, dress and girdle are trimmed with large pearls.
- When Elizabeth came to power she kissed the English translation of the Bible when she entered London.
- Denisot was a French Renaissance poet and painter, born into a noble family and his father was a lawyer.



Attributed to William Scrots, *Edward VI*, c. 1550, Hampton Court

- **Four typical portraits.** This was a critical period in Elizabeth's life and before continuing with her portraits I will show you **four typical** portraits of the period with a little of the **turbulent history**.
- **Edward.** Elizabeth's father, Henry VIII (1491-1547), died a year or two after the previous picture was painted (28 January 1547) and Edward VI (1537-1553) became king aged only 9. Of course, everyone expected Edward would then rule for the rest of his long life but he died only six years later at the age of 15. There were rumours of poisoning but such rumours were normal when a king died and the surgeon who performed the autopsy reported that he had died of lung disease. Most historians now believe he died of tuberculosis (TB), what used to be called consumption, following a bout of measles and smallpox the year before that had suppressed his immune system.
- This is painted in the latest Mannerist fashion for full-length portraits.
- (Link). Edward barred both his half-sisters from succeeding him named his cousin **Lady Jane Grey** as his successor* ...

Notes

- * In fact, Edward wanted only male heirs to succeed him and named the male heirs of Jane Grey's mother, Jane Grey or her sisters or if there were only female heirs then Jane Grey until she had a male heir. He made a final change to his will by adding 'and her' between the word 'Janes' and 'male heirs' and crossed the 's' off 'Janes'. One hundred notables agreed although later they said they had been bullied by John Dudley, 1st Earl of Warwick (and from 1551 Duke of Northumberland) as his son Guilford Dudley had married Jane Grey that year.
- Dendrochronology suggests that this and Elizabeth's portrait are painted on panels from the same tree.



Anon, *Lady Jane Grey*, 1590s, Montacute House, National Portrait Gallery, the 'Streatham' portrait, thought to be a copy of an earlier portrait

- **Lady Jane Grey.** We then have the sad episode of the Lady Jane Grey (1536/7-1554), the **Nine Days' Queen** (10-19th July 1553). She was one of the most learned women of the period and only 16 or 17 when she became queen but she was not as politically astute as Elizabeth. **Mary** (1516-1558) who gathered an **army** and marched on London and Jane was **deposed** within 9 days. She was initially imprisoned but when Thomas Wyatt led a rebellion to stop Mary marrying Philip II of Spain then Jane and her husband were executed.
- **Folk art?** Historians wonder whether this is a **genuine portrait** of Lady Jane Grey. It is known as the 'Streatham' portrait and only came to light in 2005. It may be a copy of an earlier portrait but the quality is so poor that it has been described as folk art. At the time, such was the demand that many portraits were painted by people who had **never seen** the person. Also, the **distinction** between artists and painters was not as well developed in England as in Italy and painters in London were members of the **Painters and Stainers Guild** and would have also painted **inn signs**, furniture and banners.
- (Link) We can next see a very well-known and successful Netherlandish painter called Antonio Mor ...

Notes

- Lady Jane Grey (or **Queen Grey** as the Public Records Office calls her) was the **great-granddaughter of Henry VII** through his youngest daughter Mary. **Mary Tudor**, Queen of France was Henry VII youngest daughter and married Louis XII of France. She was known as the most beautiful princess in Europe. Louis, aged 52, died within three months of marriage allegedly of his exertions in the bedchamber but he produced no heir. Mary was

in love with **Charles Brandon**, Duke of Suffolk, who Henry VIII sent to France on the understanding he would not propose. They secretly married in France and although many wanted to execute them for treason Henry let them off with a large fine. One of their children was **Frances** who married Henry **Grey**, Marquess of Dorset in 1533 and one of their daughters was **Lady Jane Grey**, cousins and near equals to Mary and Elizabeth.

- In 1553, aged 16, she **married Lord Guildford Dudley** a younger son of Edward's chief minister John Dudley, Duke of Northumberland. Jane was convicted of high treason but her life was spared until Wyatt's rebellion in 1554 when both her and her husband were executed. Wyatt's Rebellion was a popular uprising, named after Thomas Wyatt, one of its leaders. The rebellion was to prevent Queen Mary I's marriage to Philip II of Spain (1527-1598), which was very unpopular with the English. Queen Mary's overthrow was implied in the rebellion, although not expressly stated.
- A Genoese merchant, Baptista Spinola described Lady Jane Grey at the time. 'She is very short and thin, but prettily shaped and graceful. She has small features and a well-made nose, the mouth flexible and the lips red. The eyebrows are arched and darker than her hair, which is nearly red. Her eyes are sparkling and reddish brown in color. Her complexion was good, unmarked by the pox, but freckled; she had sharp white teeth and a lovely smile.'
- Following her execution the immediate successors to the throne were her two sisters, Katherine, an anorexic who was imprisoned in the Tower and Mary, a dwarf. The alternative was Mary, Queen of Scots but she was a Catholic. The only other possible candidate was Henry, Earl of Huntingdon, a Plantagenet descendent of George, Duke of Clarence, the brother of Edward IV.
- Publicans had been obliged to identify their premises with a sign since the time of Richard II. Signs outside the door were used in ancient Pompeii and Herculaneum.



Antonio Mor, *Mary Tudor*, 1554, Prado, Madrid

Titian, *Philip II of Spain*, c. 1551, Prado

- **Antonio Mor.** Mor painted this portrait of **Mary I** (1516-1558) the year after she became queen (at the age of 37 in 1553). Mor was the **leading painter** in Europe after Titian and he painted royalty and nobility across Europe in the typical European portrait style. The painting was commissioned by **Emperor Charles V** who had arranged the marriage to his son Philip of Spain for dynastic reasons. It was painted **after** the marriage and was **not exchanged** with Philip before the marriage.
- **(Click) Titian.** A painting of Philip by Titian (**click**) was sent to Mary before the marriage. This represents the pinnacle of Italian Renaissance painting.
- **(Click). Description.** She was described at the time as *'not at all beautiful, rather small and more skinny than stout, she is very white and red; she has no eyebrows; ...'*
 - She has become known as **'Bloody Mary'** because she insisted on the **burning** Protestants (283 in total and 800 emigrated) despite the advice of even her Spanish advisors. She lived for only **five years** and in 1558 she died possibly from **ovarian cysts** or **uterine cancer**. Philip was in Brussels at the time and wrote to his sister, *'I felt a reasonable regret for her death.'*

Notes

- The portrait has been described as that of a **fanatic**, her **ramrod** straight back, **piercing eyes**, **pursed lips**, **chisel-like chin** and **meaty facial muscles**. There is a strong, **hard light** and her pose is **animated** and the artist is not afraid to show signs of aging.
- **Symbols.** In Mor's painting Mary wears a **large pendant jewel** that was a wedding present from the **Hapsburgs** and she carries a **red rose**, symbol of the **Tudors** (strictly speaking the House of Lancaster as the Tudor rose was red around white) and perhaps more

significantly her sacred namesake the **Virgin Mary**. A red rose also symbolises **pregnancy** which was rumoured weeks after their marriage. It has been suggested by historians that it shows a Hapsburg **consort** rather than an English queen and if she had had a son England would have been absorbed into the Hapsburg empire.

- **Gloves.** In her left hand she is holding gloves. Holding gloves was significant but we know very little of the symbolism of gloves. Various sources indicate gloves were given as love tokens. In one Tudor court case the woman admits receiving a purse and gloves and giving a handkerchief but says '*all was given and received before the words aforesaid and therefore not in the way of marriage.*' The meaning can vary from the intimacy of hand holding to the challenge of the gauntlet. The most common gift in the 1550s was money but one third of gifts were clothing and leather and the most common was gloves followed by a purse or handkerchief. The most common item given (rather than type) was a ring. Gloves extended the symbolic hand of friendship and pledged loyalty. There were also often carried as a decorative item and not worn. In 1592 a servant left money to buy gloves for his master and mistress and two friends '*if it please them to wear gloves for my sake.*'
- Elizabeth became queen and Philip suggested marriage which she rejected and thirty years later he sent the Spanish Armada to overthrow her, without success.
- **Famous Italian Artists**
 - **Tiziano Vecelli or Tiziano Vecellio** (c. 1488/1490 – 27 August 1576), known in English as **Titian**, was an Italian painter, the most important member of the 16th-century Venetian school. He was born in Pieve di Cadore, near Belluno (in Veneto), in the Republic of Venice. During his lifetime he was often called **da Cadore**, taken from the place of his birth.
 - **Michelangelo di Lodovico Buonarroti Simoni** (6 March 1475 – 18 February 1564), commonly known as **Michelangelo**.
 - **Leonardo di ser Piero da Vinci** (15 April 1452 – 2 May 1519) was an Italian Renaissance polymath: painter, sculptor, architect, musician, mathematician, engineer, inventor, anatomist, geologist, cartographer, botanist, and writer. His genius, perhaps more than that of any other figure, epitomized the Renaissance humanist ideal.



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

- **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)



Anon, *Elizabeth I*, c. 1560, National Portrait Gallery

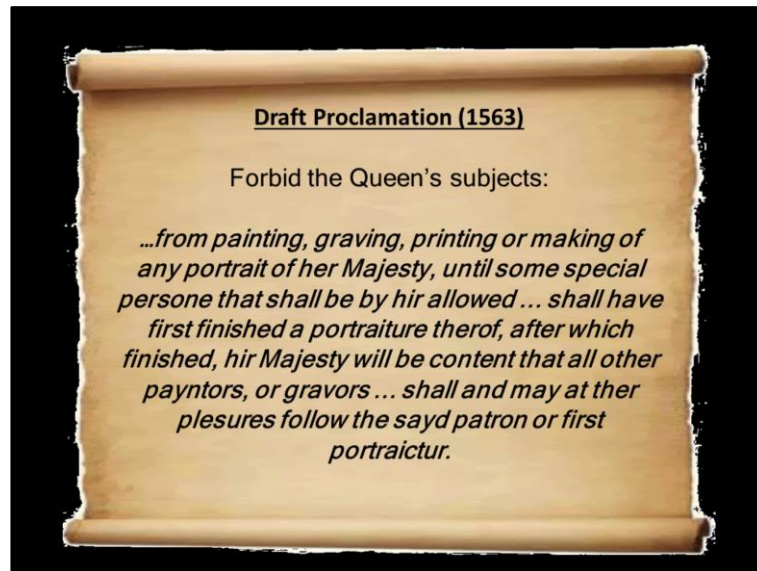
Anon, the *Clopton Portrait* (family of Sir Hugh Clopton), c. 1558-65, Mr Peter James Hall

- **Poor quality versions.**
- Unlike Edward and Mary, Elizabeth did not employ a high-quality painter to produce an official portrait.
- At this point the demand for Elizabeth's portrait becomes enormous from all over Europe, as it was for any new monarch. Painters and artists of all levels and standards produced portraits but it was important that her official image projected the **right qualities** for an English monarch. We know her portraits were poor:
 - **Catherine de' Medici** (1519-1589, queen of France as wife of Henry II, daughter of Lorenzo II de' Medici) received reports from her ambassadors that Elizabeth was beautiful and based on the evidence of her portraits she blamed the artists, she wrote, "*I must declare she did not have good painters*" and she even offered to send her own.
 - We also know that when someone at a European court complained about Elizabeth's portrait the Earl of Sussex said "*I answered at the first that the portrait bore no resemblance to your Majesty.*"
- **Was it important?** At this stage of her reign she other problems to deal with and she may have considered the quality of her portrait of **lesser importance** than an **invasion** by the French and the Scots.
- We do know that her councillors considered issuing a proclamation ...

Notes

- This was painted when she was 27 and before she caught smallpox, which was 10 October 1562, and so there were no wrinkles or blemishes she needed to hide, yet it shows a flat, unmodelled face.

- **Catherine de Medici** was wife of Henry II, France and hated in England as instigator of the **St. Bartholomew's Day massacre**, night 23-24 August 1572 on the eve of the feast of St Bartholomew the Apostle.
- Elizabeth may be wearing mourning for her sister Mary although black and white were Elizabeth's favourite colours and were fashionable partly because black was expensive to produce. The colours of the house of Tudor were green and white and servants' livery would be those colours.
- Roy Strong maintains the proclamation was a response to the circulation of **poorly made portraits** in which Elizabeth is shown "**in blacke with a hooode and cornet**", a style, the French hood, she no longer wore. However, the French hood remained fashionable throughout the sixteenth century. Roy Strong claims this style of painting was a result of a **lack of expertise** in England at the time. There were certainly many mediocre painters, high demand and no control of the official portrait.
- At this period Elizabeth was dealing with insurrection and Catholicism and the possibility of the Scots and the French invading and putting Mary, Queen of Scots on the throne.



Draft proclamation, 1563

- What evidence do we have that **Elizabeth or her councillors cared** about her portraits?
- We know there were many **poor quality pictures** of Elizabeth circulating and in France there were also **scurrilous** portraits, for example, one showing her riding her potential bridegroom and exposing her backside.
- In 1563 this **draft proclamation** was written by Sir William Cecil although never issued, it says,

*from painting, graving, printing or making of any portrait of her Majesty,
until some special persone that shall be by hir allowed ... shall have first
finished a portraiture therof, after which finished, hir Majesty will be content
that all other payntors, or gravors ... shall and may at ther plesures follow the
sayd patron or first portraictur.*

- In other words, Elizabeth **approves one** portrait and then every other painter must **copy it**.
- **There was no system of approval.** This excerpt also tells us that **portraits were copied** a lot in different media and that **no approval system** existed. It is possible it was drafted because of scurrilous images but we know such images were treated far more seriously. So this suggests they considered a way of controlling her image but **never implemented it**.
- **Common practice.** The practice of **censoring** public images of the monarch **was common** across Europe and **Philip IV** employed **Velasquez** to do this nearly a century later.
- **Portraits were controlled.** However, it does appear that from 1563 onwards here portrait **was controlled**, with some **exceptions**.

Notes

- Note that a proclamation or **Royal Proclamation** is a way for the monarch to pass a law **without the agreement of Parliament** but as far as we know this one was never issued.

(The range of issues allowed was limited, for example, the monarch could not pass laws to raise taxes.)

- The draft proclamation of **1563** 'against debased images' does not seem to have had much effect, as in **1575** the Painter Stainers' Company petitioned the Queen to take action against shoddy workmanship. In **1581** a charter and Book of Ordinances was issued to regulate the painters' craft. Furthermore artists were not to wander 'in and about' the streets selling portraits of the Queen as they had been doing. In **1584** a draft patent was drawn up between George Gower, the Serjeant Painter of the time, and Hilliard, the court miniaturist, to share between them a monopoly in the production of portraits of the Queen. This failed to materialise and unofficial images were still produced to meet the enormous demand. Elizabeth never established a single court painter with a large enough workshop to sustain the production of the royal image 'en masse'. Finally, in **1596** George Gower was instructed to search out portraits that could cause offence and **destroy** them. But by 1596 Elizabeth and her courtiers were very sensitive about depictions that showed her age as they raised questions about the succession. The problem of controlling royal portraiture was not solved until Charles I appointed Van Dyck, with his extensive studio, to be official court portraitist.



Steven van der Meulen, *Elizabeth I (the Hampden Portrait)*, c. 1563, private collection

The identification of the artist is based on a 1590 inventory notation that it was painted by 'the famous paynter Steven'. This has traditionally been identified as Steven van der Meulen but an alternative is Steven van Herwijck (c. 1530-1565/7), a Netherlandish sculptor and gem engraver famous for his portrait medallions.

- **The first high-quality likeness.** In 1563 it was said that Elizabeth 'hath been always of her own disposition unwilling' for anyone 'to take the natural representation her majesty' but this painting suggests she was persuaded to change her mind.
- This painting is unique as it symbolically refers to her becoming a wife and mother. The fruit and flowers refer to Elizabeth's fecundity. The pressure to marry may be related to Elizabeth nearly dying of smallpox the previous year.
- **Elizabeth nearly died.** There was another more important reason that may have resulted in the Proclamation.
 - **Smallpox.** In 1562 Elizabeth caught smallpox when at Hampton Court and almost died. This led to an urgent search for a suitable **marriage** partner to ensure the succession. This may be the basis of two changes to the royal portraits, the attempts to produce a **better likeness** and the start of using the portraits to convey political **propaganda messages**.
 - **Marriage.** This painting shows Elizabeth as fruitful and a prime **candidate for marriage**. It can also be interpreted as early vision of Elizabeth as **Astraea**, the virgin goddess of justice, innocence and purity who ruled the earth during the Golden Age when fruit and other crops were so plentiful no one needed to farm as they could just pick the food they needed.
 - **White face.** It is possible Elizabeth started to use heavy white makeup to **hide the smallpox scars** and to wear a wig as there is some evidence she lost her hair at this time. Heavy white makeup was also fashionable perhaps because only workers in the field had a sun-burnt face. However, in the Clopton portrait she

- also had a white face and that was before she had smallpox.
- **Magnificence.** The amount of gold used exceeds that of any other painting of the period and the low viewpoint suggest the artists knew where it would be hung. The two together create an imposing and magnificent portrait that would have stunned viewers at the time.
- **Symbols.** Elizabeth is wearing **red and white dress**, the colours of the houses of Lancashire and York that combined in the Tudors. The **red rose** on her shoulder is a reference to the **Tudor rose** and to the **Virgin Mary**. She holds a gilly-flower or **carnation**, another symbol of the **Virgin Mary** as well as a symbol of **love and marriage**. At the end of the string of pearls is a celestial or **armillary sphere**, the first time this is used in a portrait and much used later. It is thought to refer to the **celestial harmony** that her reign has brought to the kingdom. The **gold background**, the gold throne, the gold royal coat of arms demonstrate **magnificence** and the **floral tapestry** on the right suggest **marriage** and her ability to have children and be fruitful.
 - From now on her portraits become more **symbolic** and I will start by looking at one of two **allegorical** paintings that tell us something about the **qualities** Elizabeth was trying to convey before all the symbols and myths are combined into the **propaganda messages** of her later great portraits.
- It was in 1563 that Elizabeth most clearly expressed her intention to marry but by the end of the 1560s it became clear she had no intention of marrying and this portrait would have become an embarrassment.

Notes

- Steven van der Meulen (?Antwerp-?1563-64) Flemish painter best known for his Barrington Park portraits of Elizabeth of which this is the best example. Described in the 1590s in the catalogue of the Lumley collection as '*the famous painter Steven*'.
- This is the first more attractive portrait of Elizabeth since she became queen. There were competent artists, such as Hans Eworth but in 1563 it was said that Elizabeth '*hath been always of her own disposition unwilling*' for anyone '*to take the natural representation her majesty*'.
- **Provenance:** by descent through the Hampden family and the Earls of Buckinghamshire at Hampden House (Bucks.) Parts of the house are Elizabethan, the tower is 14th century. Elizabeth is alleged to have stayed there on her progresses. John Hampden is famous as the person who refused to pay Charles I's Ship Money and was prosecuted. A monument marks the spot he refused. The house is not open to the public but can be hired for weddings.
- Another theory as to the provenance is provided by the red rose on Elizabeth's left shoulder. It is surrounded by oak leaves which combines the rose of love with the strength of oak. However, all her other portraits show a rose surrounded by rose leaves. Also, the green of the oak leaves has a different composition to the other greens in the painting as if they had been added by another painter. We know the oak leaves are contemporary and oak leaves were one symbol used by Robert Dudley as the Latin for oak is Robur, which is similar to Robert. So, it is possible the portrait was owned by Robert Dudley and he had another artist add the oak leaves to symbolize their joint love.
- The need to find a marriage partner was made more urgent by the fact that when close to

death Elizabeth had named her favourite Robert Dudley, 1st Earl of Leicester, as her successor, on condition he married Mary, Queen of Scots. Dudley was someone that no one could accept. He was made an Earl in 1564 and Mary agreed in 1565 but Dudley refused. By 1566 Dudley reached the opinion she would **never marry** as she had maintained from the age of 8. From 1569 Dudley had a relationship with Douglas Sheffield and in 1574 she gave birth to a son called Robert Dudley. In 1578 Dudley (Leicester) married Lettice Knollys secretly, Elizabeth was furious when she found out. They had a son called Robert Dudley but he died aged 3.

- This is the earliest full-length portrait of Elizabeth issued the **same year** as the draft proclamation and it may have been issued in conjunction with it.
- The historian Roy Strong calls this and similar portraits Barrington Park type as a high-quality version was in that collection.
- The colours of the dress, red and white, reflect the union of the Houses of Lancashire and York and the plainness of the dress contrasts with her later garments. Red could only be worn by the monarch and close members of her household. She stands in front of a gold throne above which is the royal coat of arms. The fruit and flowers could signify her fruitfulness and willingness to marry. When she came to the throne in 1558 everyone thought she would soon marry. Her role as a woman on the throne was made more difficult by *The First Blast of the Trumpet Against the Monstruous Regiment of Women* a work by the Scottish reformer John Knox, published in 1558. It attacks female monarchs, arguing that rule by females is contrary to the Bible. Following her attack of smallpox in 1562 when she nearly died she gave the most convincing promise that she wished to marry but by the late 1560s it was increasingly clear that she did not intend to marry.
- The red rose on her shoulder is curiously surrounded by oak leaves which may signify the strength of her love. However, the paint of the oak leaves is a different composition of green than the other green pigment in the painting. In other portraits the rose has rose leaves and it is possible that Robert Dudley, whose emblem is the oak leaf, had the oak leaves painted on when he had possession of the picture at Kenilworth.
- Said to have been a gift from Elizabeth to Griffith Hampden when she stayed at Hampden House.
- The foliage, fruit and flowers are perhaps the first attempt at a still life in England.
- **Return of the Golden Age**, Geoffrey of Monmouth's 12th century *History of the Kings of Britain* was accepted as correct and Britain was founded and named by Brutus, the descendent of Aeneas who founded Rome. The Tudors are of Welsh descent and so the most ancient and descended directly from Brutus and the Trojans. The Golden Age was a period before history described in Ovid's *Metamorphosis*. It was a period of peace, harmony, stability and prosperity and was followed by the Silver, Bronze, Heroic and then the present Iron age, a period of decline.
- Sold at Sotheby's 22 November 2007 for £2,596,500 by the trustees of the Hampden settlement. It was bought by Philip Mould Fine Paintings of London. The painting has rarely been reproduced.
- **Intention to marry**. In April 1563 she addressed Parliament and said, 'if any here doubt that I am, as it were, by vow or determination bent never to trade that life [i.e., marriage], put out that heresy; your belief is awry'.
- **Symbols**. Based on Philip Mould website.

- The excessive **gold** in the background suggests a medieval religious icon.
- Elizabeth holds a **carnation** also called a gillyflower. In Greek, a carnation is dianthus which means the love of God. The carnation was an attribute of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Here it suggests Elizabeth is the Handmaid of God and the Queen of Heaven/England. She was the supreme governor of the Church of England. The carnation was also a symbol of love and betrothal, and can be interpreted here as a public declaration of the Queen's intention to marry.
- The **armillary**, or celestial, sphere that hangs at the end of a string of large pearls hanging from the Queen's waist. The historian Roy Strong identifies this as the first painting to include this royal emblem. The device recurs in portraits of Elizabeth and her courtiers throughout her reign. It is thought to refer to the harmony which the Queen by her uprightness and wisdom has brought, and will continue to bring, to the kingdom: the religious settlement, the ending of the war with France inherited from her sister Mary I, and, perhaps by her marriage and child-bearing, a settled succession.
- The most obviously symbolic area of the picture is the floral background to the right of Elizabeth. This is an allusion to the Queen's marriage potential, and shows a decorated tapestry of the type seen in Tudor royal palaces. Here the flowers, such as the honeysuckle, and some of the fruit are carefully arranged in pairs, and indicate the Queen's willingness to get married, while elsewhere in the tapestry we see ripened fruit, such as an open pomegranate, and even vegetables such as peas about to burst out from their pod, all of which are obvious symbols to the Queen's ability to bear children.
- Alexander Nowell, the Dean of St. Paul's, was very outspoken about the importance of marriage and succession when he spoke at the opening of Parliament in January of 1563, saying, *"All the Queen's most noble ancestors have commonly had some issue to succeed them, but Her Majesty none ... the want of your marriage and issue is like to prove a great plague ... If you parents had been of your mind, where had you been then?"*
- **Royal Coat of Arms.** Were first adopted by Richard I but were modified over the centuries. Elizabeth chose the English Royal Lion (on the left) and the Welsh Dragon (on the right), symbolizing she was Queen of England and Wales. The motto below her coat of arms was typically 'Semper Eadem' ('always the same'), the personal motto of Elizabeth I, but in this case it was the standard royal motto 'Dieu et mon Droï' ('God and my right').

References

- <http://www.historicalportraits.com/Gallery.asp?Page=Item&ItemID=1288&Desc=Elizabeth-I-%7C--Anglo-Flemish-School>



'HE', Elizabeth and the Three Goddesses, 1569, Royal Collection

'HE', Elizabeth and the Three Goddesses, 1569, Royal Collection

- **What is Propaganda?** I just referred to propaganda so I should clarify what I mean by the term.
 - Today propaganda means '**information**, especially of a **biased or misleading** nature, used to **promote** or publicize a particular political cause or point of view.'
 - But it did not mean the same thing then. The following century, in 1622, Pope Gregory XV created a committee of cardinals responsible for spreading the faith in foreign countries. It was called the Congregation of Propaganda Fide ("Propagation of the Faith"). Prior to the twentieth century propaganda simply meant propagating a set of beliefs.
 - What were those beliefs that Elizabeth wanted to propagate? I have already suggested she wanted to promote the **distinction** between her **physical** and **political** body.
- **Description.** This is the first of two **allegorical paintings** of Elizabeth I will be showing you.
 - The style is a mixture of Italian **Mannerist** and **English** styles, note that **Elizabeth** is painted in the **flat** style and the **goddesses** are **rounded** three-dimensional figures. It is as if the artist came to England from abroad and adopted the English style for the English components of the painting, particularly the representation of Elizabeth.
 - It is called *Elizabeth and the Three Goddesses* and we think it was painted by **Hans Eworth** as the initials HE are on the painting.
 - Her portraits show us her **political body** which is a **symbol** of what she means to the nation but exactly what **message** did she want to convey?
- **What does this painting mean?** It is perhaps **not obvious** to the **modern mind** as it looks as if she has just popped outside and found three women, one of them naked and holding

a small boy with wings. You can probably guess that they are three goddesses and the answer is made clearer by some lines of poetry that were underneath the painting. They were in Latin, which everyone at court understood but translated they said,

*Pallas was keen of brain, Juno was queen of might,
The rosy face of Venus was in beauty shining bright,
Elizabeth then came
And, overwhelmed, Queen Juno too to flight;
Pallas was silenced; Venus blushed for shame.*

- The **meaning** is clear, when Elizabeth appears before the three most powerful goddesses they are so far surpassed in brain, beauty and might that they run away, fall silent and blush.
- You may be reminded of the mythological story of the **Judgement of Paris** when Paris, son of Priam, king of Troy was selected by Zeus to choose which of these three goddesses to award a golden apple to.
- But this painting turns the story on its head. In this case Elizabeth does not need to choose as she already excels the goddesses, which means as a woman she brings peace not war.
- Elizabeth holds, not the golden apple, but the orb of state.
- But note this is still largely a **personal message** about her attributes as a woman. It is not directly addressing her empire or her nation.
- She is **not** yet a triumphant **virgin** queen or the monarch of an empire but a **woman** whose **virtues** will encourage a suitor to **marry her**.

Notes

- This is the only known portrait of Elizabeth I wearing gloves. She is known to have been particularly proud of her elegant hands and used gloves as a sign of favour, removing them to allow a courtier to kiss the royal hand or presenting them as gifts.
- In the original Judgement of Paris, Paris had to choose the fairest of three goddesses who, in a later version of the story, bribe him with gifts. The goddesses in Greek mythology were Hera (wife of Zeus and Juno in Roman mythology), Athena (sometimes called Pallas, Minerva in Roman mythology) and Aphrodite (Venus). Paris chose Venus's gift which was the most beautiful woman in the world, **Helen of Sparta**, wife of King Menelaus. Paris stole Helen and the Greek expedition to retrieve Helen from Troy was the start of the Trojan War.
- Elizabeth is presented as a solid, stable figure compared to Juno who is ungainly, and is fleeing having lost her slipper.
- In the background is the earliest representation of Windsor Castle.
- Venus's chariot is on the right and it is drawn by swans.
- Note that it is often attributed to Hans Eworth as it is signed 'HE' although the letters are sloping unlike his normal signature. The Royal Collection website lists the artist as Hans Eworth, a Flemish painter who was active in England in the mid-16th century. Along with other exiled Flemings, he made a career in Tudor London, painting allegorical images as well as portraits of the gentry and nobility. About 40 paintings are now attributed to Eworth, among them portraits of Mary I and Elizabeth I.

- The frame is the original Tudor frame.
- As Susan Doran writes,
"Implicit to the theme of the painting ... is the idea that Elizabeth's retention of royal power benefits her realm. Whereas Paris's judgement in the original myth resulted in the long Trojan Wars 'to the utter ruin of the Trojans', hers will conversely bring peace and order to the state" after the turbulent reign of Elizabeth's sister Mary I.



Attributed to Lucas De Heere (1534-1584), *The Family of Henry VIII: An Allegory of the Tudor Succession*, c. 1572, National Museum of Wales

- **Meaning.** This *Allegory of the Tudor Succession* reinforces the theme that Elizabeth brings **peace not war**.
 - In this image, **Catholic Mary** and her husband **Philip II** of Spain are accompanied by **Mars** the god of War on the left, while **Protestant Elizabeth** on the right ushers in the goddesses Peace and Plenty. **Peace** is **stamping** on the **sword of war** and breaking in two. It also reminds the viewer that Elizabeth was the daughter of Henry VIII who we see passing the **sword of justice** to his son **Edward**.
 - It has a political and religious message united with the political body of Elizabeth. **This is pure propaganda.**
- **Background.** The painting was a gift to **Sir Francis Walsingham** for his help negotiating the **Treaty of Blois** on **19 April 1572**. This was a peace treaty with Catherine de'Medici of France that isolated Spain and was hoped to prevent France from invading the Low Countries. On 24 August 1572 the **St Bartholomew's Day massacre** took place when French Protestants were massacred by French Catholics in Paris, witnessed by Sir Francis Walsingham (and by Sir Philip Sidney and Sir Walter Raleigh). Similar **atrocities** elsewhere in France result in **thousands of deaths**, and caused panic in England with fears of a **Catholic invasion**.
- **After the break** we will see how from the **early 1570s** Elizabeth's portraits became **increasingly abstract, laden with symbols and promoted specific myths**.

Notes

- The Treaty of Blois was between Elizabeth and Catherine de'Medici and France and England relinquished their old rivalry and established an alliance against Spain. It would

therefore have been painted that year, or soon after.

It was issued as a print. The "Allegory of the Tudor Succession" at Yale, c. 1590s, is based on the print and the fashions have been updated from the 1570s to the 1590s.

- Inscription on the frame of the Allegory of the Tudor Succession (Sudeley Castle), c.1572:
*The Queen to [Sir Francis] Walsingham this tablet sent
Mark of her people's and her own content.*
- Usually attributed to Lucas de Heere ('Hearer'). Elizabeth is bring Peace and Plenty while Mary and Philip are bringing in Mars the god of war.
- Two surviving allegorical paintings show the early use of classical mythology to illustrate the beauty and sovereignty of the young queen.
- The latter theme lies behind the 1572 *The Family of Henry VIII: An Allegory of the Tudor Succession* (attributed to Lucas de Heere). An inscription states that this painting was a gift from the queen to Francis Walsingham as a "Mark of her people's and her own content" and this may indicate that it commemorates the signing of the Treaty of Blois (1572) which established an alliance between England and France against Spanish aggression in the Netherlands during Walsingham's tour of duty as ambassador to the French court. Strong identifies both paintings as celebrations of Elizabeth's just rule by Flemish exiles to whom England was a refuge from the religious persecution of Protestants in the Spanish Netherlands.
- The inscription shows that the work was a gift for Francis Walsingham, to whose family its provenance can be traced. Along the bottom, it reads: "THE QUENE. TO. WALSHINGHAM. THIS. TABLET. SENTE. MARKE. OF. HER. PEOPLES. AND HER. OWNE. CONTENTE".
Inscription around the frame: "A FACE OF MUCHE NOBILLITYE LOE IN A LITTLE ROOME. FOWR STATES WITH THEYR CONDITIONS HEARE SHADOWED IN. A SHOWE A FATHER MORE THEN VALYANT. A RARE AND VERTUOUS SOON. A ZEALUS DAUGHTER IN HER KIND WHAT ELS THE WORLD DOTH KNOWE. AND LAST OF ALL A VYRGIN QUEEN TO ENGLANDS JOY WE SEE SUCCESSYVELY TO HOLD THE RIGHT, AND VERTUES OF THE THREE".
- Owing to a similarity of style and composition with Lucas de Heere's *Solomon and the Queen of Sheba* (1559) and other works, the art historian Roy Strong has attributed the work to de Heere; the art scholar and curator Karen Hearn, however, regards the attribution as speculative. Another source for the composition may be the anachronistic (Queen Jane Seymour died shortly after giving birth to Prince Edward) group portrait *The Family of Henry VIII* (c. 1545).
- There are two versions of the painting one with and the other without a small figure at the far left who could be Will Somers. One at Sudeley Castle (owned by the National Museum of Wales) and the other at the Yale Centre for British Art. The one at the Yale centre was painted later, c. 1590 and shows Elizabeth in a more sumptuous dress typical of her later years and the figure of Plenty is not bare-breasted.

References

http://www.museumwales.ac.uk/art/online/?action=show_item&item=737



Attributed to Lucas De Heere, *The Family of Henry VIII: An Allegory of the Tudor Succession*, c. 1590,
Yale Center for British Art

An alternative version of the painting from the Yale Centre of British Art.



Nicholas Hilliard (1547-1619), Elizabeth I, 'Pelican Portrait', c. 1574, Walker Art Gallery

- **The Virgin Queen.** By 1574, the date of this painting, it is clear to most that the queen, now aged 41, does not intend to marry. Pictures of Elizabeth change to present an image that **combines mythology, religion and politics**. Elaborate symbolism and rich detail show off her status and royal qualities. Her figure is stylised and her face **mask-like**. She is shown against a flat background with little attempt to convey spatial depth. It was discovered in 2010 that this and the Phoenix Portrait were painted on wood from the **same two trees** and the tracing of the face is identical but reversed although the eyes, nose and mouth of the Phoenix portrait were raised during painting.
- The mother **pelican** on her brooch is a traditional Christian symbol of **Christ's sacrifice** and one of Elizabeth's favourite images. It was believed that the pelican fed her young with her own blood. Here such a symbol refers to Elizabeth's role as a mother to her people.
- The principal signs are:
 - **The pelican:** (Brooch or pendant). There was a traditional belief that the mother pelican pecked at her own breast to feed her young, and died so that they might live. Consequently the pelican was a sign of Christ's sacrifice and Resurrection. In the context of the picture, it meant that Elizabeth is the mother of the Church of England and would sacrifice her life for her people.
 - **The Tudor Rose:** The emblem of the Tudor family with the royal crown above to show her regal status. The Tudor Rose combines the red rose of Lancaster and the white rose of York, showing that it was the Tudors who united the two sides to end the War of the Roses. The rose is the **dominant motif** in the portrait, repeated in the **pattern of her blouse**, echoed on her costume, and possibly suggested by the form of her fan.
 - **The fleur-de-lys** (Lily Flower): this is the emblem of France, and symbolises Elizabeth's claim to the throne of France - she signed herself Queen of England and France and had not renounced the traditional aspirations of English monarchs

to territorial rule in France, even though the last piece of French territory, Calais, had been lost during the reign of her sister Mary. The fleur-de-lys is also the emblem of Scotland, but it is more likely that it is France which is referred to in this context. Today it can be found as the emblem of the Scout and Guide movement.

- **The cherries:** (Over her ear) These are a sign for sweetness and a reward for virtue. Traditionally an attribute of the Virgin Mary, they were known as the 'Fruit of Paradise', and thus symbolised Heaven - the Divine reward for the Virtuous. The cherry also refers to virginity (her 'cherry' remains untouched).
- **The fan of feathers:** this is made from exotic ostrich feathers imported from Arabia or the African Sahara. A similar fan was presented to Elizabeth every year by a group of City Merchants.
- **The thornless rose:** (The red rose worn on her bodice) This is another symbol of the Virgin Mary, suggesting that Elizabeth, the Virgin Queen, was married to England in the same way that Mary was married to the Church.
- **The glove or the leather pouch:** If this is a pouch, it must be significant due to its central position in Elizabeth's hand. One theory as to the painting's origin is that it may have been commissioned by the group of City merchants who presented the fan, in order to commemorate the granting of some rights and privileges by the crown. It could be documents relating to this which Elizabeth holds in the pouch, or simply the folded vellum documents themselves. The balance of evidence from other portraits is, however, that it is a glove - a sign of elegance.

Note

- The painting would have originally have had a dark reddish-purple background.
- The Pelican and Phoenix portraits are named after the jewels the queen wears, her personal badges of the pelican in her piety and the phoenix. National Portrait Gallery researchers announced in September 2010 that the two portraits were painted on wood from the same two trees. They also found that a tracing of the Phoenix portrait matches the Pelican portrait in reverse. They therefore deduce that both pictures of Elizabeth in her forties were painted around the same time.



Associated to Nicholas Hilliard, *Phoenix Portrait*, c. 1570s, National Portrait Gallery, on loan to Tate since 1965

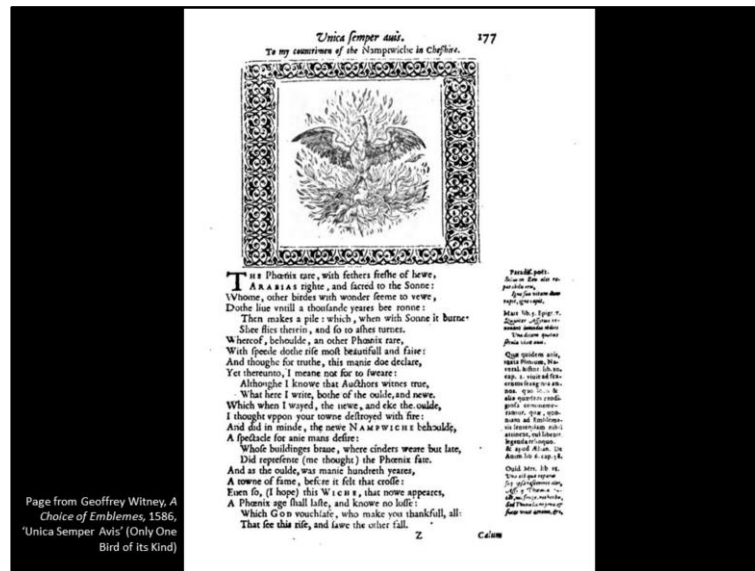
- **The Virgin Queen and Regeneration.** The jewel at her breast in this portrait is a **phoenix**, a mythical bird symbolizing rebirth and chastity. It became associated with the queen in the 1570s as an **emblem of virginity**, uniqueness and as reassurance that she would be able to **regenerate the dynasty**. Elizabeth is shown holding a **red rose**, a symbol of the House of Tudor.
- Despite her status as the Virgin Queen, in 1571 **serious marriage** negotiations were taking place between Elizabeth and **Henry, Duke of Anjou**.
- This is the so-called Phoenix portrait because of the brooch (**click**).
- **Why a phoenix?** We are starting, now, to get into the complex iconography surrounding Elizabeth.
- In Greek mythology the phoenix was a long-lived bird that was **cyclically reborn** or regenerated. It is associated with the **sun** and obtains **new life** by arising from the ashes of its predecessor.
- We must appreciate that Elizabethan symbols have **no single, simple meaning** but a **cloud of associations**. The phoenix could symbolize **renewal** in general as well as **the sun, time, the empire, reincarnation, consecration, resurrection, life in Paradise, Christ, the Virgin Mary, virginity, the exceptional man, and certain aspects of Christian life**. The phoenix is also commonly associated with royalty and the color purple.
- In this painting it is associated with virginity, uniqueness and rebirth. It provides reassurance that Elizabeth would be able to regenerate the dynasty.
- One source of symbols was **emblem books** ...

Notes

- Elizabeth is shown holding a red rose, a symbol of the House of Tudor and she wears a

heavy jewelled collar of a type worn by her father, King Henry VIII.

- The Phoenix and Pelican portraits are sometimes attributed to Nicholas Hilliard but we don't know who painted them. Note the extraordinary detail in the dress and we know from detailed inventories of Elizabeth's clothes that she wore such dresses. There are no other portraits like the Pelican and Phoenix portraits so they could have been painted by a foreign artist in the flat English style in an attempt to find a 'special painter' as mentioned in the 1563 draft proclamation. Her dress can be dated to the 1570s which is how we know the date. Of course, Elizabeth may never have seen these portraits.
- In '*A Treatise Concerning The Arte of Limning*', Hilliard claimed Holbein as his artistic model. Written about 1600.
- It was called the Phoenix Portrait as there is a large medallion hanging round her neck of a red phoenix surrounded by flames.
- Gloriana was the main character in Edmund Spenser's poem *The Faerie Queene* (1590).
- Belphebe is a character in Edmund Spenser's *The Faerie Queene* (1590), a representation of Queen Elizabeth I (conceived of, however, as a pure, high-spirited maiden, rather than a queen). Spenser intended her name to mean "beautiful Diana" (Phoebe being an epithet of the Greek moon goddess Artemis, who was known to the Romans as Diana), and it is suggested that she is a member of Poseidon's family. A virgin huntress, Belphebe can certainly fight, as a potential rapist found out. She is the stronger, militant sister of Amoret.
- Astraea, the celestial virgin, was the last of the immortals to live with humans during the Golden Age, one of the old Greek religion's four or five deteriorating Ages of Man (in Ovid Gold, Silver, Bronze, Iron and Hesiod adds the Heroic Age between Bronze and Iron). According to Ovid, Astraea abandoned the earth during the Iron Age. Fleeing from the new wickedness of humanity, she ascended to heaven to become the constellation Virgo the nearby constellation Libra.
- **Nicholas Hilliard** (c.1547 - 1619) was a miniaturist or limner and goldsmith. He was born in Exeter, the son of a goldsmith; apprenticed in London 1562 to goldsmith and enameller Robert Brandon whose daughter he later married. He became a very successful portraitist in London and in 1572/3 was appointed limner and goldsmith to the Queen. Elizabeth was a less generous patron of the arts than her father - she **never granted Hilliard an annuity**. To support his family and his evidently extravagant life style, Hilliard was forced to paint miniatures on commission for a broad spectrum of society. In 1576 Hilliard went to France in search of work and "knowledge". It seems there was some dissatisfaction with the flat, "old-fashioned" style of the Pelican and Phoenix portraits and he went abroad to improve his skills.



Page from Geoffrey Witney, *A Choice of Emblemes*, 1586, 'Unica Semper Avis' (Only One Bird of its Kind)

- This is just to mention one source of images and mottos. It one of a number of **books of emblems**. As I said, the Elizabethans loved puzzles and every noble would have a personal device or imprese ('impraysa') that embodied their deepest values but coded in such a way that only someone who was versed in classics, mythology and the codes could decipher it.
- Symbols were taken from emblem books and these contained hundreds of mottos with a moral lesson and each page contained a title, an image and a poem like this page from **Witney's A Choice of Emblemes** (1585).
- They were **very popular** and they enabled cryptic images to be decoded.
- The phoenix was said to live a thousand years and there was only one of its kind. It renewed itself in a fire from which a new phoenix was reborn. The poem talks about a town that was burned down but then rebuilt but the symbols applies to anything that is unique and renews itself. Unlike other birds it renews itself without needing a mate.

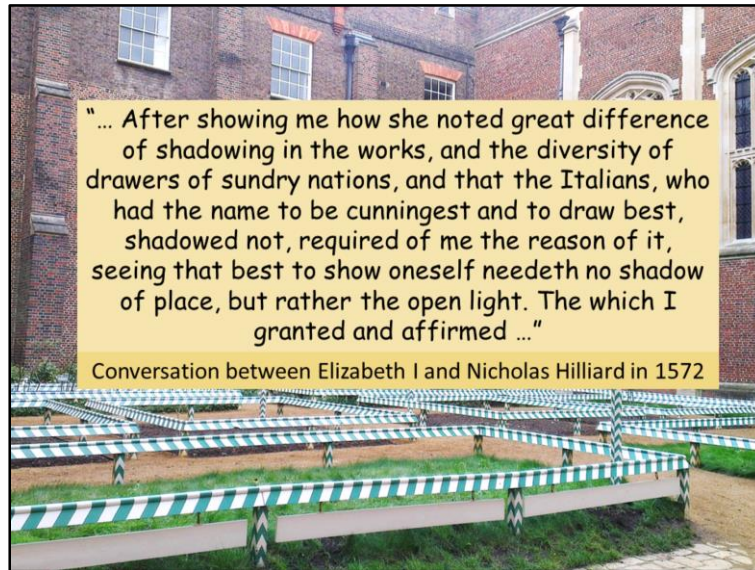
Notes

- This is from Geoffrey Whitney's *A Choice of Emblemes* of 1585 but two English emblem books were published in 1535.
- The poem on the page reads,
The Phoenix rare, with fethers freshe of hewe,
ARABIAS righte, and sacred to the Sonne:
Whome, other birdes with wonder seeme to vewe,
Dothe live untill a thousande yeares bee ronne:
Then makes a pile: which, when with Sonne it burnes,
Shee flies therein, and so to ashes turnes.

Whereof, behoulde, an other Phoenix rare,
With speede dothe rise most beautifull and faire:
And thoughe for truthe, this manie doe declare,
Yet thereunto, I meane not for to sweare:
 Althoughe I knowe that Aucthors witnes true,
 What here I write, bothe of the oulde, and newe.

Which when I wayed, the newe, and eke the oulde,
I thought uppon your towne destroyed with fire:
And did in minde, the newe NAMPWICHE behoulde,
A spectacle for anie mans desire:
 Whose buildinges brave, where cinders weare but late,
 Did represente (me thought) the Phoenix fate.

And as the oulde, was manie hundreth yeares,
A towne of fame, before it felt that crosse:
Even so, (I hope) this WICHE, that nowe appeares,
A Phoenix age shall laste, and knowe no losse:
 Which GOD vouchsafe, who make you thankfull, all:
 That see this rise, and sawe the other fall.



"... 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 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 ..."

Conversation between Elizabeth I and Nicholas Hilliard in 1572

Nicholas Hilliard (c.1547-1619), *A Treatise Concerning the Arte of Limning*, c. 1600, reporting a conversation in 1572

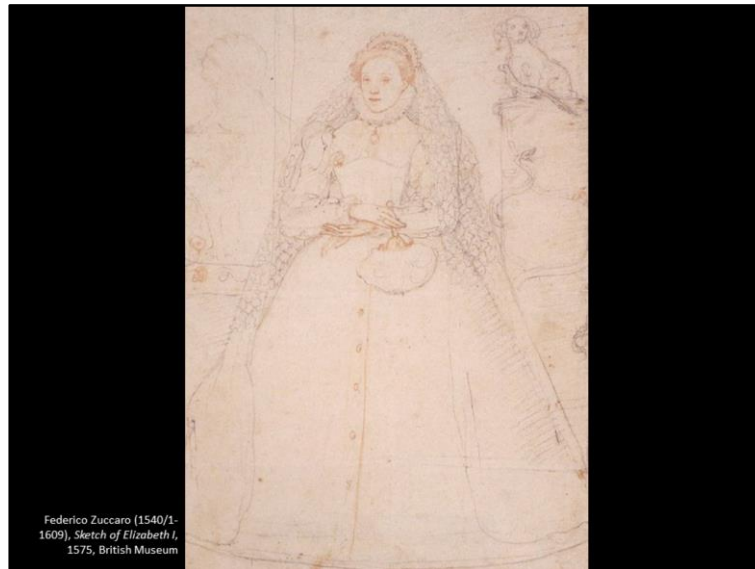
- **An Alternative Explanation.** There is an alternative **explanation** as to why Elizabeth is often painted with a **flat white face**.
- Elizabeth was **talking** to the artist Nicholas Hilliard (1572) and they started talking about painting. We are lucky in that he recorded the conversation in his book on painting. According to Hilliard, she said ([click](#)),
... 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 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 ...
- The conversation tells us that Elizabeth believed that the **best artists were the Italians** and they, she believed, did **not use shadows**. This mistake indicates she had not seen a lot of Italian paintings. Hilliard was a miniaturist and as miniature are held close to the eye they typically do not use shadows for modelling but are painted flat. Hilliard therefore agrees with Elizabeth and confirms her believes that all the best artists **do not use shadows**.
- Hilliard tells us they then **went into the garden** and she sat in the **open light** where there were no shadows to enable him to paint a miniature.
- I believe there were a number of **misunderstandings** in the conversation partly due to Hilliard's deference as a humble subject.
 - Firstly, Hilliard was painting a **miniature** where conventionally there are few shadows as they are examined closely like a passport photograph. So Elizabeth may have been talking about all paintings and Hilliard about miniatures.
 - Secondly, Elizabeth was wrong, Italian painters at the time used to **strong shadows** to model their sitters and create a three-dimensional effect. Hilliard did

- not correct her mistake.
- Thirdly, there is a **confusion** between a **shadow**, for example, of a figure on the ground **and shadowing** to create modelling. Hilliard interprets her to mean that he should paint her in the open light rather than in the shadows, a sensible suggestion.
- Finally, Elizabeth and Hilliard seem to equate shadows with not showing oneself, in other words with **concealment** which suggests treachery and evil deeds.

Notes

- Nicholas Hilliard (c.1547 - 1619) was a miniaturist or limner and goldsmith. He was born in Exeter, the son of a goldsmith; apprenticed in London 1562 to goldsmith and enameller Robert Brandon whose daughter he later married. He became a very successful portraitist in London and in 1572/3 was appointed limner and goldsmith to the Queen. Elizabeth was a less generous patron of the arts than her father - she **never granted Hilliard an annuity**. To support his family and his evidently extravagant life style, Hilliard was **forced to paint miniatures** on commission for a broad spectrum of society. In 1576 Hilliard went to France in search of work and "knowledge". It seems there was some **dissatisfaction** with the **flat, "old-fashioned" style** of the **Pelican and Phoenix** portraits and he went abroad to improve his skills.
- 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.*



Federico Zuccaro (1540/1-1609), *Sketch of Elizabeth I*, 1575, British Museum

- This is **puzzling**. **Federico Zuccaro** was a **famous Italian** artist but how did he get **Papal dispensation** to come to **Protestant** England in 1575? The Popes always hoped Elizabeth would **return** to the '**True Faith**' but it is still **incredible** that **Pope Gregory XIII** would **allow** a skilled artist to paint Elizabeth who had been **excommunicated** in **1570** by Pope Pius V.
- She has the **pose** of **Christina** of Denmark and we know that Zuccaro was impressed by Holbein's work when he saw it in England.
- Although it is difficult to interpret symbols and it depends on the context it is possible that in this picture the **dog** represents **fidelity**, the **ermine** next to the dog **purity** (it was associated with phrases such as '*Death before Defilement*', and '*Death rather than Dishonour*'), the **column** **constancy** and the **snake** climbing up the column **prudence**. Note that columns in pairs represent the columns of Hercules, a symbol adopted by Holy Roman Emperor **Charles V**, King of Spain. They have signified the promontories that flank the Strait of Gibraltar since antiquity and were seen as the gateway to the Mediterranean Sea. With the discovery of the Americas Charles V saw them as an entrance out to the rest of the world. The two vertical lines through the **dollar sign** ultimately derive from the sign on the Spanish dollar which represent the **Pillars of Hercules**.
- (Link) This drawing was probably the **model** for the **Darnley** portrait ...

Notes

- There is evidence that the Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester was instrumental in bringing Zuccaro to England and we believe he had a similar painting done. It may have been going to far to have the two painted as pendants although Elizabeth is facing in the correct direction for a husband/wife pendant pair.
- Dudley had contacts all over Italy, including Venice and Florence and he also tried to bring over other artists.
- The excommunication of 1570 led to the repression of the Jesuits in England and in 1580

Gregory XIII issued a suspension.

- The 1570 excommunication gave rise to the Ridolfi plot to assassinate Elizabeth in 1571 and replace her with Mary, Queen of Scots (1542-1587, daughter of James V and married the Dauphin of France who died and she married Henry Stuart, Lord Darnley who was found murdered. Mother of James VI and I). Roberto di Rodolfi was a banker who travelled to Brussels, Rome and Madrid. Thomas Howard, 4th Duke of Norfolk planned to marry Mary and supported the Northern Rebellion (1569) led by Charles Neville 6th Earl of Westmorland and Thomas Percy 7th Earl of Northumberland. The Duke of Norfolk was arrested and executed in 1572.
- The snake or serpent can represent prudence (or wisdom), one of the **four cardinal virtues** of **prudence, justice, temperance and courage**. Discussed in Plato's *Republic*. Plato identified prudence as the attribute of rulers. St Augustine wrote, '*prudence is love distinguishing with sagacity between what hinders it and what helps it*'. The seven virtues add the **three theological virtues** of **faith, hope and charity** (or love) – from the letters of St Paul of Tarsus.
- We know Zuccaro had a letter of introduction to Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester dated 1575.



Attributed to Federico Zuccaro, *Darnley Portrait*, c. 1575, National Portrait Gallery
 Titian, *Empress Isabella of Portugal*, c. 1548, Prado

- **The Mask of Youth.** This is one of the **most important** images of Elizabeth and is known as the Darnley Portrait. It was almost certainly painted from life and the pattern was repeated for the **remainder of her reign**. It is the face pattern historians call '**The Mask of Youth**'.
- We can tell from the brushwork that it is by an experienced artist and it has a looser and bolder handling of the paint than other British artists at the time. The historian **Roy Strong** believes it is also by **Federico Zuccaro**.
- **(Click)** It follows the pose of *Isabella of Portugal* by **Titian**.
- It shows Elizabeth looking cold, haughty and imperious, wearing a rather masculine doublet with a lace ruff collar, a double string of pearls looped around her neck and carrying an ostrich-feather fan.
- **(Click)** The pendant jewel is a large red ruby surrounded by Roman gods Minerva (goddess of wisdom at the top), Jupiter (ruler of the gods at the bottom), Venus (goddess of love) with Cupid on the right and Mars at the left.
- Note the crown and sceptre on the table beside her rather than worn. These symbols would be expanded upon in later portraits.
- **Various mythical roles.** She was **now 42** and it was becoming clear she was **not marrying** and so various roles were found to present her to the people. She was **The Virgin Queen** who was married to the country. **Gloriana**, a name that suggest an earlier golden age of glory. **Good Queen Bess**, **Deborah** (the only female judge in the Bible and one who led a counterattack), **Judith** who beheads Holofernes, **Tuccia** the Virgin, **Diana** the goddess of hunting, **Cynthia** from Raleigh's unfinished and unpublished poem, **Astraea**, goddess of justice, innocence and purity, and many others such as **Belphebe** and **Pandora**.

Notes

- The central problem for Elizabeth and her advisors from the day she became queen was that she was a woman. A queen's role was to produce male heirs and so the first priority for her advisors and the country was marriage.
- This portrait is the source of a face pattern which would be used and reused for authorized portraits of Elizabeth into the 1590s, preserving the impression of ageless beauty.
- Zuccaro's painting was to serve as a very influential face-pattern for other artists over the next decade. Hilliard returned to England in 1578 with his style enriched by the softer refined manner of the French court painters, although his work for Elizabeth up to 1590 was mainly confined to miniatures and other small scale portrait media, such as medallions and woodcuts. The task of producing larger oil portraits of the Queen was given to George Gower, Sergeant Painter from 1581, and later to Flemish-born Isaac Oliver (c.1560 - 1617).
- The national Portrait Gallery believe the attribution to Zuccaro is not sustainable and attribute the work to an unknown Continental artist.
- The crown and the sceptre on the table are the first time they are shown as props rather than worn.
- Elizabeth pale skin is the result of deterioration of the red lake pigment used.



Quentin Metsys (or Massys) the Younger (c. 1543-1589), *The Siena Sieve Portrait*, c. 1583, National Art Museum Siena

- **Lobbying - Empress of the Seas and the British Empire**
 - Many of the paintings of Elizabeth were propaganda but not Elizabeth promoting herself. Many of the paintings were presents from her courtiers to Elizabeth promoting her and their own personal message. A form of lobbying.
 - **(Click)** If we look closely at the **sleeve** of the man in the background we can just see a **white hart**, the emblem of **Sir Christopher Hatton**. Hatton was **patron of John Dee**, perhaps the most learned man of the period and an astronomer, mathematician, magician and adviser to Elizabeth. From 1570 **Dee** advocated a **policy of imperial expansion** into the New World and **building up the navy**. Dee's ideas were years ahead of their time and has been credited with the coining of the term **British Empire**. Look at the globe and you will see ships sailing across the Atlantic between Britain and the **New World**. **(Click)**
- The portrait can be seen as a **piece of lobbying by Hatton** so we have a portrait of Elizabeth being used as part of a political campaign by an individual. This is interesting as most writers about the political significance of Elizabeth's portraits tend to **assume** that it is always the **government** or court using the portraits to convey a state message. In this case it is an individual lobbying.
- **Vestal Virgin Tuccia**
 - Why is Elizabeth **carrying a sieve**? The sieve symbol goes back to **Petrarch's story** of the **Vestal Virgin Tuccia** ('two-cha') who carried water from the **Tiber to the Temple of Vesta** in a sieve to prove her **innocence** and virginity. The sieve separates the desirable from the undesirable and is therefore a symbol of prudence, which entails the ability to discern. It is also a symbol of virginity with classical allusions.

- **Illustrious Ancestry**
 - The **column** is covered in **medallions** showing the story of **Dido** and **Aeneas** from engravings by Mark Antonio Raimondi. The story is how Dido and Aeneas fall in love but Aeneas has to leave her to go off and found Rome. **Elizabeth, like Aeneas rejected love and marriage in order to found an empire.**
 - In the sixteenth century the state of **virginity** has **very negative** connotations and people were almost **embarrassed** by it as it was associated with **failure** and **old maids**. So this portrait and **other sieve portraits** were creating a new set of **positive associations** around the idea of a Virgin Queen.

Notes

- Massys was a Netherlandish artist and there is no evidence he came to England.
- When this painting was **cleaned** in the 1980s Quentin Massys's signature was discovered on the globe.
- The Vestal Virgin Tuccia was familiar to Elizabethan readers from Petrarch's *The Triumph of Chastity*.
- The face is like the Darnley Portrait so it may have been copied from an engraving. Sir Christopher Hatton was the patron and the man in yellow tights in the background has Hatton's symbol of a hind on his sleeve.
- A series of Sieve Portraits copy the Darnley face pattern and add an allegorical overlay that depicts Elizabeth as Tuccia, a Vestal Virgin who proved her chastity by carrying a sieve full of water from the Tiber River to the Temple of Vesta without spilling a drop. The first Sieve Portrait was painted by George Gower in 1579, but the most influential image is the 1583 version by Quentin Metsys (or Massys) the Younger.
- Pearls denote chastity.
- **Inscriptions**
 - The Italian motto on the sieve 'a terra il ben mal dimorra in sella', can be translated, '*The good falls to the ground while the bad remains in the saddle.*' This suggests Elizabeth is shown not as a water carrier but as a sower of seeds which evokes the book she wrote in Italian of prayers called *Christian Prayer and Meditations* (1569) in which she represents herself as a godly gardener. It also shows Elizabeth's wisdom and ability to discriminate the good from the bad.
 - The other inscription reads 'STANCHO RIPOSO & RIPO SATO AFFA NNO' ('**Wearied rest and rested weariness** or 'Weary am I and, having rested, still am weary') also from **Petrarch** and it reminds the discerning viewer that Petrarch referred to the way in which Tuccia's closed sieve magically reflected her **chaste body** which protected her **reputation** and her **life** in the **same way** that Elizabeth's **virginity protected** the realm from the Catholic threat.
 - The globe is inscribed 'I see all and much is lacking' ('TVTTO VEDO ET MOLTO MANCHA').
- All the sieve portraits date from 1579-83. In 1570 Elizabeth considered a marriage proposal from Henry, Duke of Anjou, and later, from 1572 to 1581, his brother Francis, Duke of Anjou, formerly Duke of Alençon. Hatton was against marriage to a foreign

Catholic and he decided it was **better to have a Virgin Queen** than a Catholic Queen. Like Aeneas the Queen had to leave her 'love' to found an Empire.

- **John Dee's** 1576 *General and Rare Memorials Pertayning to the Perfect Arte of Navigation*, was the first volume in an unfinished series planned to advocate the rise of imperial expansion. In the highly symbolic frontispiece, Dee included a figure of Britannia kneeling by the shore beseeching Elizabeth I, to protect her empire by strengthening her navy. Dee used Geoffrey's inclusion of Ireland in Arthur's imperial conquests to argue that Arthur had established a 'British empire' abroad. He further argued that England exploit new lands through colonisation and that this vision could become reality through maritime supremacy.
- **Dido and Aeneas Scenes**
 - The medallions on the pillar to the left of the queen illustrate the story of Dido and Aeneas, ancestor of Brutus, suggesting that like Aeneas, Elizabeth's destiny is to reject marriage and found an empire. The scenes from bottom right to left are (1) Aeneas fleeing Troy (2) Aeneas arriving at Carthage, (3) Aeneas meeting Dido at the temple, (4) Dido and Aeneas strolling, (5) the banquet at which they fall in love, (6) the hunt during which they consummate their love, (7) Mercury warning Aeneas, (8) Dido on her funeral pyre, (9) Aeneas's departure.
- This painting's patron was likely Sir Christopher Hatton (his heraldic badge of the white hind appears on the sleeve of one of the courtiers in the background), and the work may express opposition to the proposed marriage of Elizabeth to François, Duke of Anjou.
- There is another portrait of Elizabeth holding a sieve, The Plimpton Sieve Portrait, by George Gower in 1579.



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'

- **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**, if fact the first time a **commoner** had been granted such a privilege. It is not surprising in 1580 when Drake returned to Plymouth on the *Golden Hind* the Queen's share of his cargo was more than the crown's income for the entire year.
- The **cameo** is interesting as the two layers of **coloured stone** have been skilfully cut to

create the two heads in contrasting 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 'Ano Dm 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



William Segar (c. 1554-1633), *The Ermine Portrait*, 1585, Hatfield House

- Elizabeth as Virgin Queen and goddess had many attributes which portraits reinforced and extolled.
- This is **Elizabeth as Pax or Peace**. The queen bears the olive branch of Pax and the **sword of justice** rests on the table at her side.
- She is now 52 and most of the images are based on the '**Mask of Youth**'.
- Another symbol from this work is the **spotless ermine**, wearing a collar of gold studded with topazes. This is a symbol of royalty and the ermine is shown wearing a golden crown. An ermine also signified majesty and purity. She is wearing one of her most treasured jewels, the 'Three Brothers' jewel consisting of three diamonds set as a triangle around a fourth diamond. The sword of state rests on the table signifying justice and she holds an olive branch signifying peace.
- **Elizabeth as Head of State**. The monarch was synonymous with the state and so all this praise of Elizabeth was not (just) of the person but of what she represented politically. So these symbols represent not only the personal purity of Elizabeth but the "*righteousness and justice of her government*."

Notes

- **Excessive Clothing**. We might consider the clothes of this period as excessive but it might be a surprise that many thought the same way at the time. A scholar called Camden wrote, 'In these days [1574] a wondrous excess of Apparel had spread itself all over England, and the habit of our own country, though a peculiar vice incident to our apish nation, grew into such contempt, that men by their new fangled garments, and too gaudy apparel, discovered a certain deformity and arrogance of mind whilst they jetted up and down in their silks glittering with gold and silver'.
 - Elizabethans dyed their hair not because it was turning grey but to match their gaudy clothing. Elizabethans revelled in wigs. Elizabeth had 80 and Mary Stuart

changed her hair every day.

- Feathers sometimes two foot long were added to hats.
- Ruffs grew so large that it became difficult to eat without long utensils.
- The chopine ('shapeen') was a device used by women principally for the purpose of increasing their height, and to keep their embroidered shoes and clothing out of the dirt when they walked outside. Lady Jane Grey was short and wore high chopines. The chopine was often a foot high and in Venice it was taken to an extreme and was so high women had to be assisted to walk.



Marcus Gheeraerts the Elder (1520-1590), *The Peace Portrait*, 1580-5, 45.7 × 38.1 cm, private collection

- In this portrait, the queen is the harbinger of peace. She holds an olive branch in her left hand and a sheathed sword lies at her feet. She is possibly wearing the same headdress, collar and girdle from the 'Ermine Portrait'. Also, both gowns are 'Polish style' with froggings (ornamental braiding that fastens a garment across the front).
- From the date, the peace may refer to the troubles in the Netherlands.
- The painting has long been associated with Elizabeth's favourite, Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester (1532/3-1588).
- Next to the sword of justice is a lap-dog, an animal which rarely occurs in Elizabeth's portraits with the exception of the Federico Zuccaro's drawing we have seen. This may refer to an incident when Elizabeth found out Dudley had been planning to travel to France and she sharply retorted, 'I cannot live without seeing you every day. You are like my little dog. As soon as he is seen anywhere, people know that I am coming, and when you are seen, they say I am not far off'.
- It is also known as the 'Wanstead' or 'Welbeck' portrait and formerly hung at Welbeck Abbey. Some say it is Old Wanstead House in the background and some claim it is Robert Dudley and his second wife Lettice Knollys in the background.



Anon, formerly George Gower (1540-1596), *Armada Portrait*, c. 1588, Woburn Abbey

- **Empress of the Seas and the British Empire.**
- This is the ***Armada Portrait*** painted the year of the Spanish Armada in 1588.
- The queen's hand rests on a **globe** below the crown of England, "her fingers covering the Americas, indicating England's dominion of the seas and plans for imperialist expansion in the New World". The Queen is flanked by two columns behind, probably a reference to the famous impresa of the Holy Roman Emperor, Charles V, Philip II of Spain's father, which represented the pillars of Hercules, gateway to the Atlantic Ocean and the New World.
- In the background view on the left, English fireships threaten the Spanish fleet, and on the right the ships are driven onto a rocky coast amid stormy seas by the "Protestant Wind". On a secondary level, these images show Elizabeth turning her back on storm and darkness while sunlight shines where she gazes.
- As we saw from 1570 John Dee advocated a **policy of imperial expansion** into the New World and building up the **navy**. Dee's ideas were **years ahead of their time** and has been credited with the coining of the term **British Empire**. The defeat of the Armada was part of grander strategy to 'rule the waves' and create an empire although Dee was several hundred years ahead of his time in his understanding of what this meant.

Notes

- Visions of **Empire**
- The *Armada Portrait* is an allegorical panel painting depicting the queen surrounded by symbols of empire against a backdrop representing the defeat of the Spanish Armada in 1588.
- There are **three surviving versions** of the portrait, in addition to several derivative paintings. The version at Woburn Abbey, the seat of the Dukes of Bedford, was previously regarded as the work of George Gower, who had been appointed Serjeant Painter in

1581. A version in the National Portrait Gallery, London, which has been cut down at both sides leaving just a portrait of the queen, was also attributed to Gower. A third version, owned by the Tyrwhitt-Drake family, may have been commissioned by Sir Francis Drake. Scholars agree that this version is by a different hand, noting distinctive techniques and approaches to the modelling of the queen's features.

- The combination of a life-sized portrait of the queen with a horizontal format is "quite unprecedented in her portraiture", although allegorical portraits in a horizontal format, such as *Elizabeth I and the Three Goddesses* and the *Family of Henry VIII: An Allegory of the Tudor Succession* pre-date the Armada Portrait.
- An engraving by Crispijn van de Passe (Crispin van de Passe), published in 1596 but showing costume of the 1580s, carries similar iconography. Elizabeth stands between two columns bearing her arms and the Tudor heraldic badge of a portcullis. The columns are surmounted by her emblems of a pelican in her piety and a phoenix, and ships fill the sea behind her.
- The arm of her chair is carved in the shape of a large mermaid. The mermaid appeared in sixteenth century portraits and pageants perhaps linked to Elizabeth as both were troublesome hybrid figures that maintained authority exploiting the ambiguity of their mixed form. In the case of Elizabeth it was the conflict between her physical body as a woman, which society saw as subordinate to men and her political body as monarch which was superior to everyone.
- He **speech to the troops at Tilbury** on 9 August 1588 (found in a letter written in 1624):

My loving people

We have been persuaded by some that are careful of our safety, to take heed how we commit our selves to armed multitudes, for fear of treachery; but I assure you I do not desire to live to distrust my faithful and loving people. Let tyrants fear. I have always so behaved myself that, under God, I have placed my chiefest strength and safeguard in the loyal hearts and good-will of my subjects; and therefore I am come amongst you, as you see, at this time, not for my recreation and disport, but being resolved, in the midst and heat of the battle, to live and die amongst you all; to lay down for my God, and for my kingdom, and my people, my honour and my blood, even in the dust.

I know I have the body of a weak, feeble woman; but I have the heart and stomach of a king, and of a king of England too, and think foul scorn that Parma or Spain, or any prince of Europe, should dare to invade the borders of my realm; to which rather than any dishonour shall grow by me, I myself will take up arms, I myself will be your general, judge, and rewarder of every one of your virtues in the field.

I know already, for your forwardness you have deserved rewards and crowns; and We do assure you on a word of a prince, they shall be duly paid. In the mean time, my lieutenant general shall be in my stead, than whom never prince commanded a more noble or worthy subject; not doubting but by your obedience to my general, by your concord in the camp, and your valour in the field, we shall shortly have a famous victory over these enemies of my God, of my kingdom, and of my people.



Marcus Gheeraerts the Younger, Queen Elizabeth I ('*The Ditchley Portrait*'), c. 1592, National Portrait Gallery

Attributed to John de Critz, *Portrait of Anne Vavasour*, c. 1605, Collection of the Armourers and Brasiers of the City of London

- **Ditchley Portrait.** The Ditchley portrait was commissioned by **Sir Henry Lee of Ditchley** and Elizabeth was asked to decipher its meaning as part of his **courtly entertainment**.
- The story behind this game was complex but illustrates Elizabethan courtly behaviour far better than a TV documentary.
- In 1590 **Henry Lee's wife died** and he decided to retire as **Queen's Champion** and move to the country. This might also be because he had recently met **Anne Vavasour** (c. 1560-1650) ([click](#)).
- Now, at the Accession Day tilt he wrote a long valedictory poem he read the Queen but unknown to the Queen and the court the poem had a double meaning and he intended it to be aimed at Anne Vavasour. The Queen found out about Vavasour and was very annoyed but she liked Henry Lee and so despite many courtiers trying to argue that Vavasour was a '**strange woman**', that is a loose woman or harlot, after two years of pleading she agreed to visit his home at Ditchley to be entertained.
- Lee laid on extravagant entertainment poetry, fairy tales, music, allegorical paintings, public speeches and a courtly debate between Constancy and Inconstancy. This was a complex affair and involved a bevy of inconstant ladies asleep that had to be woken by finding clues. Finally, the Queen was led into a room where **Henry Lee lay in an enchanted sleep** from which he could only be woken by the Queen examining this portrait and finding the solution.
- There are three fragmentary Latin inscriptions that can be interpreted as: (left) '*She gives and does not expect*'; (right) '*She can but does not take revenge*', and (bottom right) '*In giving back she increases (?)*'. The sonnet on the right, perhaps composed by Lee, though

fragmentary, can mostly be reconstructed. Its subject is the sun, symbol of the monarch.

- Elizabeth is shown standing on a globe with her feet in Oxfordshire the location of Lee's house at Ditchley near Oxford or possibly at Woodstock.
- I think the **solution was obvious to everyone**. The symbolic theme was forgiveness and the request was for the Queen to allow Henry Lee to continue live with Anne Vavasour. Which she did. They both outlived Elizabeth, in fact Vavasour lived till she was 90.
 - In 1616, at the age of 56 she married John Richardson, while her first husband was still alive; and as a consequence, she was brought up before the High Commission on a charge of **bigamy**, for which she had to pay a fine of **£2000**; however, she was spared having to perform a public penance. £2,000 in terms of today's historic standard of living (purchasing power) it is worth about £500 million.
- Exciting times but what the TV documentaries miss out is the intellectual depth and subtlety of the poetry with its classical references and double meanings.

Notes

- **Henry Lee** was the Queen's Champion at the tilts (jousting) for 31 years, from 1559 to 1590. One of the most important events of the year was the Accession Day tilts. At these knights would compete by jousting. This involved using hollow lances of thin wood so that when a strike occurred the lance would splinter. A record was kept of the number of broken lances and the winner had the most lances broken. The winner would then present themselves to Queen Elizabeth by reading a long poem they had written that contained many clever references to the Queen's power, intellect and beauty.
- **Anne Vavasour** (c.1560 – c.1650) was a Maid of Honour (1580–81) to Queen Elizabeth I. She was the inspiration, protagonist, and possibly the actual author, of the poem, Anne Vavasour's *Echo*, though her lover the Earl of Oxford is more commonly identified as its author. She was an interesting person. At the age of 20 she became Maid of Honour to Elizabeth for a year and then lover of Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford, by whom she had an illegitimate son. For that offence, both she and the Earl were sent to the Tower by the Queen. In 1590, or probably earlier, she became the mistress of Henry Lee, by whom she had another illegitimate son. In 1590, she married a sea captain called John Finch who treated her badly.
- Known as the 'Ditchley Portrait', this painting was produced for Sir Henry Lee who had been the Queen's Champion from 1559-90. It probably commemorates an elaborate symbolic entertainment which Lee organised for the Queen in September 1592, and which may have been held in the grounds of Lee's house at Ditchley, near Oxford, or at the nearby palace at Woodstock. After his retirement in 1590 Lee lived at Ditchley with his mistress Anne Vavasour. The entertainment marked the Queen's forgiveness of Lee for becoming a 'stranger lady's thrall'. The portrait shows Elizabeth standing on the globe of the world, with her feet on Oxfordshire. The stormy sky, the clouds parting to reveal sunshine, and the inscriptions on the painting, make it plain that the portrait's symbolic theme is forgiveness.



Attributed to Robert Peake (1551-1619), *Procession Portrait*, c. 1600-1, Sherborne Castle

- Procession portrait of Elizabeth I of England c. 1600-1. Queen Elizabeth I preceded by the Knights of the Garter. From left: Edmund Sheffield, later Earl of Mulgrave; Thomas Howard, Lord Howard of Effingham and Lord Admiral; George Clifford, Earl of Cumberland; George Carey, Lord Hunsten; unknown knight, possibly Robert Radcliffe, Earl of Sussex; and Gilbert Talbot, Earl of Shrewsbury, carrying the Sword of State. In the foreground is Edward Somerset, 4th Earl of Worcester, Master of the Horse. Of the four men carrying the canopy only the one in white on the far right has been identified: Worcester's eldest son, Lord Herbert. Source: Strong, Roy. *Gloriana*. Thames and Hudson, 1987, pp. 154-5.



Isaac Oliver, *Elizabeth I*, c. 1592, Victoria & Albert Museum

- **The last 10 years.** We now move on to the final 'Mask of Youth' period. There is evidence that during this period unflattering portraits of Elizabeth were destroyed and all portraits were based on a version created by Hilliard and known as the 'Mask of Youth'.
- Without doubt this miniature was **painted from life**. The evidence for this is not only the extraordinary directness of observation in the painting but also its actual shape which incorporates, at the top and bottom, the straight edges of the playing card mount enabling the miniature to be held in place while Oliver was painting it. This would have subsequently been trimmed to fit the miniature case. The fact that this was not done would suggest that it was kept for reference as a **face-pattern** and is not, as has often been suggested merely an unfinished miniature.
- The result is in reality, gently refined but catching all the intelligence and certainly providing us with an image matching the celebrated Hentzner description on 1598: "**her face oblong, fair but wrinkled, her eyes small, yet black and pleasant, her nose a little hooked, her lips narrow...her hair...an auburn colour but false...**" (W. B. Rye, *England as seen by Foreigners in the Days of Elizabeth and James I*, London, 1865, p. 104).

Notes

- Isaac Oliver was Hilliard's pupil.
- Vellum stuck to a playing card with one club verso. The original rectangular card has been trimmed to an oval, leaving the squared edges at top and bottom, oval, 82 x 52 mm, 2 7/16 x 2 1/8 in.
- This portrait of Elizabeth is virtually contemporaneous with Marcus Gheeraerts the Younger's **Ditchley Portrait**. The artist's were, of course, closely related, Oliver later being Gheeraert's **brother-in-law**. There was no doubt a flow of ideas between them as, epitomizing a new generation of painters, they essayed the face of the ageing Queen. We see her **aquiline nose** and may wonder whether this should be straightened. The problem

for the artist is that the nose had two meanings – it was not regarded as a sign of beauty in a woman but it was associated with the great Roman Caesars and so it was negative regarding the body physical but positive regarding the body politic.

- **Roy Strong** considered the portrait **unacceptable**, 'Oliver's revealing miniature of the aging Queen, painted from life in 1592 did not provide an acceptable image. Subsequent engravings based upon it were **destroyed** as they caused '**great offence**'. In the last years of her reign Elizabeth turned once more to her miniaturist **Hilliard** who could be relied upon to create a formalized '**mask of youth**', celebrating her eternal beauty and majesty with gorgeous surface detail and elaborate symbolism.'



Nicholas Hilliard, Heneage or Armada Jewel, c.1595, Victoria and Albert Museum

- **Heneage or Armada Jewel.** This is another **jewel** containing Elizabeth's image. It is the **Heneage Jewel** and, according to tradition, it was given by the Queen to **Sir Thomas Heneage**. The miniature of the Queen is by **Nicholas Hilliard**. As part of the cult of the Virgin Queen, courtiers were rather expected to **wear the Queen's likeness**, at least at Court.
- The ship on the reverse side is holding a steady course through a storm, signifying the **Protestant church** steered by Elizabeth through religious turmoil.
- I have **two more contrasting** portraits I would like to show you.

Notes

- This locket encloses a miniature of Elizabeth I (1558-1603).
- **Thomas Heneage** was a Privy Counsellor and **Vice-Chamberlain of the Royal Household**. The jewel remained in the possession of the Heneage family until 1902. It has sometimes been called the **Armada Jewel**. However, it was probably made in about 1595, some years after the defeat of the Spanish Armada in 1588.
- Enamelled gold, set with table-cut diamonds and Burmese rubies. Obverse, a bust in gold under rock crystal of Elizabeth I, apparently a version of the Garter Badge of about 1585, surrounded by inscription. Inside, a miniature of the Queen by Nicholas Hilliard. The hinged back of the locket is enamelled outside with the Ark of the English Church on a stormy sea and an inscription. The back of the locket is enamelled inside with a Tudor rose encircled by leaves and an inscription.
- Elizabeth was the heart of government, and the focus of power in England. As a woman ruler she encouraged a unique court culture, exerting her authority through elaborate rituals of courtship with her male courtiers. This role-playing reached a pitch at the Accession Day ceremonial jousts, at which the queen demonstrated her power by receiving the homage of her knights. Each courtier would present her with a shield bearing

an 'impressa', a combination of picture and motto '*borne by noble personages ...to notify some particular conceit*', usually their devotion to the queen.

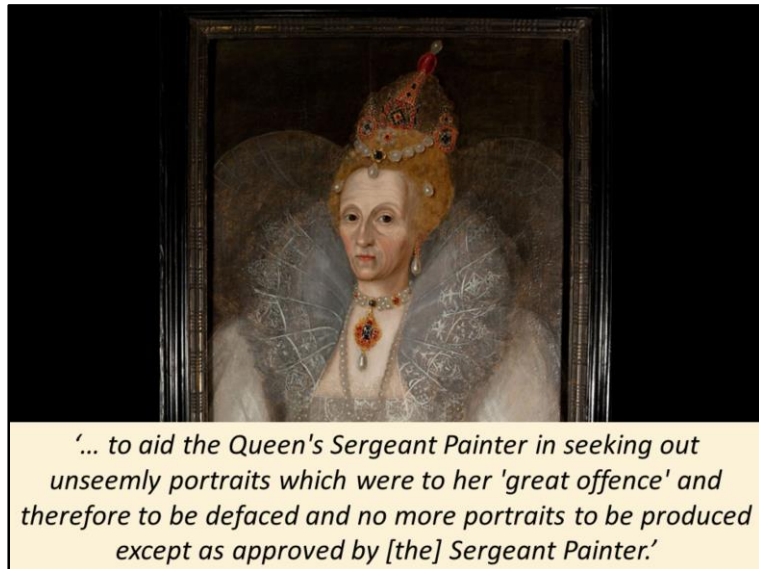
- **Nicholas Hilliard** was an apprentice to the **Queen's jeweller** Robert Brandon, a goldsmith and city chamberlain of London, and Sir Roy Strong suggests that Hilliard may also have been trained in the art of limning by Levina Teerlinc. Hilliard emerged from his apprenticeship at a time when a new royal portrait painter was "*desperately needed*."
- Hilliard's first known miniature of the Queen is dated 1572. It is not known when he was formally appointed limner (miniaturist) and goldsmith to Elizabeth, though he was granted the reversion of a lease by the Queen in 1573 for his "good, true and loyal service." Two panel portraits long attributed to him, the Phoenix and Pelican portraits, are dated c. 1572–76.
- But Hilliard's panel portraits seem to have been found wanting, and in 1576 the recently married Hilliard left for France to improve his skills. Returning to England, he continued to work as a goldsmith, and produced some spectacular "picture boxes" or jewelled lockets for miniatures: the Armada Jewel, given by Elizabeth to Sir Thomas Heneage and the Drake Pendant given to Sir Francis Drake are the best known examples.
- His appointment as miniaturist to the Crown included the old sense of a painter of illuminated manuscripts and he was commissioned to decorate important documents, such as the founding charter of Emmanuel College, Cambridge (1584), which has an enthroned Elizabeth under a canopy of estate within an elaborate framework of Flemish-style Renaissance strapwork and grotesque ornament. He also seems to have designed woodcut title-page frames and borders for books, some of which bear his initials
- Inscriptions: 'ELIZABETHA D.G. ANG. FRA. ET. HIB. REGINA' Elizabeth, by the grace of God Queen of England, France and Ireland
'SAEVAS. TRANQUILLA. PER. VNDAS' peaceful through the fierce waves
'Hei mihi quod tanto virtus perfusa decore non habet eternos inviolata dies' Alas, that so much virtue suffused with beauty should not last for ever inviolate.



Nicholas Hilliard Gold medallion, Elizabeth I (BM), about 1580-90

Nicholas Hilliard Gold medallion, Elizabeth I (BM), about 1580-90

- Elizabeth was also represented in other media, coins, medallions and the Great Seal.
- The laurel tree on the reverse is labelled with the royal monogram ER (for 'Elizabeth Regina'). The legend translates as 'Not even danger affects it', a reference to the legend that laurel was immune from lightning. This is likely to be emblematic of Elizabeth's resistance to the dual threat of Catholicism at home and, in the years leading up to the Spanish Armada, Philip II of Spain abroad.



Studio of Marcus Gheeraerts the Younger (c. 1561/62–1636), *Portrait of Elizabeth I* (1533–1603), c. 1595, Elizabethan Gardens of North Carolina

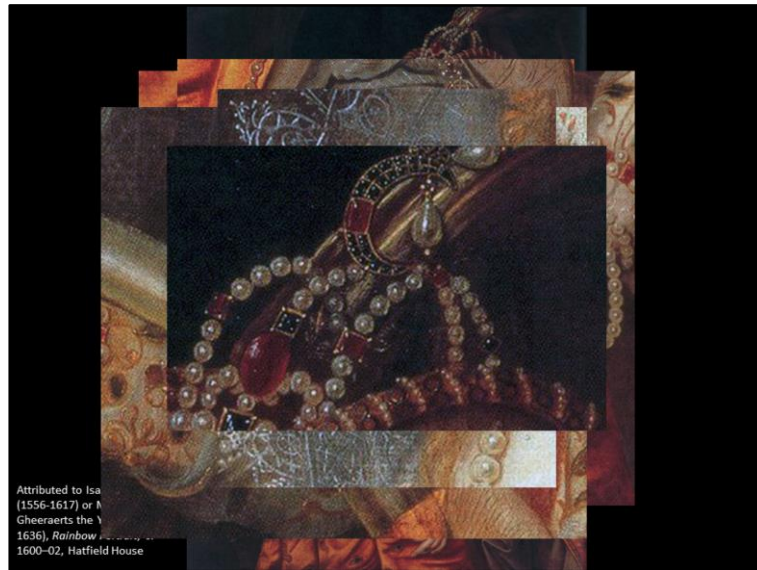
- **A puzzle.** We find the **wrinkles shocking** particularly as we are used to the smooth 'Mask of Youth' version of her face.
- Many historians have speculated about this portrait and suggested it may have been **subversive**. However, it is from the studio of one of the **leading painters** Marcus Gheeraerts and the latest theory is that her **loyal** subjects **did not mind wrinkles** and it was one of many **proudly** hung in the long galleries of her wealthy, **status-conscious** subjects.
- It is possible that Elizabeth found it **more unacceptable** than her subjects. She was always **very sensitive** about her portraits and Raleigh wrote that **she burned those she did not like**. The following year (1596) the Privy Council commanded public officers (**Click**) "*to aid the Queen's Sergeant Painter in seeking out unseemly portraits which were to her 'great offence' and therefore to be defaced and no more portraits to be produced except as approved by [the] Sergeant Painter.*"
- So historians wonder whether there were portraits that were acceptable to her loyal subjects but were sought out and burned by the Queen officers.

Notes

- Called the 'Manteo portrait'.
- **George Gower** was appointed by Elizabeth I in 1581.
- She is wearing the same or a similar dress to the Ditchley portrait.
- A painting of Elizabeth I aged about 62, depicting her with facial wrinkles. Produced by the studio of Marcus Gheeraerts in the early-mid 1590s, the painting now owned by the Elizabethan Gardens in North Carolina. It was authenticated in 2011.
- The exhibition's co-curator, Thomas Herron, an author and English professor at East Carolina University, noted that the reason for the portrait's obscurity may lie in Elizabeth's

efforts to control her image.

- And according to Anna Riehl, author of *The Face of Queenship: Early Modern Representations of Queen Elizabeth I* the Elizabethan Gardens portrait is a "*rare exception in not covering up the queen's flaws*".



Attributed to Isaac Oliver (1556-1617) or Marcus Gheeraerts the Younger (1561-1636), *Rainbow Portrait*, c. 1600–02, Hatfield House

- **Rainbow Portrait.** Finally, one of the great symbolic paintings of Elizabeth and, as far as we know, her final portrait.
- **What is she holding?** The answer, for those that speak Latin, is in the motto above '*non sine sol iris*' – '**no rainbow without the sun**'. She is the sun and has created a rainbow, the Biblical sign of **hope and rebirth**. She has put discord and war behind her and brings forth the rainbow signifying sunshine and peace and a new **Golden Age**.
- It is called the **Rainbow Portrait** for obvious reasons and was painted between 1600 and 1602 when the queen was in her late sixties. She was to die in 1603.
 - (Click) If you look closely at her dress you might be surprised to see it is covered in **eyes and ears**. What do you think that means? Fame was shown covered in eyes and ears signifying everyone looking at her and talking about her but it has also been suggested that they represent her cloaked in the protection of her loyal subjects who are looking out for her protection and telling her about any intrigue or plots against her.
 - She also has a **serpent** embroidered on her sleeve with a heart hanging from its mouth. The serpent is a symbol of wisdom and the heart of passion showing that she has the wisdom to control her passions. The celestial globe above the serpents head means that to understand higher matters one must first go down to the earth, like the serpent, and then rise heavenward under good council. The queen is therefore skilled in the affairs of the universe.
 - The **flowers** on the dress show she is Flora, 'Empress of Flowers'.
 - In her hair is the **crescent moon** alluding to 'Cynthia, Queen of Seas and Lands'.
 - On her ruff is the **gauntlet**, a chivalrous emblem showing she is the heroine of her knights.

- She is being shown as **queen of beauty, queen of love**, the **just virgin** of the **Golden Age returned**. Elizabeth was most **proud** of the fact that there was **peace** throughout her reign and although this is an exaggeration as it ignores the troops she sent against Philip II, the raid on Cadiz and the Nine Years' War in Ireland, Elizabeth was cautious and there were many **years of peace**.
- The portraits, carefully analysed, tell us a lot about Elizabeth. If we look beyond the gorgeous dresses, of which she had 2,000, we find a complex web of symbolism that supports a few clear propaganda messages – **the Virgin Queen reminding us of the Virgin Mary, the Queen of a Golden Age of peace and prosperity and the Empress of the Seas** that will lead to a British Empire.
- The *Rainbow Portrait* is a fitting end to the way Elizabeth used her portraits to convey these complex messages and maintain her position as monarch and woman.
- Thank you.

Notes

- It has always been owned by the Cecil family. **William Cecil**, 1st Baron Burghley (sometimes spelt Burleigh), KG (13 September 1520 – 4 August 1598) was an English statesman, the **chief advisor** of Queen Elizabeth I for most of her reign, twice Secretary of State (1550–1553 and 1558–1572) and Lord High Treasurer from 1572. He was the founder of the Cecil dynasty which has produced many politicians including two Prime Ministers.
- Hatfield House is Jacobean and was built in 1611 by Robert Cecil, First Earl of Salisbury and Chief Minister to King James I and has been the home of the Cecil family ever since.
- Attributed to Isaac Oliver, perhaps the **most heavily symbolic portrait** of the queen is the *Rainbow Portrait*. It was painted around 1600–1602, when the queen was in her sixties. In this painting an ageless Elizabeth appears dressed as if for a masque, in a linen bodice embroidered with spring flowers and a mantle draped over one shoulder, her hair loose beneath a fantastical headdress. She wears symbols out of the popular emblem books: the cloak with eyes and ears, the serpent of wisdom, the celestial armillary sphere, and carries a rainbow with the motto *non sine sol iris* ("no rainbow without the sun"). Strong suggests that the complex "programme" for this image may be the work of the poet John Davies, whose *Hymns to Astraea* honouring the queen use much of the same imagery, and suggests it was commissioned by Robert Cecil as part of the decor for Elizabeth's visit in 1602, when a "shrine to Astraea" featured in the entertainments of what would prove to be the "*last great festival of the reign*".
- **Cynthia** was originally an epithet of the Greek goddess of the moon, Artemis, who according to legend, was born on Mount Cynthus. Selene, the Greek personification of the Moon, and the Roman Diana (by way of their identification with Artemis) were also sometimes called "Cynthia". '*Cynthia is not the sylvan Diana but the cold, chaste guardian of peace and civility*'.
- **Astraea**, daughter of Zeus and goddess of justice, the celestial virgin, was the last of the immortals to live with humans during the Golden Age.
- Elizabeth took advice and ignored it when it suited her, she was prudent and careful and

kept her pugnacious male courtiers entertained for 45 years (1558-1603) with finding ways to praise her both as a woman and as a monarch.