

ELIZABETH I

Queen

Court

PHILIP MOULD
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The exhibition explores the visual and political dynamics of Queen Elizabeth I's court through the highly expressive genre of portraiture.

Elizabeth I increasingly understood the importance of projecting her likeness. In a world where the majority concerned her image more often than her person, painting became an essential reinforcement of rank. Her portraits asserted authority, stability, and shaped her identity across her long reign. The works in this exhibition trace her transformation, from the blossoming of her youth to the highly controlled and codified images of her later years.

Those who pursued power in Elizabeth's orbit adopted and adapted their own visual language through portraiture. Access to the Queen was a privilege, and her court and concubines by the proximity and approval. Leading courtiers – among them Robert Dudley, William Cecil, Robert Cecil, and Robert Devereux – and foreign envoys to project loyalty and devotion, service, intimacy and honor. The ceremonial splendor of a monarch, the calculated subtlety of a concubine, or the rhetorical self-fashioning of a rising courtier. In this world, portraiture became a means of representing and affirming status.

Rarely are such works seen together, and this exhibition is only possible due to the generosity of private lenders with whom the gallery has worked.



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Catalogue for the exhibition

14 May—10 July 2026

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Those who pursued power in Elizabeth's orbit adopted and adapted their own visual language through portraiture. Access to the Queen was a privilege, and her court vied constantly for proximity and approval. Leading courtiers – among them Robert Dudley, William Cecil, Robert Cecil, and Robert Devereux – used iconography to project loyalty, ambition, service, intimacy, and favour: the cultivated elegance of a favourite, the calculated sobriety of a statesman, or the theatrical self-assertion of a rising courtier. In this world, portraiture became a means of negotiating and affirming status.

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*Lawrence
Hendra*

Exhibitions like *Elizabeth I: Queen & Court* do not come together very often. Tudor portraits of quality are now increasingly difficult to gather, not least because many of the best examples have entered museum collections or are scattered around the world in private collections. It has therefore been a great privilege to bring together this group of paintings and miniatures and to have the opportunity to share them publicly, many of them for the first time.

The exhibition has only been possible through the generosity and enthusiasm of collectors who have kindly agreed to lend works that, in most cases, have passed through the gallery over the last four decades. Seeing them reunited has offered a rare chance to look again at the personalities who shaped Elizabethan England.

The underlying theme of this exhibition is an exploration of these Elizabethan characters as told through their portraits. Is it therefore more people than artist led.

At the centre of the exhibition are four portraits of Elizabeth. Together, they trace the remarkable evolution of her public image across the course of her life. From the comparatively intimate and innocent likenesses of her youth to the theatrical

imagery of her later years, each portrait reflects the changing political pressures surrounding the Tudor monarchy and Elizabeth's increasingly sophisticated control over her own representation.

Orbiting Elizabeth was a court composed of ambitious and often contrasting personalities, each seeking influence within the Queen's tightly controlled inner circle. Some, like Francis Walsingham, exercised power through intelligence, surveillance, and political calculation; others, such as Robert Devereux, Earl of Essex, pursued favour through charisma and military ambition. The exhibition aims to remind the viewer of the kaleidoscope of characters that formed her close-knit group of advisors and helped shape British history.

*I*n twenty-first century England, the monarch's image is so omnipresent that it almost escapes notice. The late Elizabeth II has often been described as 'the most reproduced person in history', her likeness appearing across stamps, coins and bank notes as well as in official portraits and photographs. Before her, only Victoria came close, her long reign witnessing the invention of photography and the proliferation of illustrated media in newspapers and magazines. Yet the first monarch to enjoy such a wide exposure was not a product of the industrial revolution, but of the Renaissance and all that came with it. That monarch was Elizabeth I (r.1558-1603).

Even by the end of Elizabeth I's reign, the idea of having a portrait painted for wider consumption was a relatively new idea. In the fifteenth century, portraits were occasionally made, but usually for exchange as part of international marriage negotiations, a proxy for when the intended couple were unable to meet in person. Such images were small in format, and never intended to be seen by a wide circle of subjects or even courtiers. Elizabeth I's own grandfather, Henry VII (r. 1485-1509), was the first English monarch to put an accurate likeness of his own face on the coinage, while the full-scale experiments of Hans Holbein the Younger at the

court of Henry VIII, Elizabeth's father, forged a totally unprecedented path for the representation of English majesty.

Elizabeth's reign coincided with the widespread adoption of portraiture as a genre, though its conventions were yet to solidify. This was also an era when visual symbolism was rife, notably in heraldry, a complex system of colours and symbols used to convey dynastic identity, and in the popular use of emblems – less-formal combinations of mottos and images to convey moral, religious and personal messages. This potent mixture produced some of the most inventive and diverse images of any English monarch. Around a repeating circuit of approved face patterns, which were passed like templates between artists' workshops, the queen's costume, attributes, settings, mottos and personae exploded in infinite variety.

A key factor in this proliferation was the fact that Elizabeth herself rarely commissioned portraits. Instead, she left their creation in the hands of courtiers and other subjects, many of whom were – if a Draft Proclamation of 1563 is to be believed – positively clamouring for an image of their queen. Her majesty, 'overcome with the continual requests of so many of her nobility and Lords,' was encouraged to bow to 'the natural

desires that all sorts of subjects and people both noble and mean have to procure ye portrait and picture of the Queen's majesty,' and sit for a pattern that could serve as a 'licensed' likeness.[1]

Portraits of the queen advertised their owners' loyalty, bathing nobles and gentry alike in the reflected glow of royal authority. But likenesses intended to be seen by the queen herself sometimes sought to influence royal policy. The careful selection of attributes and mottos allowed patrons to frame Elizabeth in specific ways – as a potential spouse, as a military leader, or as an untouchable Virgin Queen – emphasising and encouraging her towards policies that they supported. The seeming inconsistency of Elizabeth's portraits is due partly to the fact that no single mind created them. Instead, the queen's image was infinitely malleable, shaped as much by the interests of the commissioning party as by the queen's own desires or policies.

Elizabeth's recognisability in our own time obscures the long, contested development of her image, with artists at first struggling to construct an iconography for this unprecedented female, Protestant, unmarried monarch. The most recognisable of her incarnations: as a quasi-divine, eternally virginal maiden, was a long time in the making. The portraits of Elizabeth in this exhibition represent

four key moments in the invention of her image, tracing her status from teenage marriage pawn to resplendent Virgin Queen.

The earliest image of Elizabeth in the exhibition (cat. 1) is a cut-down version of the portrait in the Royal Collection ([RCIN 404444](#)), also dated c.1546. The Royal Collection painting has been attributed to the artist William Scrots, and is usually regarded as a pair with the portrait of the future Edward VI ([RCIN 404441](#)), painted on the eve of his planned investiture as Prince of Wales – an event cancelled when Henry VIII died and Edward acceded to the throne. The siblings were close, and Elizabeth later wrote to Edward to present a portrait he had requested, saying that '[t]he face, I grant, I might well blush to offer, but the mind I shall never be ashamed to present'. [2]

The trope of Elizabeth's reluctance to be portrayed persisted into her own reign, but the portrait shown here was probably not the one sent to her brother when he was king. More probably, it was painted at the very end of Henry VIII's reign, for his own collection. Although often known by the title 'Elizabeth I when a Princess', in fact Elizabeth was not officially using the title of princess at this time. In 1536, following the execution of her mother, she had been declared illegitimate; although



English School, *Queen Elizabeth I (1533-1603), when a Princess*, c. 1548-1558
Oil on Panel, 30 x 15 in. (76.2 x 38.1 cm). Private collection.



English School, *Queen Elizabeth I (1533-1603), The 'Clopton' Portrait*, c. 1558.
Oil on panel, 26 1/2 x 19 1/8 in. (67.5 x 48.9 cm). Private collection.

her illegitimacy was not repealed, the Third Succession Act of 1543 officially restored her, and her half-sister Mary I, to the succession, and by implication to the royal family. The portrait declares her restored status: she wears a crimson silk gown woven with precious metal threads, and her undersleeves and the triangular forepart in her skirt are of cloth-of-silver tissue with gold, the latter fabric reserved by law for the use of the king and his close family. Although still officially only representing 'the Ladye Elizabeth her grace', the portrait is a bold statement about her place in the royal household.

At this stage, nobody expected Elizabeth actually to become queen. With a healthy young brother and an older half-sister standing between her and the throne, Elizabeth was regarded as a useful dynastic pawn rather than a potential ruler. The portrait may partly have been concocted to advertise the qualities that would make her an attractive bride: she is feminine, but also pious and learned. A large cross hangs at her neck, and she is shown with a small book in her hand, probably intended to represent a prayer book. However, we also know that Elizabeth was a sharply intelligent and highly educated young woman, who in 1544, at the age of 11, presented her father and step-mother, Catherine Parr, with gifts of her own translations of spiritual texts, bound in

covers she had embroidered herself. The portrait therefore almost certainly captures something of Elizabeth's precociously serious personality, as well as offering an idealised picture of an obedient potential bride.

The earliest portraits made during Elizabeth's reign echo many of the features described above. In the portrait painted around the year of her accession (cat. 2), she is again shown wearing materials reserved for royalty – now the distinctive white ermine fur, dotted with the creature's black tails – and holding a small prayerbook. It is perhaps not too fanciful to see the echoes of Hans Holbein the Younger's influence here – his full-length portrait of Henry VIII's prospective fourth bride Christina of Denmark, with her demure gaze and chaste, self-contained pose, remained in the royal collection although the marriage negotiations fell through, and set a pattern that would be followed in portraits of royal women for the rest of the sixteenth century. In other ways, Elizabeth is here almost unrecognisable. In contrast to the low-cut dress of the earlier portrait, almost no skin is visible: only her hands and face are exposed. With her hair pulled back, and no hint of her body shape under the black of her costume, the effect is severe and androgynous, perhaps intentionally so.

Att. to George Gower (c. 1540-1596), *Queen Elizabeth I (1533-1603)*,
The 'Hampden' Portrait, c. 1563-7. Oil on panel, transferred onto canvas,
77¼ x 55¼ in. (196 x 140 cm). Private collection.



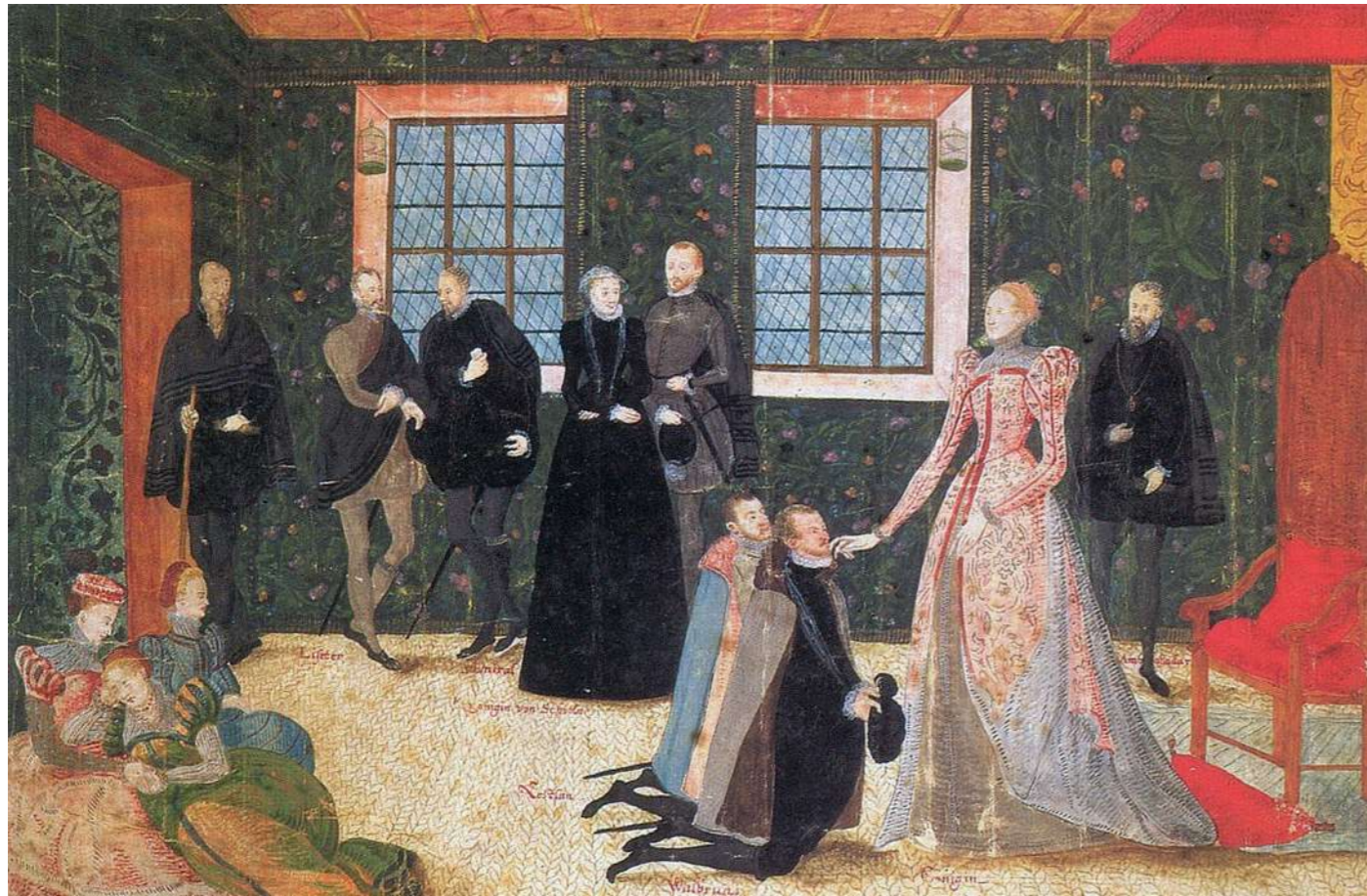
The paradox of a woman in power had already been addressed during the reign of her sister, Mary I, when the Act Concerning Regal Power declared that monarchy overruled gender: 'The Royal Power of this Realm, and all the Dignities of the same, shall be as well in a Queen as in a King'. Elizabeth herself had been described in 1559 as 'our sovaraigne lord and ladie, our kinge and quene, our emperor and empress', and she often compared herself with male figures from history and the Bible. The minimisation of Elizabeth's feminine features in this portrait may therefore be seen as a deliberate strategy by her artists to find a way accurately to represent this unprecedented, young, female, unmarried, Protestant ruler without undermining her authority.

But as Elizabeth's reign evolved, so did her portraiture. In 1562, after just four years on the throne, she experienced a near-fatal bout of smallpox. Although she recovered, her advisors were so shaken by the lack of an obvious Protestant successor that they urged her to marry and produce an heir as soon as possible. Marriage negotiations necessitated the creation of an accurate, attractive portrait, and it may have been in this context that they drafted (though never issued) a proclamation concerning the queen's image. Known as the Draft Proclamation of 1563, it declares the queen's intention

to appoint 'some special person that shall be by her allowed' to create 'a portraiture' of the queen, to be officially licensed and distributed so that artists 'may at their pleasures follow the said pattern or first portraiture'. Around the same time, an artist called 'Master Steffan', probably the Flemish artist Steven van der Meulen, was paid for several likenesses of Elizabeth, perhaps to serve as the pattern described in the proclamation.

Portraits after a pattern known as the 'Badminton Type' have since become associated with van der Meulen, including one discovered in 2019, which expands the sombre black costume of her early images into a more feminine silhouette, complete with puffed sleeves and hourglass waist. Meanwhile, a carnation in her hands suggests a new openness to courtship. Continuing in this vein, but ramping up the themes of femininity, partnership and fertility, is the spectacular Hampden Portrait of Elizabeth (cat. 3). Debate still rages about the attribution and dating of this picture, some historians associating it with the output of van der Meulen in c.1562, others suggesting it is a slightly later portrait by George Gower, who would go on to become Elizabeth's Sergeant Painter in 1581.

Regardless of its attribution, the portrait is one of the most sumptuous images ever made of Elizabeth. Like the human



Artist Unknown, *Elizabeth I Receiving Dutch Ambassadors*, 1570-1575.
Neue Galerie, Kassel, Germany.

embodiment of a Tudor rose, she blooms, life-size, in white and red. The setting is a throne room; standing before a golden cloth of estate, her hand grasping the ball finial of her cushioned throne, rendered in the same gold pigment, and almost camouflaged against the cloth of gold backdrop. She stands on a rich red Turkey carpet – usually considered too valuable to be placed on the floor, as here – a popular commodity that spoke of the queen’s international reach. Along the right edge, a curious strip of flowers, fruit and foliage bursts into the picture, almost threatening to overwhelm the man-made fabrics in the rest of the panel. What to make of this unusually verdant intrusion?

The fruit and flowers appear almost exclusively in pairs. This suggests that the composition was intended to underscore Elizabeth’s suitability for, and openness to, marriage. Bursting pea pods and blossoming flowers speak of fertility and the promise of future royal children. But the combination of foliage, cloth of gold and throne may point to the idea that the portrait represents a specific location. A very similar combination is seen in a painting of c.1585, *Elizabeth I Receiving the Dutch Ambassadors*, now in the Neue Galerie, Kassel, Germany. The room is lined from floor to ceiling in what appear to be green ‘verdure’ tapestries. A cloth of gold estate stands behind a red-cushioned

throne, itself standing on a carpet set on woven rush matting. If this indeed represents a real location, it may be the so-called ‘Paradise Room’ at Greenwich Palace, where Elizabeth commonly entertained foreign emissaries. In this case, the Hampden Portrait could be read as placing the viewer in the position of a foreign dignitary, encountering the queen for the first time; a position that, had she married, her suitor would have experienced firsthand.

Not everyone was in favour of Elizabeth marrying. A suitor from abroad might draw England under foreign rule, while a local spouse threatened to inflame old factions at home. As the queen grew older and the dangers of potential pregnancy became more acute, portraits placed increasing emphasis on her virginal status. Cherries, associated with the Virgin Mary, are tucked into her ear in the Pelican Portrait of c.1575, while the famous ‘sieve’ portraits of the late 1570s and early 1580s associate Elizabeth with the vestal virgin Tuccia, who, according to legend, miraculously carried a sieve full of water from the Tiber to the Temple without spilling a drop as proof of her maidenhood. Many of these portraits were commissioned by Elizabeth’s own courtiers, who were seeking to push her away from a final, likely-looking match with Francois, Duke of Anjou.



English School, *Queen Elizabeth I (1533-1603)*, 1590s.
Oil on panel, 43 x 33 ½ in. (110 x 85 cm).
Philip Mould & Company.

The same anxiety provoked John Stubbe, a Puritan writer, to publish *The Discovery of a Gaping Gulf* whereunto England is like to be swallowed by another French Marriage in 1579, a seditious pamphlet criticising the potential union, for which he was punished by the forced amputation of his right hand. A painted diptych dated 1579 (cat. 23) bears a risqué but commonplace image of the three graces on its cover, and opens to reveal an even more subversive image of Stubbe, prominently displaying the stump of his severed hand, and a reliquary-style painting of the severed hand itself. Although the diptych format suggests that someone felt a need to conceal the portrait, Stubbe himself later regained official favour and served as the MP for Great Yarmouth in 1589.

As Elizabeth grew older, her childlessness once again raised the threat of a succession crisis. Much has been made of the artistic strategy developed by some of Elizabeth's artists—including Nicholas Hilliard—now known as the 'mask of youth', which pushed the problem further into the future by presenting Elizabeth as ever-more youthful. The emphasis placed on these images makes portraits where Elizabeth is shown more convincingly aged—notably Marcus Gheeraerts's *Ditchley Portrait*, 1592—seem like exceptions, generally accompanied by legendary accounts of the queen's supposed disfavour. The 1590s portrait of Elizabeth shown in this exhibition settles somewhere between the rather gaunt pattern used by Gheeraerts, and the improbably youthful face

presented by Hilliard. It shows Elizabeth resplendent in the standing ruff and heavily embroidered skirt typical of other portraits of that era (e.g. the Hardwick Portrait of Elizabeth, c.1590-99).

The embroidery on the skirt consists of roses, honeysuckle and birds in diverse poses. The birds in particular seem to have been chosen to reflect aspects of Elizabeth's rule. Some appear to be standing on one leg, in the manner of the heraldic symbol 'the crane in its vigilance'. According to legend, the crane keeps watch by holding a stone in the claw of its raised foot; if it falls asleep, it drops the stone and is woken immediately by the sound. A symbol of alertness, the watchful, protective theme offers a counterpart to the 'pelican in her piety', which feeds its young with the blood of its own breast—an emblem of self-sacrificial kingship found in Elizabeth's jewel in the earlier Pelican Portrait.

Elsewhere on Elizabeth's skirt, a bird appears to be pierced with arrows. This may be a reference to the popular emblem of an eagle stuck with arrows vanned with its own feathers: suggestive of the double-edged nature of talents that might otherwise inspire too much pride.[4] Perhaps most interestingly of all, some of the birds seem to hold a snake in their beaks, an image found in emblem books at the time accompanied by the motto *gratiam referendam* 'an obligation must be repaid'.[5] This emblem recalls a legend associated with the stork, who was

said to feed her young in infancy in the expectation that they would nourish her in her old age. If this is the intended reference, then Elizabeth's visible senectitude may hold further significance, the portrait intended to remind the viewer of their responsibility to serve Elizabeth faithfully as she approaches old age – one context in which she might not have objected so much to the reference.

If legend is to be believed, Elizabeth was never very enthusiastic about having her portrait painted. Yet the sheer proliferation of her portraits suggests that she, and certainly her courtiers, came to recognise the advantages of presenting their queen in this way. In an age when portraiture as a genre was still relatively new in England, the queen's image was put to an arguably broader range of uses than any monarch's before or since. The portraits' rich symbolism and sumptuous attention to materials rendered them potent at the time, and they continue to fascinate contemporary audiences, inviting us still to decipher their abundant meanings more than four centuries later.

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Vivid Art in Post-Reformation England (Yale University Press / Paul Mellon Centre, 2023) and *The Story of Tudor Art* (Head of Zeus, 2025), a Times and Sunday Times Book of the Year.

[1] Lynn Robson (ed.), (2014) 'Draft Proclamation Relating to Persons Making Portraits of the Queen, 6 December 1563,' In *John Nichols's The Progresses and Public Processions of Queen Elizabeth I: A New Edition of the Early Modern Sources, Vol. 1: 1533–1571: 1533–1571*. Oxford Scholarly Editions Online. Available at: <https://www.oxfordscholarlyeditions.com/view/10.1093/actrade/9780199551385.book.1/actrade-9780199551385-div2-41> (Accessed 6 May 2026).

[2] Elizabeth I, (1968) '15th May, Year Unknown', in George Bagshawe Harrison (ed.), *The Letters of Queen Elizabeth I*. London: Cassell, 1981, p. 15.

[3] John Strype, (1824) *Annals of the Reformation*. Vol.1, part 2. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 399, 406, cited in Carole Levin, (2013) *The Heart and Stomach of a King: Elizabeth I and the Politics of Sex and Power*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, p. 121.

[4] Alison Adams et al., (2006) *French Emblems at Glasgow*. Available at: <https://www.emblems.arts.gla.ac.uk/french/emblem.php?id=FLPa052> (Accessed 6 May 2026).

[5] Alison Adams et al., (2006) *French Emblems at Glasgow*. Available at: <https://www.emblems.arts.gla.ac.uk/french/emblem.php?id=FLPa052> (Accessed 6 May 2026).



*D*uring Elizabeth I's forty-five year reign, which stretched from 1558 to 1603, there were perhaps 2,000 courtiers (male and female) orbiting her at any time.[1] The vast majority attended court sporadically for specific events such as the Accession Day Tilts, held annually at Whitehall Palace on 17 November, where they would have encountered the Queen in public, ceremonial spaces. Some were allowed to kiss her hand on occasion. But most courtiers probably saw paintings of Elizabeth – whose portrait could be found hanging on the walls of 'all sortes of [her] subiects' – more frequently than they saw the monarch herself.[2]

Only a small minority of Elizabeth's courtiers regularly attended court. Fewer still were granted personal audiences or given access to spaces such as the privy chamber (her private day room) or the royal bedchamber. Those in Elizabeth's inner circle were often on the receiving end of playful nicknames and other terms of endearment. Henry Carey, 1st Baron Hunsdon – her first cousin – was 'my Harry'. Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester

– Elizabeth's rumoured lover and the only man she ever seriously considered marrying – was 'Eyes': an allusion, perhaps, to the fact that she trusted him to look out for her interests at court. William Cecil, 1st Baron Burghley – Principal Secretary (1558-72) and Lord Treasurer (1572-98) – was 'Sir Spirit', a sobriquet seemingly chosen because Elizabeth perceived in him something of a kindred spirit, both being cautious by nature. Sir Francis Walsingham – spymaster and one of Burghley's successors as Principal Secretary (1573-90) – was 'the Moor', perhaps because he seems to have preferred black attire (as may be seen in portraits such as that displayed in the current exhibition).[3] Robert Cecil, 1st Earl of Salisbury, Burghley's second son and political heir, was 'Pygmy' because he was short of stature, having been born with a curvature of the spine.

In an era in which proximity to the monarch equalled power, those with direct access to the Queen – and some form of personal relationship with her – were feared and envied in equal measure, even by others

in her inner circle. Walsingham, for example, noted ruefully on one occasion that Hunsdon's bonds of kinship with the Queen seemed to give him an advantage: 'propinquyte in blood doothe somewhat preveyle'. [4] Sometimes, the courtiers closest to Elizabeth found themselves on the receiving end of smear campaigns propagated by political rivals. When, in 1560, Robert Dudley's wife, Amy Robsart, was found dead at the foot of a stone staircase, Dudley's enemies were quick to accuse him of a murderous plot designed to pave the way for marriage to Elizabeth and kingship in all but name. [5] In the early 1580s, a scurrilous tract called *Leycesters Commonwealth* accused Dudley of yet more murders, including that of Walter Devereux, 1st Earl of Essex (whose widow Dudley had married in 1578).

One way to combat such attacks was to commission written rebuttals. Portraiture was another means by which a courtier's public persona could be (re)shaped. Many an Elizabethan courtier displayed an oil painting of himself on his own walls. Some – particularly those with considerable political and artistic patronage to dispense – displayed more than one. As of 1588, Dudley had no fewer than seven paintings of himself hanging on the walls of Leicester House in the Strand, his London base, where he regularly entertained the Queen, other leading courtiers, and foreign dignitaries. [6] Powerful and

ambitious courtiers ensured, too, that carefully crafted images of themselves circulated far and wide. Dudley gifted his portrait to foreign monarchs, including James VI of Scotland and Catherine de' Medici, the Queen Mother of France, as well as to fellow courtiers in England, many of whom displayed his image on their walls. [7]

Dudley was the first of Elizabeth's courtiers to fully realize the potential of portraiture as political propaganda. [8] Between 1558, when Elizabeth ascended the throne, and his own death in 1588, a few weeks after the defeat of the Spanish Armada, Dudley commissioned, and sat for, a new portrait of himself on at least twenty occasions. [9] Many of these were one-offs designed to adorn Dudley's own walls; often, such images were paired with one-off paintings of Elizabeth, also commissioned by Dudley, in what must have been a potent display of Dudley's singular status as favourite (and, for much of the 1560s and 1570s, would-be consort). [10] Other of the portraits Dudley commissioned of himself were types intended for replication and distribution. In these cases, Dudley typically retained the original, or prime, version for his own picture collection, which by the end of his life numbered approximately 200 paintings and other works of art.



English School, *Portrait of Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester (1532-1588)*, 1560s.
Oil on panel, 45 x 34 in. (114 x 86 cm). Private collection.

The portrait of Dudley in the current exhibition conforms to a type commissioned in the early 1560s from the Antwerp-born Steven van der Meulen, who emigrated to England in late 1560 or early 1561 and was denized in 1562 in reward for having travelled to Sweden to take the likeness of Eric XIV, one of Elizabeth's foreign suitors.[11] In all the surviving examples a richly clad Dudley – the Garter George suspended from a jewel-encrusted gold chain around his neck – is depicted in three-quarter length, standing, pivoted slightly to his left, right hand on his hip. Other common elements include the presence, on Dudley's cap, of a jewel depicting the Roman soldier Marcus Curtius on horseback, a detail probably intended to remind the viewer of Dudley's privileged position as master of the horse, to which he had been appointed by Elizabeth shortly after her accession. Few were more trusted at Renaissance courts than the master of the horse, whose job it was to lift the monarch and off horseback: a task which necessarily entailed close, physical contact.[12]

Portraits of this type, which constitute the first images of Dudley designed for widespread circulation, speak to his growing wealth, power, and ambition in the early 1560s: the period when, following his wife Amy's death, he began positioning himself as a potential consort for Elizabeth. Indeed, the very

act of commissioning a portrait from van der Meulen – immediately after van der Meulen had painted Eric XIV's portrait – might be seen a means of announcing himself as a worthy competitor to the Swedish king, despite the fact that many at the Elizabethan court saw the Dudleys as arrivistes. Or, as William Cecil, 1st Baron Burghley, noted when weighing up the relative merits of Dudley and the Habsburg Archduke Charles (another of the Queen's foreign, royal suitors), Dudley's grandfather had been 'but a solicitor'.[13]

Dudley was unusual in commissioning such a large, and varied, number of portraits: some depicted him as the Elizabethan courtier *par excellence*, others as Elizabeth's consort *manque*, yet others as the ideal Protestant soldier. By contrast, Burghley – Dudley's great rival for Elizabeth's ear – seems to have sat for no more than a handful of portraits over the course of his long life.[14] (Dudley died at the age of about fifty-six, Burghley a few weeks shy of his seventy-eighth birthday.) Why should this have been so? One answer is that Burghley, unlike Dudley, was not particularly vain or flamboyant. Another is that Burghley probably was not as interested in painting *per se* as Dudley was. Inventories and other written accounts suggest that, as was the fashion of the day, Burghley hung painted portraits of *uomini famosi* (including, in all likelihood, one or



English School, *Portrait of William Cecil, Lord Burghley (1520-98)*, Late 1590s. Oil on panel, 30 3/5 x 24 3/8 in. (78 x 62 cm). Private collection.

two of Dudley) on his own walls.[15] But architecture is what Burghley poured his energy into as a patron of the visual arts, lavishing time and money on ambitious building works at his three great houses: Cecil House on the Strand in London; Burghley House in Northamptonshire; and Theobalds in Hertfordshire.

This is not to suggest that Burghley was unaware of 'the value of portraits as personal propaganda'.[16] On the contrary, he must have gone to some effort to ensure that his image circulated widely, for more contemporary portraits of Burghley survive than of any other Elizabethan save Elizabeth herself.[17] All, however, conform to one of three types, each of which was updated as and when required (not necessarily by the artist who had devised it). Thus, as the decades

passed, the brown hair seen in portraits of the 1560s became grey and, in due course, white. By the same token, clothing, props, and background details were altered to reflect Burghley's steady acquisition of new honours and offices at court. But the basic, underlying templates used for portraits of Burghley remained unchanged with the passage of time. Given that, so far as Elizabeth was concerned, reliability was one of Burghley's great virtues, continuity of image may have been part of a larger political strategy in his case. To have regularly commissioned new portraits, constantly seeking out new painters to take his likeness afresh – as Dudley did – might have proven counterproductive for Burghley.

The portrait of Burghley on display in the current exhibition conforms to a type



Marcus Gheeraerts the Younger (1561 – 1635) and Workshop, *Robert Devereux, 2nd Earl of Essex (1565 – 1601)*, Late 1590s. Oil on panel, 44 ¾ x 35 in. (113.7 x 88.9 cm). Private collection.

believed to have come into use in the mid-1580s, possibly following a sitting to Marcus Gheeraerts the Younger.[18] Paintings which adhere to this template depict Burghley in three-quarter face, pivoted slightly to his left, wearing the magnificent scarlet robes and gold collar of the Order of the Garter. This particular example was painted in the late 1590s by an unidentified workshop. In the upper left corner, Burghley's coat of arms may be seen, encircled by the order's motto: 'Honi soit qui mal y pense' (Old Norman French which has variously been translated 'Shamed be (the person) who thinks evil of it' and 'Evil be to him who thinks of evil'.) In the upper right corner an inscription in English lists his principal offices and honours: 'Lorde Burghley, lorde highe treasurer of England, master of the wardes, and one of hir majesteis most honorable priuey Counsellors'. This painting was originally part of a set of portraits – all produced by the same as-yet-unidentified workshop in the second half of the 1590s – depicting Elizabethan Knights of the Garter in their regalia. [19] A portrait of Dudley, now in the Yale Center for British Art, was part of the same set and made use of a face type devised c.1587 by William Segar which was widely copied by other painters.[20]

If Dudley and Burghley (amongst others) dominated Elizabethan court life from the late 1550s through the late 1580s, Robert

Devereux, 2nd Earl of Essex (Dudley's step-son) and Robert Cecil (Burghley's younger son) did so in the 1590s. (Dudley's illegitimate son, Sir Robert, the subject of a portrait on display in the current exhibition, was never a key player at court and, from 1605 onwards, lived on the Continent in self-imposed exile.) Essex and Cecil approached portraiture differently, in ways that reflected their distinct personalities and political approaches. Rash, hot-headed, and impatient, Essex – whose relationship with the Queen veered between high favour and complete disgrace – was attention-seeking and dramatic, known for his handsome looks, his extravagant tastes, and his derring-do both in the tiltyard and on the battlefield. On more than one occasion, Essex incurred Elizabeth's wrath for his dalliances with young ladies of the court.[21] Cecil, by contrast, was serious and sober, a man of care and contemplation and not a tiltyard star or a battlefield hero. A workaholic, Cecil took pleasure in describing himself as serving the Queen 'like a pack horse'. [22]

Only thirty-five at the time of his execution for treason in 1601, Essex commissioned a remarkable number of portraits during his brief life. Between 1587 and 1599, the years when his political star was in the ascendant, Essex commissioned, and sat for, perhaps as many as a dozen portraits in as many years.[23] These range from

one-off images, such as Nicholas Hilliard's cabinet miniature *Young Man Among Roses* (generally agreed to be a depiction of Essex, c.1587-8), to types designed for wide circulation. Virtually all surviving contemporary paintings show Essex wearing black and/or white – Elizabeth's colours – in what was probably intended to be understood as a declaration of loyalty to the Queen.

In addition to Hilliard, who seems to have portrayed Essex on three or possibly four occasions, portrait painters who benefitted from Essex's patronage include William Segar (like Hilliard, a one-time protégé of Dudley), Isaac Oliver, and Robert Peake the Elder.[25] Whether commemorating his appearance in the tiltyard or on the battlefield, whether depicted life-sized or in miniature, Essex – like Dudley before him – was highly attuned to the many and varied ways in which portraiture might be deployed to fashion a court persona. Those to whom Essex presented his portrait include fellow courtiers as well as foreign dignitaries of note, such as Giovanni Battista Basadonna, the Venetian agent in London.[26] Ferdinando I de' Medici, Grand Duke of Tuscany, was keen to acquire a portrait of Essex, though it is unclear whether he succeeded.[27]

The painting of Essex currently on display is an example of a type commissioned from Marcus Gheeraerts the Younger to

celebrate Essex's military triumph over the Spanish at Cadiz in the summer of 1596. The original, or prime, version, now at Woburn Abbey, depicts Essex life-sized and full-length, entirely in white, standing in a rocky landscape with roiling seas and a burning Cadiz visible in the background, holding the wand of the office of the Earl Marshal in his right hand. Given that Essex was not appointed Earl Marshal until December 1597, presumably this type did not come into circulation until c.1598 – perhaps because, as is clear from court correspondence, Essex was so busy on his return from Cadiz that it proved difficult to find enough time 'to sitt it owt' for Gheeraerts.[28]

The present portrait is one of several extant variants in half-length in which Essex is depicted against a plain background, clad in black and white, the Lesser George suspended from a blue ribbon around his neck. As in all examples of this type, Essex sports the distinctive, spade-shaped beard he had grown while sailing to Spain. Oil paintings conforming to this composition were integral to a propaganda campaign by which Essex sought to rebut various stains on his name and character, including the charge that he and his men had failed to hand over the spoils of war to the Crown, instead keeping the gold and jewels they had looted at Cadiz for themselves. Portraits like this one were also deployed in the service of Essex's long-standing

rivalry with Robert Cecil. The competition between them intensified markedly from 1596, with Essex increasingly seeking to present himself to the world not just as a royal favourite, but as a serious political and military leader.[30]

All contemporary portraits of Cecil conform to one type, in which he is shown staring straight ahead, pivoted very slightly to his right, surrounded by props illustrative of his many court offices.[31] In most extant versions – including those painted long after his wife's death, in 1597 – Cecil's wedding ring is 'almost at the geographical centre of the portrait'.[32] Unlike Essex, Cecil (who would be created 1st Earl of Salisbury by James I) does not seem to have enjoyed sitting for his portrait – in part, perhaps, because he was self-conscious about his appearance. His inability to fight, either in the tiltyard or on the battlefield, also would have limited the range of ways in which he could be portrayed. That said, continuity of image is likely to have suited Cecil for political reasons, just as it had his father, Elizabeth, and in due course James, trusted Cecil, in large part, because he was perceived as a safe pair of hands. Continuity of image would have made sense for other reasons, too, for it was Cecil who, more than any other courtier, masterminded the smooth transition, in 1603, from Tudor to Stuart.

The earliest extant examples of Cecil's

portrait are inscribed with a date of 1599 and can be associated on stylistic grounds with John de Critz the Elder, who continued to produce variations on this theme for Cecil, as and when required, for many years thereafter.[33] Documentary evidence from 1607, for example, records a series of payments from Cecil to de Critz for making several such portraits for distribution as gifts to, among others, Giorgio Giustinian (the Venetian ambassador in London); Christophe de Harlay, Count of Beaumont (the French ambassador in London), and Juan Fernández de Velasco y Tovar, Constable of Castile (who had led the Spanish delegation to England for the signing of the 1604 Treaty of London). [34] Further insight into the demand for Cecil's image – and the ways in which it was displayed, at least by his fellow courtiers – may be gleaned from a letter of 1609, in which Thomas Howard, 3rd Viscount Howard of Bindon, wrote to Cecil requesting a painting of him in his Garter robes so that he could hang it 'in the gallery I lately made for the pictures of sundry of my honourable friends'.[35]

It is unlikely to be coincidence that Cecil's one, and only, experience of commissioning, and sitting for, his portrait seems to have occurred circa 1599: a period of acute reputational crisis. Following his appointment, in quick succession, to several of the great

offices of state once held by his father – Principal Secretary (1596), Lord Privy Seal (1596), and Master of the Court of Wards (1598) – Cecil found himself the subject of a series of venomous printed attacks penned by followers of Essex, who felt that their man had been unjustly passed over by the Queen. Conflating physical deformity with moral deformity, Essex's followers accused Cecil of being a 'crookebacke spider' with 'crooked waies'.^[36] Not surprisingly, perhaps, the portrait type devised by de Critz gives no indication of Cecil's curvature of the spine.

In surviving examples from the late 1590s and early 1600s, Cecil – perhaps taking a leaf from Essex's book – is shown wearing Elizabeth's colours: black and white. In extant examples dating from 1606 (the year James I made him a Knight of the Garter) or later, including the portrait displayed in the current exhibition, he is shown wearing his crimson Garter robes and gold collar of the Garter. The present painting also depicts Cecil holding a wand of office indicative of his appointment, in 1608, as Lord Treasurer (a post his father had held under Elizabeth I), whilst on the table may be seen a handbell, the red purse of office, and two letters. The latter may originally have been inscribed with a list of his offices and honours, though the words are now difficult to decipher. This painting is unique amongst extant portraits of Cecil in showing him against a backdrop

of monumental architecture: an allusion, presumably, to his many ambitious, and expensive, building works, including the erection of Salisbury House in the Strand (1599-1602) and of Hatfield House in Hertfordshire, work on which began in 1607 (when James I forced him to swap Theobalds for Hatfield) but remained unfinished at his death five years later.

Salisbury and Burghley were unusual in deriving so much political and artistic mileage from a limited number of portrait types, just as Dudley and Essex were exceptional in the number, and variety, of the portraits that they commissioned. Most of the courtiers in Elizabeth's inner circle tended to commission one or two portrait types for reproduction with a limited range of variations. All surviving portraits of Sir Francis Walsingham, Elizabeth's 'Moor', conform to a type believed to have been devised by John de Critz in the mid-1580s, in which a serious-faced Walsingham (sometimes pivoted to his left, other times pivoted to his right) is depicted wearing a black doublet and a black skull-cap; sometimes, a cameo of the Queen set in gold may be seen hanging from a black ribbon around his neck. Elizabeth's beloved cousin Henry Carey, 1st Baron Hunsdon, seems to have sat for his portrait twice: once, in the early 1560s, to Steven Cornelisz van Herwijck, and again in the early 1590s, to an unidentified Anglo-Netherlandish artist. In examples



of the former type, including the portrait on display in the current exhibition, Carey is shown wearing the Lesser George, a signifier of his status, from 1561 onwards, as a Knight of the Garter. In examples of the latter, he is shown holding his rod of office as Lord Chamberlain, to which post he had been appointed in 1585.

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[1] See Susan Doran, (2015) *Elizabeth I and her Circle*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 2 for the statistic and pp. 2-3 further discussion of the varying degrees of access enjoyed by different courtiers.

[2] The quotation is taken from a 1563 draft proclamation concerning the production of portraits of the Queen, see The National Archives (TNA), Kew. SP 12/31/25, fol. 46. For further evidence of the widespread circulation of her image, see Elizabeth Goldring, (2014) *Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, and the World of Elizabethan Art: Painting and Patronage at the Court of Elizabeth I*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, p. 10.

[3] For this explanation of Walsingham's nickname, see John Cooper, (2011) *The Queen's Agent: Francis Walsingham at the Court of Elizabeth I*. London: Faber & Faber, 2012, p. 125.

[4] The National Archives (TNA), Kew. SP 52/35, fol. 54 (Walsingham to Mr Davison, 12 July 1584); cited and discussed in Doran, *op. cit.* (n. 1), p. 20.

[5] His detractors also took this opportunity to dredge up the fact that father (John Dudley, Duke of Northumberland) and grandfather (Edmund Dudley) both had been executed for treason.

[6] This is clear from surviving inventories: see Goldring, *op. cit.* (n. 2), Appendix III, 283-302 (with particular reference to the following entries, which record paintings of Dudley on display at Leicester House in 1588: L36, L40, L51, L52, L74, L91, L97).

[7] For the circulation of Dudley's image at the Elizabethan court and foreign courts during his own lifetime, see Goldring, *op. cit.* (n. 2), pp. 8-14.

[8] Dudley was not, however, the first at the English court to do so: that distinction goes to Sir Thomas More, the first of Henry VIII's courtiers to recognize that Hans Holbein's skills as a portraitist might be deployed to burnish his, and his family's image, in the eyes of contemporaries and posterity. See Elizabeth Goldring, (2025) *Holbein: Renaissance Master*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, pp. 85-115.

[9] See Goldring, *op. cit.* (n. 2), pp. 6-8.

[10] At Kenilworth Castle, Warwickshire, for example, Dudley displayed four life-sized, full-length paintings of himself and the Queen which had been commissioned in the run-up to the 1575 Kenilworth festivities, during Elizabeth and the court were entertained by Dudley for nearly three weeks at the castle. See Goldring, *op. cit.* (n. 2), pp. 87-114.

[11] The example on display in the current exhibition seems to have been painted by an independent hand working to van der Meulen's template in the immediate aftermath of van der Meulen's death, which occurred in October 1563. Given that the painting includes no references to Dudley's elevation to the earldom of Leicester, which occurred in September 1564, its execution can be narrowed to the eleventh-month window between

October 1563 and September 1564. For van der Meulen's life and career, see Edward Town, (2014) 'A Biographical Dictionary of London Painters, 1547-1625,' *Walpole Society*, vol. 76, pp. 1-235 (esp. pp. 179-81). Other surviving examples of this type (which appear to have been painted by van der Meulen himself) are now in the Rothschild Collection at Waddesdon Manor, Buckinghamshire; in the Yale Center for British Art, New Haven, Connecticut, USA; and at Montacute House, Somerset (National Trust).

[12] See Doran, *op. cit.* (n. 1), p. 119.

[13] This episode, which dates from 1566, is discussed in Goldring, *op. cit.* (n. 2), p. 66.

[14] See Roy Strong, (1969) *Tudor and Jacobean Portraits*. Vol. 1. London: H.M.S.O., pp. 27-33; and Goldring, *op. cit.* (n. 2), pp. 6-8.

[15] The earliest surviving inventories of the Cecils' picture holdings, which date from the early seventeenth century, record two paintings of Dudley, which may well have been acquired during Burghley's lifetime, perhaps as gifts from Dudley. See Goldring, *op. cit.* (n. 2), p. 8; and Erna Auerbach and C. Kingsley Adams, (1971) *Paintings and Sculpture at Hatfield House*. London: Constable, p. 20. Numerous written accounts by foreign travellers who visited England in the 1590s and early 1600s make mention of the painted portraits displayed by the Cecils, particularly at Theobalds. See, e.g., Zdeněk Brtnický z Valdštejna (1981)

The Diary of Baron Waldstein, a Traveller in Elizabethan England. Edited and Translated by G. W. Groos. London: Thames and Hudson, p. 85.

[16] Strong, *op. cit.* (n. 14), I, p. 31.

[17] The bulk of these date from the early 1570s onwards, the period when Cecil was created 1st Baron Burghley (1571), appointed Lord High Treasurer (1572), and inducted into the Order of the Garter (1572). See Strong, *op. cit.* (n. 14), pp. 27-33.

[18] The type in question is what Strong labelled 'Type B'; see Strong, *op. cit.* (n. 14), I, p. 32.

[19] Other extant portraits likely to have been part of this set include: one of Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, now in the Yale Center for British Art (B1975.1.7); one of Ambrose Dudley, Earl of Warwick, now in a private collection (formerly with Philip Mould & Co.); and one of Thomas Radcliffe, 3rd Earl of Sussex, now in a private collection (formerly with Philip Mould & Co.). These paintings are the same size as that of Burghley on display in the current exhibition and also include, in the upper left corner, the sitter's coat of arms encircled by the motto of the Order and, in the upper right corner, an inscription in English identifying the sitter and listing his chief offices. As of the eighteenth century, this set was in the possession of the Capel Cure family at Blake Hall, Essex – though its earlier provenance remains uncertain.

[20] For the Segar type, see Goldring, *op.*

cit. (n. 2), pp. 8, 10-11, 231, 245, 306.

[21] Elizabeth was displeased by Essex's secret marriage to (a possibly pregnant) Frances Walsingham, daughter of Sir Francis, in the early 1590s – and also by his admission, in the mid-1590s, that he was the father of Elizabeth Southwell's illegitimate child, born a few years earlier.

[22] Cited in Doran, *op. cit.* (n. 1), p. 289.

[23] This estimate is taken from Roy Strong, (Autumn 2004) 'Faces of a Favourite: Robert Devereux, 2nd Earl of Essex, and the Uses of Portraiture,' *The British Art Journal*, vol.5.2, pp. 80-90 (here at p. 90).

[24] Paul E. J. Hammer, (1999) *The Polarisation of Elizabethan Politics: The Political Career of Robert Devereux, 2nd Earl of Essex, 1585-1597*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 208.

[25] See Goldring, *op. cit.* (n. 2), pp. 164, 237-40; Elizabeth Goldring, (2019) *Nicholas Hilliard: Life of an Artist*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, pp. 223-25 (figs. 180-181), 229-30 (fig. 192), 233-35 (fig. 204); Hammer, *op. cit.* (n. 24), pp. 204-11; Catharine MacLeod, (2020) 'Isaac Oliver and the Essex Circle', in Catharine MacLeod and Alexander Marr (eds.), *British Art Studies: Elizabethan and Jacobean Miniature Paintings in Context*. Available at: <https://britishartstudies.ac.uk/issues/17/isaac-oliver-and-the-essex-circle/> (Accessed 6 May 2026); and Strong, *op. cit.* (n. 22), pp. 80-90.

[26] Hammer, *op. cit.* (n. 24), p. 206.

[27] Hammer, *op. cit.* (n. 24), pp. 206, 208.

[28] Strong, *op. cit.* (n. 23), p. 83, was the first to note the significance of the wand of office for dating the Woburn portrait to c.1598. For the court correspondence indicating that Essex was too busy, until late 1597, to sit to Gheeraerts, including the snippet quoted in the main text above, see Hammer, *op. cit.* (n. 24), pp.208-10, n.35. For the activities with which Essex was busy on his return, see n. 28, below.

[29] In addition to commissioning Gheeraerts to create a template for the production of portraits in great celebrating the English victory at Cadiz, Essex commissioned Isaac Oliver to create a template for the production of portrait miniatures of himself sporting the new, square-cut beard synonymous with his expedition to Cadiz. So far as is known, Essex was the only non-royal patron at the Elizabethan court to have commissioned replica portrait miniatures in bulk for widespread distribution (something Thomas Cromwell seems to have done at the Henrician court, ordering several replica miniatures of himself from Holbein to celebrate his installation as a Knight of the Garter). See MacLeod, *op. cit.* (n. 25); and Goldring, *op. cit.* (n. 8), p. 177. As part of this same propaganda campaign, Essex also organized a public Thanksgiving in London to celebrate the victory (and would have organized more, in the provinces, had the Queen not intervened to prevent this from

happening); penned two written accounts of the battle; and sponsored the production of a birds-eye map of Cadiz showing key battle scenes. See Doran, *op. cit.* (n. 1), pp. 180-81; and Paul E. J. Hammer, (September 1997) 'Myth-Making: Politics, Propaganda and the Capture of Cadiz in 1596,' *The Historical Journal*, vol.40.3, pp. 621-42.

[30] Essex was enraged to discover, on his return from Cadiz, that Elizabeth had appointed Cecil to the coveted post of Principal Secretary during his absence.

[31] See Strong, *op. cit.* (n. 14), vol. I, p. 275. For Robert Cecil as a collector of paintings and other objets d'art at the Jacobean court, see Susan Bracken, (2002) 'Robert Cecil as Art Collector,' in Pauline Croft (ed.), *Patronage, Culture and Power: The Early Cecils, 1558-1612*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, pp. 121-37.

[32] Stephen Alford, (2024) *All his Spies: The Secret World of Robert Cecil*. London: Allen Lane, pp. xxix.

[33] Isaac Oliver, to whom de Critz was related by marriage, also seem to have had access to this template. See Isaac Oliver (c.1600) Robert Cecil, 1st Earl of Salisbury. Available at: <https://collections.burghley.co.uk/collection/robert-cecil-1st-earl-of-salisbury-by-isaac-oliver-circa-1600/> (Accessed: 6 May 2026).

[34] For a transcription of the documentary evidence in question, see Auerbach and Adams, *op. cit.* (n. 15), pp. 72-73.

[35] Hatfield House, Cecil Papers 127/33; cited and discussed in Auerbach and Adams, *op. cit.* (n. 15), pp. 72-73.

[36] For these, and other, examples, see Doran, *op. cit.* (n. 1), pp. 290-91. The sentiment expressed was not new – Essex and his followers had been saying such things to one another in their private correspondence for years – but the public nature of the attacks was. See Alexandra Gajda, (2012) *The Earl of Essex and Late Elizabethan Political Culture*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013, p. 148.

[37] For this type, see Strong, *op. cit.* (n. 14), I, pp. 320-22. For Walsingham as a source of both political and artistic patronage, see Goldring, *op. cit.* (n. 2), pp. 66-67, 74.

[38] See The Weiss Gallery (ed.), (2010) *25th Anniversary Catalogue*. London: The Weiss Gallery, p. 86; The Weiss Gallery (ed.), (2006) *A Fashionable Likeness: Early Portraiture, 1550-1710*. London: The Weiss Gallery, cat. no. 1; and Tarnya Cooper (ed.), (2006) *Searching for Shakespeare*. London: National Portrait Gallery, pp. 125-26.



CATALOGUE ENTRIES



Cat. 1

ENGLISH SCHOOL

Queen Elizabeth I, when a Princess

c. 1548-1558

Oil on panel
30 x 15 in. (76.2 x 38.1 cm)

PROVENANCE

Probably Dukes of Somerset;
Sir John Ramsden 6th Bt.;
Christie's, London, 'Pictures by Old Masters the Property
of Sir John Ramsden', 27 and 30 May 1932, Lot 99;
Bt. 'Sykes' £54.12
Sotheby's May 30th 1962, Lot 25;
Private Collection, Spain;
Christie's, London, 9 November 2005, lot 1;
Philip Mould & Company, London, acquired from the above;
Private collection, UK, acquired from the above.



This rare early portrait of Elizabeth I, painted when she was still a princess, offers an unusually intimate glimpse of the future queen before the construction of her later public image. In marked contrast to the opulent portraiture associated with her later reign, Elizabeth is presented here as an intellectual young adolescent, whose status as a legitimate heir to the throne had only recently been restored.

The present work is an in-period copy of a portrait in the Royal Collection, which is considered the earliest individual portrayal of Elizabeth. Until the re-emergence of the present work in 2005, the Royal Collection work was thought to be the only surviving single likeness of Elizabeth as Princess from this formative period. It depicts her at approximately thirteen years of age, datable to c.1546, some twelve years before her accession in 1558. To this date, neither work has been securely attributed.

In contrast to the highly codified representations of her reign, in which authority and magnificence are projected through highly elaborate costumes, this early likeness presents a more human and intimate image. Although still adorned in the trappings of her rank, Elizabeth appears composed and self-possessed, her demeanour reflecting the courtly ideals of decorum and piety expected of a princess. Notably, the portrait is largely

devoid of overt monarchical symbolism, instead emphasising personal presence over dynastic display. In more prosaic terms and given its early date within the development of English portraiture in oil, the type may also be understood as among the earliest surviving representations of a young girl in English oil painting.

The Royal Collection portrait is thought to have been sent by Elizabeth as a gift to her brother, Edward VI, in 1547. The two siblings appear to have enjoyed a close relationship. Edward's letters attest to his affection for his sister, expressing how keenly he felt her absence following his accession, while Elizabeth remained at Hatfield. In May 1547, Elizabeth sent a letter to accompany the portrait Edward had requested, writing: "*For the face, I graunt. I might wel blushe to offer, but the mynde I shal never be ashamed to present... when you shal loke on my picture you wil witsafe to think that as you have but the outwarde shadow of the body afore you, so my inwarde minde wisbeth that the body it selfe were oftener in your presence.*"[1]

The Royal Collection picture, therefore, was likely a mark and symbol of affection, commissioned for a private audience. This was unusual in Royal portraiture. Until then, the function of portrait paintings had largely been directed towards display or diplomacy. Holbein's imposing Henry VIII was clearly designed to awe, as much as his controversial portrait

of Anne of Cleves was produced to facilitate marriage negotiations. In this context, the portrait of Princess Elizabeth represents a notable shift in function.

Within this expanding framework for the production and purpose of royal portraiture, the present work may be understood in relation to the commissioning practices of Elizabeth's immediate circle. Catherine Parr, Henry VIII's final queen and one of the most culturally engaged figures at court, emerges as a central patron in mid-Tudor England, and her role in the development of English portraiture is significant. Her chamber accounts record payments to artists including John Bettes the Elder, Lucas Hornebolte, and Hans Eworth,[2] and suggest associations with William Scrots and Levina Teerlinc.

Catherine was also a prolific disseminator of her own image. Her fourth husband, the reprehensible Thomas Seymour, wrote "give me one of your small pictures... if ye have any left...". [3] Portraits were likewise exchanged within the royal family: Catherine presented Edward VI with a portrait of herself and the King, while a comparable example was given to the Earl of Hertford, her brother-in-law and later Protector Somerset. Elizabeth, who was living with Catherine Parr during this period, must be understood within this milieu. It is highly plausible that she

was directly exposed to, and perhaps participated in, these patterns of artistic patronage. The present portrait may be situated within this context, reflecting the broader practice of producing and circulating likenesses within a closely connected dynastic and familial network.

Recent dendrochronological analysis of the central German oak panel on which this portrait is painted provides an earliest possible felling date of 1546. The painting is therefore likely to have been executed from 1548 onwards, allowing time for seasoning. The political difficulties of Elizabeth's position in Queen Mary's reign make it unlikely that the picture was made after Edward VI's death in 1553. Nor does it accord with the more controlled and overtly political imagery that developed following her accession in 1558, when her royal portraiture became increasingly regulated. The Royal Collection portrait, which belonged to Edward VI and is recorded at Westminster in 1547, further suggests that the production of related versions would have required some degree of access to, or sanction from, the royal court.

The provenance of the present work is obscured by the fact that, by the early twentieth century, it appears to have lost its original identity. The picture was sold from the Ramsden collection in 1932. Sir John Ramsden, 5th Bt., had married

Lady Guendolen Seymour, daughter and co-heir of Edward Adolphus, 12th Duke of Somerset, a direct descendant of Protector Somerset. Lady Guendolen inherited a substantial group of paintings from her father, including important Tudor portraits, together with the estate of Bulstrode in Buckinghamshire, where the present work is recorded in 1930. The painting is almost certainly identifiable with that listed in the Bulstrode inventory as 'L. Cranach Portrait of a lady in a pink jewelled dress, holding a book, panel 29 × 21½ in'. [4] These dimensions would have included the two now-missing narrow panels on either side of the central panel preserved here. Its misidentification and uncertain attribution at that date likely accounts for its relatively modest status within the collection and its absence from other inventories so far identified.

[1] Karen Hearn (ed.), (1995) *Dynasties: Painting in Tudor and Jacobean England, 1530-1630*. London: Tate Publishing, p. 78.

[2] The National Archives (n.d.) PRO E315/340, fol. 30a, cited in Susan James (1996) 'Lady Jane Grey or Queen Kateryn Parr?', *The Burlington Magazine*, January.

[3] Susan James, *Kateryn Parr – The Making of a Queen* (London, 1999), p. 419.

[4] D/RA/3-109q, Bulstrode Papers.



Cat. 2

ENGLISH SCHOOL

Queen Elizabeth I (1533-1603)
The 'Clopton' Portrait

c. 1558

Inscribed 'ELIZABETHE REGINA'

Oil on panel
26 1/2 x 19 1/8 in. (67.5 x 48.9 cm)

PROVENANCE

The Clopton family, Clopton House, Stratford on Avon, and thence by descent;
Francis Pathericke (née Clopton), late eighteenth century;
John Skrymsher-Clopton, nephew of the above;
Mrs Edward Pathericke;
George Lloyd, acquired as part of the house and estate from the above, 1831;
Charles Warde, nephew of the above;
Arthur Hodgson Esq., acquired as part of the house and estate from the above, 1873;
The Rev. F.H. Hodgson, son of the above;
The Hon Mrs OE Hodgson, widow of the above;
Mrs J Paton, granddaughter of the above;
Philip Mould & Company, 1991, acquired from the above;
Private collection, USA, acquired from the above;
Philip Mould & Company, 2005, acquired from the above;
Private collection, UK, acquired from the above;
Private collection, UK, acquired from the above in 2023

EXHIBITED

Shakespeare's Birthplace Trust, Stratford-upon-Avon, 2005;
The National Portrait Gallery, The Smithsonian, 2005-2022.

LITERATURE

Roy Strong, (1963) *Portraits of Elizabeth I*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, p. 56;
Roy Strong, (1969) *Tudor and Jacobean Portraits*, Vol. I. London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office. p. 110;



Roy Strong, (1987) *Gloriana: The Portraits of Queen Elizabeth I*. London: Thames and Hudson. pp. 58–59 (illus.);

Roy Strong, (1991) Private correspondence, 27 July;

Malcolm Rogers, (1992) Private correspondence, 3 August;

Lawrence Hendra and Philip Mould, (2024) 'The Face Beneath: Collaboration in the Art Market', in Aviva Burnstock, (ed.) *Art History, Conservation and Conservation Science*. London: Archetype Publications. pp. 442–481.

TECHNICAL ANALYSIS

Ian Tyers, Dendrochronological Consultancy Report 1368, March 2022;

Aviva Burnstock, The Courtauld Institute, Report of a Technical Examination CIA2816, April 2022.

This early portrait type of Elizabeth, of which the present 'Clopton' portrait is the finest surviving example, holds great significance within her iconography. It is the first official painted image of Elizabeth circulated following her accession in 1558, and is therefore a crucial visual anchor point in the study of her portraiture.

On her accession to the throne in 1558, the 25 year old Elizabeth faced several challenges. A period of forced and violent religious change under her sister Queen Mary was fresh in the minds of her subjects and her legitimacy as Queen was being questioned amongst the Catholic population. There was also the issue of her sex, which alarmed those who had experienced the turbulence of the reign of her sister, England's first queen regnant, exacerbated by the publication of John Knox's infamous 'The First Blast of the Trumpet Against The Monstrous Regiment of Women', the year of her accession [fig. 2.1]. In the search for an

appropriate idiom in which to represent the new monarch, this early image presents Elizabeth with a marked degree of androgyny, perhaps tempering the visual expression of her femininity at a moment when female rule remained deeply contentious. This stands in contrast to the increasingly codified and strategically feminised imagery of her later portraits, culminating in the highly constructed iconography of the Virgin Queen.

Although the identity of the artist who painted this work remains unknown, the survival of other versions of this type indicates that it was considered an official likeness intended for wider dissemination. It was probably never intended to remain in circulation for long, but due to Elizabeth's reluctance to sit for new portraits, it remained a defining likeness during the early years of her reign. A portrait of this type is almost certainly that described by Margaret of Parma in 1567 as showing the queen 'in black with a hoode and cornet'. [1]

By 1567, however, Elizabeth had ruled for almost a decade, and such a modest likeness sat uneasily with her growing presence on the domestic and global stage. Writing from the Burgundian court in the same year, the Earl of Sussex reported that Margaret observed the queen's costume 'was not the attire Your Majestie now used to were' and requested a more up to date likeness.[2]

Surviving versions of this early portrait type are rare. One of the best-known is in the National Portrait Gallery, London, and a further bust-length version, without the gold and pearl necklace with suspended jewel, is in the collection at the Ancient House, Museum of Thetford Life. A more comparable example to the present work, although smaller in scale, is now in a private American collection.

Of particular note in the present portrait is the meticulous rendering of the Queen's ruff and cuffs, which are heightened with gold, and the highly naturalistic depiction of her ermine collar. Infrared reflectography has also revealed confident exploratory underdrawing of the facial features. This confirms that the artist was not only well-trained and highly competent – key characteristics of an artist working within court circles - but also unlikely to have relied heavily on an existing prototype. It therefore makes an interesting comparison with the aforementioned version in a private American collection, where the face

pattern was transferred onto the panel using a accurate tracing technique known as pouncing. This raises the possibility that the present work was the first in this series of early portraits of the queen.

Equal attention is devoted to the rendering of the jewellery. The clearest signifier of Elizabeth's sovereignty is the large, square-cut jewel suspended from a double chain at her neck, surmounted by allegorical figures. As her later portraiture makes clear, jewellery formed a crucial component of Elizabeth's magnificence, functioning both as personal adornment and as a vehicle for political and symbolic display. Much of this material was dispersed under her successors, James I and Charles I, yet the present portrait preserves what appears to be one of the Queen's oldest and most favoured jewels, the so-called 'Mirror of France', inherited from Henry VIII. This same jewel frequently appears in Elizabeth's portraiture and can be seen included in her later portrait from the 1590s, included in this exhibition.

Of particular interest is the early provenance of the present work, which suggests it may have been known to the great Elizabethan bard, William Shakespeare. It was most likely commissioned by William Clopton (d. 1560), a courtier to Queen Mary, or by his son, also William (d. 1592). The Cloptons were major civic figures in Stratford-upon-Avon, long established as benefactors and leading citizens of

the town. During Elizabeth's reign they resided both at Clopton House and at New Place, a substantial gabled residence adjoining the Guild Chapel, built by their ancestor Sir Hugh Clopton, Lord Mayor of London in 1492. The present portrait may well have hung at New Place, which was sold in 1597 to William Shakespeare for the considerable sum of £120. Given the shared status of the Cloptons and Shakespeare as the town's richest inhabitants and chief landowners in the country nearby, it is likely that he had direct familiarity with the family and their possessions.

[1] Roy Strong, (1987) *Gloriana: Portraits of Queen Elizabeth I*. London: Thames and Hudson, p. 59.

[2] Kervyn de Lettenhove, J.M.B.C (ed.), (1882-1900) *Relations Politiques des Pays-Bas ed de l'Angleterre sous le regne de Philippe II*, 11 Vols, Brussels, p. 470.



Fig. 2.1
English School, *Queen Elizabeth I*.
Oil on panel, 15 1/2 x 10 3/4 in. (39.4 x 27.3 cm).
National Portrait Gallery, London. Image source: NPG
4449, National Portrait Gallery.



Cat. 3

ATT. TO GEORGE GOWER (C. 1540-1596)

Portrait of Elizabeth I (1533-1603)
The 'Hampden' Portrait

c. 1563-7

Oil on panel, transferred onto canvas
77¼ x 55¼ in. (196 x 140 cm)

PROVENANCE

By descent through the Hampden family and the Earls of Buckinghamshire at Hampden House, Buckinghamshire;
Sotheby's, London, 22 November 2007, lot 4;
Philip Mould & Company, acquired from the above;
Private collection, UK, acquired from the above;
Private collection, UK, acquired from the above

LITERATURE

John Bernard Burke, (1852) *A Visitation of the Seats and Arms of the Noblemen and Gentlemen of Great Britain*, Vol. I. London: Hurst and Blackett. p. 186;
James Sheahan, (1862) *History and Topography of Buckinghamshire*. London: Longman, Green, Longman and Roberts. p. 145;
Freeman Marius O'Donoghue, (1894) *A Descriptive and Classified Catalogue of Portraits of Queen Elizabeth*. London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office. no. 9;
Alison Uttley, (1950) *Buckinghamshire*. London: B.T. Batsford. p. 198;
Roy Strong, (1963) *Portraits of Queen Elizabeth I*. Oxford: Clarendon Press. p. 57, no. 15;
Roy Strong, (1969) *Tudor and Jacobean Portraits*, text vol. London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office. p. 110;
Roy Strong, (1987) *Gloriana: The Portraits of Queen Elizabeth I*. London: Thames and Hudson. p. 61.
Olga Dmitrieva and Tessa Murdoch, (2013) *Treasures of the Royal Courts: Tudors, Stuarts and the Russian Tsars*. London: Victoria and Albert Museum. p. 31 (illus., front cover);
Adam Eaker and Elizabeth Cleland (2022) *The Tudors: Art and Majesty in Renaissance England*. New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art. cat. 30, pp. 92-93.



EXHIBITED

Tate, London, 2007-2019;

Victoria and Albert Museum, London, 'Treasures of the Royal Courts: Tudors, Stuarts and the Russian Tsars', 9 March – 14 July 2013.

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 'The Tudors: Art and Majesty in Renaissance England', 10 October 2022 – 8 January 2023 [touring exhibition to Cleveland Museum of Art, 26 February – 14 May 2023; Legion of Honour, San Francisco, 24 June – 24 September 2023].

This extraordinary portrait is the earliest recorded life-size, full-length likeness of Queen Elizabeth I. It was painted less than a decade after the 'Clopton' portrait (cat.2) and is a striking reminder of how the role of portraiture had changed during the early years of Elizabeth's reign. After a cautious start, by the early 1560s, portraiture was being harnessed to confront questions of authority, and in this case, fertility and union.

Within the iconography of Elizabeth I, this work is unique. It is the only portrait that alludes to the Queen's potential role as both wife and mother. This emphasis is most clearly articulated in the richly decorated background to the right, where an abundance of paired flowers and ripened fruit forms a visual language of fertility and union, underscoring her marriageability and capacity to produce heirs. The prominence of red and white in her costume reinforces this message, alluding to the union of Lancaster and York and to Elizabeth herself as its living embodiment, with the implicit promise

of dynastic continuity. Likely painted in the mid-1560s, in the wake of the succession crisis of 1562–3, the portrait can be understood as a response to the pressing question of her marriage, at a time when her hand was actively sought as the greatest dynastic prize in Europe.

This rich symbolism would have been immediately legible to its Tudor audience. In her right hand, Elizabeth holds a carnation – *dianthus* in Greek, or 'the love of God' – an attribute of the Virgin Mary that here aligns the Queen with divine authority as both Handmaid of God and Supreme Governor of the Church of England. At the same time, the carnation carried associations of love and betrothal and may also be read as a declaration of her intention to marry.

When Elizabeth succeeded to the throne in 1558, the universal expectation was that she would marry. An amusing letter written by Baron Breuner in 1559 to the Emperor Ferdinand II describes Elizabeth as: 'somewhat dejected.

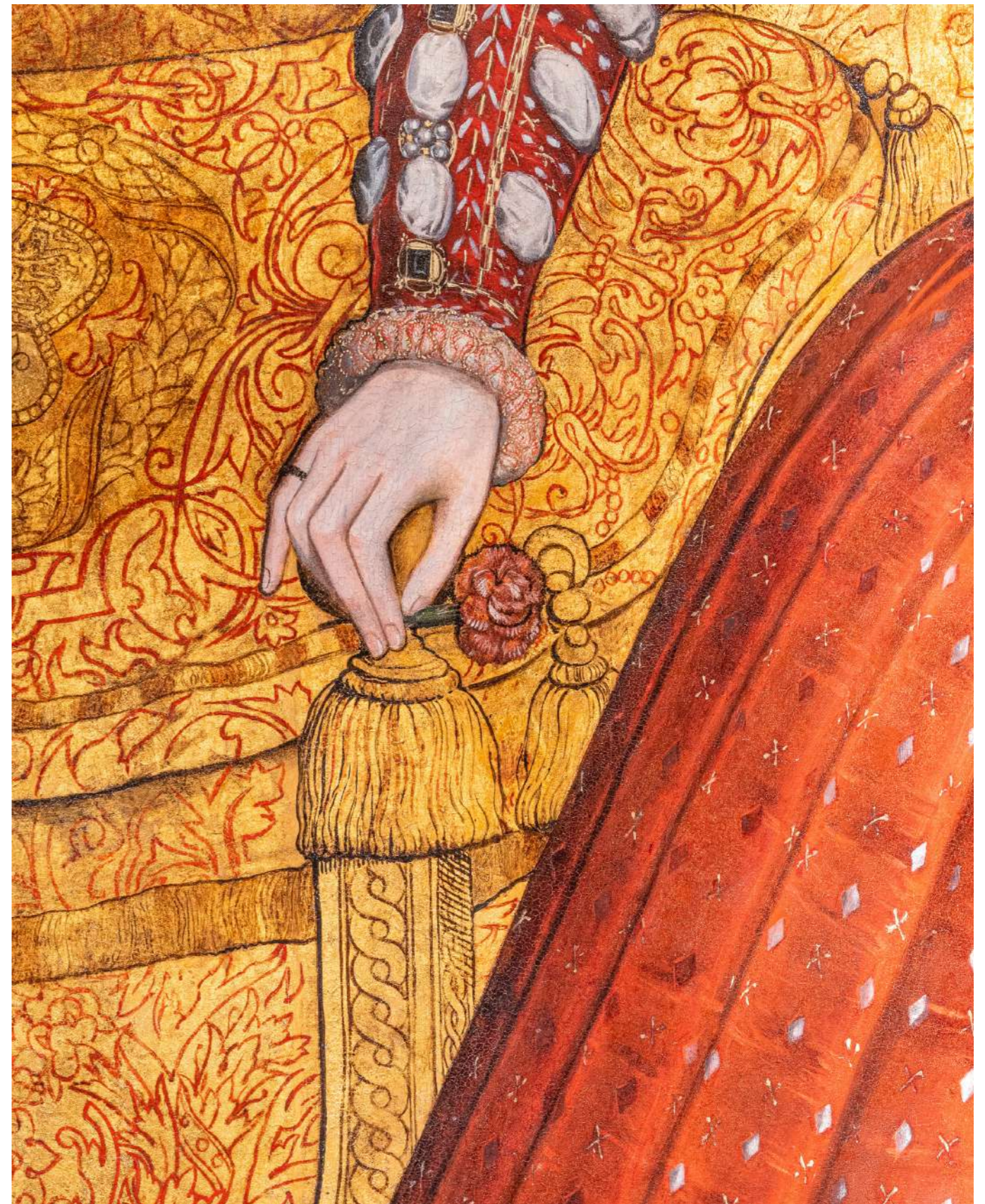
She told me that she was daily pestered with petitions from her subjects desiring her for her honour's sake and for the welfare of her Kingdom ... to marry'.[1] Elizabeth was not only a woman, but the last of the Tudor line. A well-negotiated marriage, therefore, was seen as crucial to cement her hold on the throne.

Historians are divided as to Elizabeth's sincerity in her publicly declared intention to marry. Certainly, her resolve to remain the 'Virgin Queen' becomes ever more apparent. But in the early 1560s, Elizabeth went to great lengths to convince her closest advisers that she would indeed marry. In a speech given in the House of Lords on 10 April 1563, delivered by the Lord Keeper, Sir Nicholas Bacon, she addressed the issue directly: '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'.[2] The Hampden portrait would therefore have been the perfect visual reminder of Elizabeth's intention to marry.

There are compelling reasons to link the Hampden portrait with the moment of Elizabeth's House of Lords speech and the sentiments in it. The tapestry in the background alludes to Elizabeth's own representation of herself as a tree ready to bear fruit, while the pairing of the fruit and flowers relate to her promise to

marry. The portrait also appears to present Elizabeth in the Parliament Chamber, or at the very least to allude to it. The throne, with its finials and cross-braced design, is strikingly like those seen in other representations of parliament in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, and differs in turn from those with their multi-coloured cloths of estate and canopies found elsewhere in Whitehall and other royal palaces.[3] We know too that the throne in the Parliament Chamber was gold and covered with cushions of cloth of gold, as seen in the Hampden portrait.[4] The cloth of state seen here behind the throne also fits the description of a German visitor, Lupold von Wedel, who in 1584 witnessed Elizabeth entering a 'chamber, on the platform of which was a splendid canopy of golden stuff and velvet, embroidered with gold, silver, and pearls, and below it a throne on which the queen seated herself'.[5] Finally, we know from Sir Thomas Smith's *De Republica Anglorum* of 1565 that the Parliament Chamber was 'richly tapessed and hanged', as also seen here.[6]

Unfortunately, nothing is known of the portrait's early provenance. Unlike the extant inventories of Henry VIII and Edward VI, the records of Elizabeth's possessions are comparatively meagre. The first known trace of the painting dates from the mid-nineteenth century, when it was in the collection of the



Earls of Buckinghamshire at Hampden House (Bucks.). In 1852, J.B. Burke noted ‘portraits of Queen Mary and her sister Elizabeth, one of them supposed to be meant for Mary Queen of Scots’. [7] The portrait of Elizabeth may be identifiable with one mentioned as being in the house in 1887. An 1862 account mentions a portrait of a ‘lady in a chair of state, conjectured to be Mary Queen of Scots’, [8] but also decries the fact that ‘many of the numerous family pictures of the Hampdens have neither names, dates nor coats of arms annexed to them, by which they might be known.’ [9] There was clearly considerable confusion amongst the paintings in the house.

AUTHORSHIP

Since its reemergence in 2007, scholars have proposed several possible attributions for the artist of the Hampden portrait, including Steven van der Meulen, a Flemish artist who in 1562 was granted denization in England. Van der Meulen is also perhaps the ‘famous paynter steven’ whose work was recorded in the collection of John, 1st Baron Lumley in 1590 as ‘Master Staffan’ and who travelled to Sweden in 1561 with an English embassy and painted a portrait of Erik XIV. [10] It is known that the envoys who presented Elizabeth with the portrait of Erik also commissioned several likenesses of her, though none have so far come to light. Another hypothesis identifies this same ‘Steven’ with the medalist Steven

van Herwijk, although no examples of painted portraits by his hand have so far been discovered. [11]

In 2020, a new attribution for the portrait was proposed by Edward Town and Jessica David at the Yale Center for British Art who suggested that it could in fact be linked to the oeuvre of George Gower, one of the most celebrated court artists of the Elizabethan age. This attribution was based in part on a comparison with a portrait of Frances Sidney, Countess of Sussex [Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge] which has also been attributed to Gower. A comparison between the two portraits is certainly revealing and does indeed indicate that they were painted by the same hand or workshop; the right hands of both sitters are nearly identical and must derive from the same workshop pattern, and the postures, strong and upright, are closely aligned. Technical analysis has added further weight to the proposed connection between the two portraits and infra-red imaging has revealed that the portrait of Sidney was in fact painted over the top of an image of Elizabeth that closely resembles the Hampden portrait. [12] A fine bust-length portrait of Elizabeth in a private collection (known as the ‘Fonthill’ portrait) has been proposed as the prototype head-pattern for the Hampden portrait and was possibly used for reference when drawing the physiognomy and other details such as the embellished gold chain worn around her neck. [13]



[1] Victor von Klarwill, (ed.) (1928) *Queen Elizabeth and Some Foreigners*. London: John Lane, p. 120.

[2] Lansdowne MS 94, art 15B, f. 30, British Library.

[3] See for example the 1584 engraving of the Presentation of the Speaker, reproduced in John Ernest Neale, (1950) *The Elizabethan House of Commons*. London: Jonathan Cape. p. 359; or see the watercolour of ‘Elizabeth Receiving Two Dutch Ambassadors’, 1570-5, Staatliche Kunstsammlung, Kassel, Germany.

[4] In 1559 a later Venetian ambassador mentions the cushions on the throne as being on cloth of gold, *CSP Ven.* 1558-80, p. 23.

[5] Lupold von Wedel, (1899) ‘Journey through England and Scotland Made by Lupold von Wedel in the Years 1584 and 1585’, trans. by Gottfried von Bülow, *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, new series, IV, p. 261.

[6] Thomas Smith (1982) *De Republica Anglorum*, ed. by Mary Dewar. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 80.

[7] John Bernard Burke, (1852) *A Visitation of the Seats and Arms of the Noblemen and Gentlemen of Great Britain*, Vol. I. London: Hurst and Blackett, p. 186.

[8] James Sheahan, (1862) *History and Topography of Buckinghamshire*. London: Longman, Green, Longman and Roberts, p. 145.

[9] *Ibid.* p.146.

[10] Elizabeth Cleland and Adam Eaker, (2022) *The Tudors: Art and Majesty in Renaissance England*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, pp. 92–93.

[11] Bendor Grosvenor (2009) ‘The identity of “the famous paynter Steven”: Not Steven van der Meulen but Steven van Herwijck’, *The British Art Journal*, 9(3), pp. 12–17.

[12] Jessica David and Edward Town (2020) ‘George Gower: portraitist, mercer, Serjeant Painter’, *The Burlington Magazine*, 162(1410), pp. 730–747.

[13] The underdrawing on the Hampden portrait shows an initial intention to portray the Queen’s diamond and pearl drop pendant hanging from a ribbon, but it was changed to an embellished gold chain nearly identical to that in the Fonthill portrait.



Cat. 4

ENGLISH SCHOOL

Portrait of Elizabeth I (1533-1603)

1590s

Oil on panel
43 x 33 ½ in. (110 x 85 cm)

PROVENANCE

The Blencowe family, Marston House, near Banbury;
The Misses M. E. and C. M. Blencowe, by descent from the above;
Sotheby's, London, 28 April 1954, Lot 5, consigned by the above;
Dr Edmund Elmhirst, acquired from the above;
Phillips, London, 9 June 1987, lot 37;
Private collection, UK;
Philip Mould & Company, London, acquired from the above, 2020;
Private collection, UK, acquired from the above, 2021;
Private collection, UK, acquired from the above 2025



This portrait of Queen Elizabeth I, painted towards the end of her reign in the 1590s, epitomises the unrestrained flamboyance that dominated her later iconography.

By this date, Elizabeth was acutely aware of the power of portraiture and deployed it with increasing sophistication to project an image of authority. These later portraits are marked by their opulence, standing in marked contrast to the restraint of those produced earlier in her rule. Among these later works, two works stand out for their exceptional scale and theatricality: the ‘Ditchley’ portrait by Marcus Gheeraerts the Younger [fig 4.1], and the ‘Armada’ portrait. In both, Elizabeth is shown as an icon and saviour of England, her powerful position as head of state transcending her body of ageing flesh and bones. Such images convey a carefully constructed vision of power and stability. At a moment when the question of succession remained unresolved, the figure of Gloriana, resplendent in imposing costume and jewels, stood firm.

The artist or workshop that painted the present work was evidently well versed in this established visual language, producing an image designed to impress and to affirm loyalty. In keeping with the prevailing idiom of Elizabeth’s later portraiture, the costume dominates the composition, its surface richly worked with colour and detail.[1] Elizabeth is presented



Fig. 4.1
English School, *Queen Elizabeth I (The Ditchley Portrait)*, (c.1592)
Oil on canvas, 95 in. x 60 in. (2413 mm x 1524 mm)
National Portrait Gallery, London.
Image source: NPG 2561, National Portrait Gallery

wearing a large open-set standing ruff arranged in large figures of eight, which lends an ethereal quality. This effect is enhanced by the gauze ‘rail’ that hangs behind, framing the queen in a manner typical of her later large-scale portraits.

The broad red sleeves of the gown are split to reveal a pair of white silk sleeves embellished with floral forms,

including Tudor roses interspersed with acorns and honeysuckle. Each motif is symbolic of Elizabeth's lineage and authority. The Tudor rose alludes to dynastic unity, while honeysuckle and acorns, associated with love and growth, are motifs linked to the personal iconography of Elizabeth's parents, Henry VIII and Anne Boleyn.[2] These forms recur across the stomacher and skirt, which are densely embroidered in gold thread. At the centre of the stomacher, a naturalistic rose appears to grow upward, while more stylised roses, honeysuckle and birds are arranged in couched gold across the skirt. The birds may evoke the falcon badge of Anne Boleyn, though they may equally allude more broadly to themes of motherhood, abundance and Elizabeth's role of protector of the kingdom.

The queen's jewellery plays an equally significant role within the composition. Most prominent is the long string of pearls worn around the neck, which the queen delicately holds between the thumb and ring finger of her right hand. Pearls, long associated with purity and virginity, feature insistently in her later portraits, hung around the neck, woven into the hair, and worn at the ears. Around Elizabeth's neck hangs a distinctive jewel composed of a large square-cut diamond flanked by two figures and terminating in a pendant pearl. It appears to be based on 'The Mirror of France', the same jewel which appears in the 'Clopton' portrait [cat.2], suggesting

the repetition of specific items of royal jewellery across multiple portraits.

Elizabeth did not sit for the many contemporary portraits of her that survive, but nevertheless attempted to control their dissemination. One way to regulate the Queen's image was through the circulation of approved head designs (or 'patterns') which could then be drawn or traced by the artist, as is likely to have been done here. Once the head had been drawn, the artist would then either imagine the costume or work from further patterns, embellishing it with a level of detail corresponding to the depth of their patron's pocket. Only a small number of original face patterns from the Tudor period have survived, but one of John Fisher and another of a lady thought to be Elizabeth I can be found in the National Portrait Gallery, London.

The present work was formerly in the possession of the Misses Marjorie Edith and Cecilia Mary Blencowe of Marston House, Banbury, Oxfordshire. The Blencowe family have a long and illustrious heritage and had been at Marston since the reign of Henry VI. Later generations of the family were actively involved in politics and Anthony Blencowe was provost of Oriel College, Oxford between 1572 and 1618. His portrait, painted by an unknown hand in 1601, is in the art collection at Oriel College. In the early twentieth century Marston House and its contents

were put up for sale. The family appear to have retained the estate and the present work passed into the possession of the aforementioned two sisters and was then sold at auction in 1954 with the remainder of their art collection.

[1] We are grateful to Jacqui Ansell, Fashion Historian, for her assistance when researching the costume.

[2] E Ives, (2004) *The Life and Death of Anne Boleyn*. Hoboken: Wiley-Blackwell, p.243.



Cat. 5

ENGLISH SCHOOL

Portrait of Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester (1532-1588)

1560s

Oil on panel
45 x 34 in. (114 x 86 cm)

PROVENANCE

E. Beatrice Sharp (née Henry);
Basil Telford Sharp;
Thence by descent until sold;
Woolley & Wallis, Salisbury, 17 June 2009, lot 299;
Philip Mould & Company, acquired from the above;
Private collection, Oxfordshire;
Philip Mould & Company, acquired from the above, 2021;
Private Collection, London;
Philip Mould & Company, acquired from the above, 2024.

EXHIBITED

Philip Mould & Company, London, 'Loves Labours Found: Elizabethan and Jacobean Portraiture', 21 April – 28 May 2021.

LITERATURE

Lawrence Hendra & Emma Rutherford (ed.), (2021) *Loves Labours Found: Elizabethan and Jacobean Portraiture*. London: Philip Mould & Company, pp. 24-31.



This charismatic portrait presents Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, one of the most prominent figures of the Elizabethan age. He was a beloved friend of Elizabeth I from her accession in 1558 until his death in 1588 and their close relationship was the subject of great suspicion and intrigue.

Dudley's rise to fame and fortune was perhaps surprising given his family's chequered history at the Tudor court. Three of his kinsmen had been accused of treason and executed; his grandfather, Edmund Dudley, built a vast fortune during the reign of Henry VII, but was left exposed following the King's death and was sent to the scaffold by his enemies in 1510. His father, John, and brother Guildford also met a grizzly end on the executioner's block for their part in the plot to place Lady Jane Grey, wife of Guildford, on the throne following the death of Edward VI. For this brazen attempt to take the crown, Mary I stripped the family of their titles and possessions and had them imprisoned in the Tower. Robert and his other brothers were spared death, but their family's reputation was left in tatters. It took several years of military service and political manoeuvring within the circle of Mary's husband, Philip II of Spain, for the Dudleys to regain favour and in 1558 their father's attainder was reversed and the surviving Dudley children were restored in blood.

It is not known for certain how and when Dudley first met Elizabeth. It is clear, however, that by 1559, the year after Elizabeth ascended the throne, their close relationship was beginning to attract attention. In one of his dispatches, the Spanish ambassador salaciously reported that Elizabeth was 'in his [Dudley's] chamber day and night' and was 'waiting for [his wife] to die' so that they might marry. [1]

The following year, Robert's wife Amy died after falling down a set of stairs. This, unsurprisingly, kept the rumour-mill turning, with Dudley's enemies claiming foul play. In any event, Dudley and Elizabeth never married, but as her closest friend and trusted advisor, Dudley found himself in a position of immense power and privilege, which was reflected in the numerous appointments and grants he received soon after Elizabeth's accession.

The day after Elizabeth became Queen, Dudley was appointed Master of the Horse, a position which guaranteed them close contact, and the following year he was made a Knight of the Garter, the highest order of chivalry at the English court. In addition to illustrious positions at court, Dudley was also granted vast areas of land in Leicestershire and Yorkshire, some of which had previously been in the possession of his father. Kenilworth Castle, which also belonged to his father,



Fig. 5.1

Steven van der Meulen, *Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester*, c. 1564. Oil on panel, 42 1/8 x 31 1/2 in. (107 x 80 cm). Rothschild Family Trust, on loan to Waddesdon Manor.

Kenilworth Castle, which also belonged to his father, was restored to him in 1563 and later housed his extensive art collection. In 1562, Dudley was appointed to the Privy Council, and two years later, he was created Baron Denbigh and Earl of Leicester.

As his wealth and influence grew, Dudley indulged his passion for the arts, becoming one of the most prolific and important cultural patrons of the Elizabethan age. [2] His patronized historians, poets, musicians, painters, tapestry makers and architects. [3] He commissioned fine armour - the designs for one such set are now in the Victoria and Albert Museum - and collected coins, medals, and rare artefacts. [4] He was a keen art collector, and at the time of his death in 1588 he

owned some two hundred paintings and works of art, plus many more miniatures, drawings, and other objects which are not recorded in the surviving inventories. [5]

Dudley was one of the most painted men of his day, having sat for a new portrait at least twenty times during his thirty years at the centre of Elizabeth's court. [6] None of his peers came close to this level of portrait patronage which rivalled, and in some years probably exceeded, that of the Queen herself. Dudley, however, possessed a more nuanced understanding of the role of portraiture than many of his contemporaries and used it to dramatic effect during his time at court to maintain relationships with his peers at home and abroad, as well as strengthen his friendship

with Elizabeth on both a public and private stage - and to remind her of his eligibility for marriage.

The present portrait relates to a type introduced to the Elizabethan court by Steven van der Meulen in the early 1560s. It is the largest of the four extant examples of this type on this scale, the others being at Waddesdon Manor [fig 9.1], Yale Center for British Art, New Haven, and Montacute House, Somerset. The series of portraits all depict Dudley standing, turned left, with his right proper hand resting on his waist and his left hand either on a table, as in two iterations of this type, or wrapped around the guard of his sword, as in the Montacute portrait.

Compared with the Waddesdon portrait and the other surviving versions, the present work appears to be by an independent hand, working at a similar date. This is unsurprising, given that van der Meulen died shortly after the introduction of the type and his workshop likely ceased to operate. Demand for this dashing new image of Dudley would have remained strong, and it is probable that a tracing (or 'pattern') of the composition was made available to other artists, enabling further versions to be produced for Dudley and his supporters. Particularly notable in the present work is the animated handling of the facial features and the inclusion of Dudley's mole, suggesting close observation from life; this detail is absent from the Montacute and Yale portraits.

Glamorous and courtly in demeanour, Dudley wears a red doublet of taffeta or satin and a buff-coloured peasecod jerkin,

cut and laid with gold lace, with a high collar and small shirt ruff, red hose padded and boned and passed with a codpiece. Around his neck hangs a gold enamelled chain set with pearls, bearing the Lesser George of the Order of the Garter, while his black Italian cap is adorned with a red feather and an oval cameo brooch depicting the Roman hero Marcus Curtius. The jerkin may be identified with that supplied in 1561 by William Whittell, Dudley's tailor. [7]

[1] Kervyn de Lettenhove, J.M.B.C (ed.) (1882-1900) *Relations politiques des Pays-Bas et d'Angleterre sous le règne de Philippe II*. Brussels. Vol. 2, pp. 123-124; and Calendar of State Papers, Spain, (1558-67), pp. 57-58; Quoted in Elizabeth Goldring, (2014). *Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, and the World of Elizabethan Art*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, p. 44.

[2] For a fulsome overview of Dudley's patronage of the arts see Elizabeth Goldring, (2014) *Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, and the World of Elizabethan Art*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press.

[3] Ibid, pp. 3-4

[4] Ibid.

[5] For the inventories of Leicester's picture collections see Goldring, (2014) Appendices I-III.

[6] Goldring, (2014), p. 6.

[7] The authors would like to record their thanks to Dr. Tracey Wedge for this information. For Dudley's wardrobe during this period see Tracey Wedge, 'Constructing Splendour: The Wardrobe of Robert Dudley, early of Leicester (1532/3-1588), Consumption and Networks of Patronage', Phd Thesis, University of Southampton.



Cat. 6

ENGLISH SCHOOL

Portrait of William Cecil, Lord Burghley (1520-98)

Late 1590s

Oil on panel
30 3/5 x 24 3/8 in. (78 x 62 cm)

PROVENANCE

The Capel Cure family, wax seal affixed to the reverse;
Christie's, London, 17 November 1989, lot 135;
Private collection, U.K.;
Philip Mould & Company, London, 2018;
Private collection, U.K, acquired from the above, 2021.



William Cecil was one of the most successful political figures of the Tudor age and served as Elizabeth I's chief councillor for most of her reign. His influence continued after his death in the person of his younger son, Robert (cat.7), who succeeded his father as the monarch's principal advisor into the reign of James I.

The foundation of the Cecil dynasty was laid by David Cecil, a minor member of the gentry who joined Henry Tudor on his march through Wales in 1485. The family's influence gradually grew at court, and resulted in the young William Cecil, after education at Cambridge University, being appointed as private secretary to the Lord Protector, Edward Seymour, Duke of Somerset, during the reign of Edward VI. In an early display of the political dexterity that allowed him to survive the Tudor age unscathed, Cecil escaped the fallout from Somerset's fall (save a brief period in the Tower) and swiftly gained the confidence of his successor, John Dudley, Duke of Northumberland: he was knighted in 1551 and joined the Privy Council. In 1553, he further managed to evade recrimination for his part in the disastrous attempt to place Lady Jane Grey on the throne. Cecil had, albeit unwillingly, signed Edward's 'Devise' for the succession to exclude the Catholic Mary Tudor, but, after realizing the inevitability of Mary's succession, he swiftly plotted to bring

down Northumberland and the Greys.

As an active Protestant, Cecil played no official role in Mary's reign, preferring to join instead the household of the young Princess Elizabeth. Thus began the closest relationship of confidence and trust ever to exist between an English monarch and their advisor. The new Queen appointed Cecil as her Secretary of State on the first day of her reign in 1558, placing him at the heart of her government. Almost every letter of consequence, both foreign and domestic, crossed his desk, which, combined with the adept control of his royal mistress, gave Cecil considerable influence over English affairs.

Perhaps his greatest achievement was the development of a 'British' foreign policy, which helped pave the way for the union of England and Scotland on Elizabeth's death. Cecil was amongst the first to realise that the religious changes sweeping across Europe in the mid-sixteenth century added a new dimension to the old geopolitical and dynastic rivalries and could be turned to England's advantage. He therefore sought to ally himself with, for example, Protestants in the Netherlands and Huguenots in La Rochelle, as a means of destabilising the hostile Catholic regimes of Spain and France. His similar support for the Protestant cause in Scotland contributed to the eventual deposition



Fig. 6.1
English School, *Ambrose Dudley, Earl of Warwick* (c. 1530-90), Late 1590s.
Oil on panel, 85 x 51 cm. Private collection.



Fig. 6.2
Circle of Marcus Gheeraerts the Younger (1561/62-1636), *Portrait of Sir Thomas Radcliffe, 3rd Earl of Sussex* (1526/7-83), 1580s.
Oil on panel, 31.5 x 26 in. (80 x 66 cm).
Private collection.

of the Catholic Mary, Queen of Scots (cat.11), who, alongside the Armada, posed the greatest threat to Elizabeth's reign. And it was arguably Cecil's staunch support for the Protestant Regent in Scotland, James Stewart, Earl of Moray, that ensured Mary's son, James VI, was brought up a Protestant, thus smoothing the way for James' succession to the English throne in 1603.

Cecil's powerful position allowed him to wield significant patronage. His ability to influence everything from court positions to land grants, in part, explains the high demand for his portrait. It would have been typical for a family to display their patron's portrait, such as the present example, alongside a portrait of Elizabeth

and possibly themselves as a means of conspicuously displaying their status. The present work derives from a portrait type in circulation from the mid-1580s. Although the identity of the originating artist remains uncertain, it was most likely Marcus Gheeraerts the Younger, to whom a number of related versions have been attributed.

Cecil is shown here wearing the robes of the Order of the Garter, one of the most prestigious chivalric orders in Europe. Membership in the order, which was reputedly founded by King Edward III, was limited to just twenty-five knights, not including the sovereign. This portrait was once part of a set of portraits of Garter knights in the collection of the

Capel Cure family. Other portraits thought to be from this set include those depicting Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester (Yale Center for British Art), Ambrose Dudley, 3rd Earl of Warwick (private collection) [fig. 6.1], and Sir Thomas Radcliffe, 3rd Earl of Sussex (private collection) [fig. 6.2].



Cat. 7

**WORKSHOP OF JOHN DE CRITZ THE ELDER
(1551/2-1642)**

Robert Cecil, 1st Earl of Salisbury (1563-1612)

c. 1608-12

Oil on panel
44 ½ x 32 ½ in. (113 x 82.5 cm)

PROVENANCE

Reputedly Diana Cecil (1663-1736), by descent in the sitter's family;[1]
Rosemary McCorquodale (née Turnor) (1924-2015), by descent from the above;
Christie's, London, 3 August 1978, lot 280, sold by the above;
'H. Klein', acquired from the above;
Private collection, U.K.;
Weiss Gallery, London, acquired in 2001;
Private collection, UK, acquired from the above;
Philip Mould & Company, London, acquired in 2024;
Private collection, U.K.

TECHNICAL ANALYSIS

Ian Tyers, Dendrochronological Analysis Report 1624, March 2025



The influence of Robert Cecil, 1st Earl of Salisbury, at Elizabeth's court can hardly be overstated. Unlike his more dashing, charismatic peers, Salisbury operated behind the scenes and became a trusted advisor to the queen.

His ascent to power was assured in 1596 when he was appointed Secretary of State – a position previously held by his father, William Cecil, 1st Baron Burghley. It was an illustrious position and made him the effective gatekeeper to Elizabeth. Holding such a position demanded exceptional diplomatic skill and the ability to navigate the competing factions at court, particularly those led by the popular Robert Devereux, Earl of Essex (cat.8), whose hawkish attitude often conflicted with Cecil's more measured approach. This bitter rivalry ultimately contributed to the Essex Rebellion in 1601, which Cecil swiftly suppressed, branding Essex a traitor and ensuring his arrest. During his trial, Essex made a dramatic claim that Cecil was plotting against the Queen. However, these allegations were swiftly dismissed, and Essex was found guilty and executed. Although Cecil encouraged the Queen to show clemency towards many of Essex's rebels, he was still treated with great suspicion by the public and his peers, many of whom mourned the bold yet flawed Essex.

As Secretary of State, Cecil was also the Queen's advisor on domestic and foreign affairs and handled correspondence with

foreign rulers and ambassadors. Further responsibilities encompassed overseeing negotiations and alliances, managing domestic and international royal appointments, and overseeing England's intelligence network. Cecil assumed the latter role following the death of Francis Walsingham (cat.10), and as the Queen's new 'spymaster', he was kept abreast of any possible threats to queen and country.

When Elizabeth's health began to deteriorate, and with no immediate heir apparent, Cecil quietly progressed negotiations with James VI of Scotland, son of the executed Mary, Queen of Scots (cat.11). It was a daring yet pragmatic decision and a masterstroke in political foresight. He recognised that a smooth transition of power was crucial to maintaining stability in England and positioned himself as an indispensable figure in securing James's peaceful accession in 1603. His subtle diplomacy avoided the turbulence of rival claims and civil unrest and further demonstrated his political acumen whilst safeguarding his position within the incoming court. In 1605, Cecil was elevated to the Earldom of Salisbury and the following year was made a Knight of the Garter, robes of which he is shown proudly flaunting in the present work.

It was likely due to a spinal condition which affected his posture that Cecil was cautious about disseminating his image, and for the most part, his iconography

relates to only one head type painted by John de Critz the Elder, in around 1599. This head type was used in numerous bust and three-quarter-length versions commissioned from de Critz and his workshop by Cecil's friends and supporters, which can be found in public and private collections across England. These versions can be divided into two groups: the earlier, more common type shows Cecil dressed in black (and from 1606, wearing the Garter around his neck), and the second type shows him dressed in Garter robes. Only five examples from the latter 'garter' group survive, and of these five, the present work is the only example of this design [6.1, 6.2, 6.3, 6.4, 6.5]. The other four portraits repeat a simpler composition, showing Cecil standing without a backdrop or a side table. The finest surviving example of the garter type is the version at Hatfield House, the seat of the Cecil family, which shows the artist at the height of his powers.

The monumental architectural setting of this portrait is unique within Cecil's iconography and likely alludes to his well-documented passion for architecture, most notably reflected in his commissioning of Salisbury House on the Strand and Hatfield House in Hertfordshire. Despite his reputation for control, Cecil himself acknowledged this enthusiasm as a weakness, describing it as a "vice... [that] hath almost undone me." [2] On the table beside him are placed a handbell, the red purse of office, and two inscribed letters

likely listed with his numerous titles. He holds the wand of the Lord Treasurer's office, a position he assumed in 1608, confirming that this portrait was painted sometime between that year and his death in 1612.

This portrait is thought to have descended through Cecil's great-granddaughter, Diana Cecil before passing to Rosemary McCorquodale (née Turnor), who sold it at auction in 1978. It hung at Stoke Rochford, the ancestral seat of the Turnor family, and likely arrived there following Diana's marriage to John Turnor in around 1685.

The artist John de Critz was among the most sought-after portrait painters working in England at the turn of the seventeenth century. Born in Antwerp, de Critz came to England at a young age and trained under the painter and poet Lucas de Heere before entering the service of Sir Francis Walsingham (cat.10), for whom he undertook diplomatic journeys across Europe. [3] His advantageous marriage in 1591 to Helen Woodcock, granddaughter of a Sheriff and Alderman of London, appears to have facilitated his entry into court circles, and by the late 1590s, he had established a London workshop. In 1598 he was named alongside Isaac Oliver and Nicholas Hilliard as one of those "very famous for their painting" [4] and by 1599 was producing likenesses of Cecil. It was likely on Cecil's endorsement that de Critz was granted the reversion of the office of

Serjeant, he was named alongside Isaac Oliver and Nicholas Hilliard as one of those "very famous for their painting", and by 1599, -Painter in 1603 and, in 1605, took up the role officially. [5] A bill from 1607 for work undertaken for Cecil reveals the extent of the latter's patronage and itemises four portraits of Cecil and portraits of his father, William Cecil and of James I. [6] Soon after this, he appears to have lost his sight and likely relied on his son and assistant in completing later portrait commissions.

[1] Diana Cecil, the sitter's great-granddaughter, married John Turnor (1654-1719) of Stoke Rochford, Lincolnshire

[2] ???

[3] Edward Town, (2014) 'A Biographical Dictionary of London Painters, 1547-1625', *The Walpole Society*, Vol. LXXXVI, pp. 65-68.

[4] Francis Meres, (1598) 'Palladis Tamia or Wits Treasury', quoted in Edward Town, (2014) 'A Biographical Dictionary of London Painters, 1547-1625', *The Walpole Society*, Vol. LXXXVI, p. 66.

[5] Edward Town, (2014) 'A Biographical Dictionary of London Painters, 1547-1625', *The Walpole Society*, Vol. LXXXVI, p. 67.

[6] Hatfield House Archive [HHA BOX U/81], quoted in Edward Town, (2014) 'A Biographical Dictionary of London Painters, 1547-1625', *The Walpole Society*, Vol. LXXXVI, p. 67.



Cat. 8

**MARCUS GHEERAERTS THE YOUNGER
(1561–1635) AND WORKSHOP**

Robert Devereux, 2nd Earl of Essex (1565–1601)

Late 1590s

Oil on panel
44 ³/₄ x 35 in. (113.7 x 88.9 cm)

PROVENANCE

Mr. and Mrs. Eric Bullivant, Anderson Manor, Dorset;
Sotheby's, London, 8 May 1974, lot 8, sold by the above;
Christie's, London, 15 November 1991, lot 4;
Mrs. Barbara Overland, Mont Pellier House, Jersey;
Christie's, London, 10 July 2015, lot 171;
Weiss Gallery, London, acquired from the above;
Private collection, USA, until 2024;
Philip Mould & Company, London;
Private collection, U.K.

TECHNICAL ANALYSIS

Nathan Daly and Aviva Burnstock, Report of a technical examination of CIA3033
(Infrared and X-ray analysis), 7 March 2025;
Ian Tyers, Dendrochronological Consultancy Report 1623, March 2025.



This fine portrait of Robert Devereux, 2nd Earl of Essex is the best-surviving example of its type in private hands. The work was painted at a pivotal moment in Essex's life, following his triumphant return to England after the capture of Cadiz from the Spanish in August 1596.

Few figures at the Elizabethan court embodied both its glamour and its volatility more fully than Robert Devereux, 2nd Earl of Essex. By turns loyal, heroic, impetuous and ultimately treasonous, his career illustrates the precarious position of a royal favourite under the Tudors. At the height of his influence, Essex was sufficiently close to the Queen to be regarded as her lover; yet in the end, Elizabeth ordered his execution, seemingly unmoved even when the sentence was carried out so clumsily as to require three blows of the axe.

Essex was always destined to be highly placed at the Elizabethan court as a result of his close personal connection with the Queen: his mother, Lettice Knollys, was descended from Mary Boleyn, Anne Boleyn's sister. However, when Lettice married Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, in 1578, it became clear that Essex was to be especially marked out for preferment as one of Elizabeth I's favourites. Leicester, eager for his stepson to inherit his own pre-eminence at court, actively

promoted his career. In 1586, Essex was appointed as commander of the cavalry in Leicester's military mission to the Netherlands, where he distinguished himself by his great bravery, and in 1587 he succeeded Leicester as Master of the Horse. When Leicester died in 1588, having seen off with Essex's help the rival advances of Sir Walter Raleigh for the Queen's favour, it seemed that Essex was destined to become the leading courtier of the late Elizabethan period.

However, Essex was even more headstrong than his stepfather, and even less prudent. He was also ultimately a less accomplished general, which proved to be his undoing. A failed campaign in Normandy in 1591 marked the beginning of a gradual eclipse at court from 1592. Although Elizabeth continued to entrust him with military commands, allowing for occasional successes, most notably the celebrated raid on Cádiz in 1596, his position was increasingly unstable.

The most significant phase of Essex's political and military career came in 1598, when Elizabeth appointed him Lord Lieutenant of Ireland to lead the English campaign during the conflict associated with the Nine Years' War, led by Hugh O'Neill, Earl of Tyrone. Seizing the opportunity to restore both his military reputation and political

standing, Essex accepted the command. Although he initially secured parts of southern Ireland against the possibility of Spanish intervention, his overconfidence soon led to a series of misjudgements and mounting difficulties, culminating in a number of setbacks, including the defeat of Sir Conyers Clifford's forces in the Curlew Mountains on 5 August 1599.

Despite this, Elizabeth expected Essex to engage directly with Tyrone. Concerned by shortages of men and resources, he nevertheless advanced north in August 1599, only to enter into a negotiated truce on 7 September, much to the Queen's displeasure. Fearing the consequences of his actions at court, and suspecting the influence of his political rivals, Essex hastily concluded terms, disbanded his forces, and returned to England without permission.

His position at court subsequently deteriorated. Increasingly isolated and burdened by debt, he was encouraged by his circle to attempt a rising in 1601, an episode famously preceded by a special performance of Shakespeare's *Richard II* at the Globe. The venture was swiftly suppressed, and Essex was arrested and executed for treason shortly thereafter. The present work is a half-length variant of Gheeraerts' full-length portrait of c.1596 at Woburn Abbey, which differs in the clothing, collar and posture of the hands. In the Woburn portrait, Essex is

shown standing in an open landscape with Cadiz burning in the background. Gheeraerts' portraits of the earl support a description of him given in a letter by a Venetian visitor in England after the capture of Cadiz, as: 'fair skinned, tall but wiry; on this last voyage he began to grow a beard, which he used not to wear.'^[1] Indeed, his distinctive red, square-cut beard became a trademark feature of his appearance.

Devereux, much more than his contemporaries, quite consciously engineered his public image in an ambition to stand out from others, and the Gheeraerts commission can be regarded as a means of displaying his achievements, capabilities and superiority as a prominent courtier.^[2] The choice of costume, with the white bodice and black riding cloak and hat, is a clear allusion to Elizabeth I, whose colours were black and white. The pearl buttons and detailing may also allude to the purity of the Virgin Queen.

The commissioning of the imposing full-length Woburn portrait by the leading court painter of the period, Marcus Gheeraerts, reflected Essex's lofty achievements and ambitions. It is little wonder, therefore, that following the success of the work, several variants followed, including the full-length portrait of Essex in Garter Robes in the National Portrait Gallery. Alongside the two full-lengths, a series of three-quarter length portraits were

produced of varying degrees of quality, depending on the level of Gheeraerts' personal involvement. These variants can be roughly divided into two types: those likely painted between 1596 and 1598 which show Essex with his right hand on his hip, and those painted from 1598 which show him holding the baton of Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, a position he was granted in 1598.

There are, at present, only seven known examples of three-quarter length portraits using the same head-type as the Woburn portrait, which appear to be of sufficient quality to be by Gheeraerts or his workshop.^[3] The majority of these works are in public collections, and only two are thought to remain in private hands: the present work and a further example of currently on loan to the National Maritime Museum, Greenwich (as of 2025). The finest surviving example of this three-quarter length type is that in the collection at Trinity College Cambridge in which Essex is shown with a slightly more angular face than the Woburn portrait, perhaps indicative of a new sitting.^[4]

The Trinity portrait was analysed in 1993 and an infrared reflectogram reveals brisk, confident underdrawing indicative of the master's hand [illustrate]. Similar underdrawing can be observed in the present portrait, which likewise reinforces the argument that Gheeraerts himself was responsible for the key areas of this

portrait. Underdrawing is also visible in other areas and was used extensively to delineate the costume and to ensure the correct angle of the wrist bone and sword hilt.

The portrait once formed part of the notable collection of Elizabethan paintings formed by Mr and Mrs Eric Bullivant at Anderson Manor in Dorset. The collection was dispersed in 1974, and works are now held in private collections and museums around the world. Among the most notable is the aforementioned full-length portrait of Essex in Garter Robes, now in the National Portrait Gallery which was once owned by Essex's close friend Sir Henry Lee. Two further examples, including an exemplary portrait by Robert Peake and a large and unusual allegory of the Tudor succession, are at the Yale Center for British Art in New Haven. A further portrait depicting Mary Rogers, Lady Harrington, also by Marcus Gheeraerts and considered one of his earliest surviving works, is now in the Tate collection.

[1] F. Gradenigo to the Venetian Ambassador in France, CSP Venice, 1592 – 1603, 9.238.

[2] Paul E. J. Hammer, *The Polarisation of Elizabethan Politics: The Political Career of Robert Devereux, 2nd Earl of Essex, 1585-1597*, Cambridge 1999, pp. 199-216, cited in Hearn, op cit.

[3] Examples are those at Trinity College,

Cambridge (TC Oils P 52); National Gallery of Art, Washington (1947.18.1); Parnham Park, Sussex; Private collection, UK (formerly Philip Mould & Co.); Ipswich, Christchurch Mansion; Christie's, London (1932).

[4] Karen Hearn (ed.), *Dynasties: Painting in Tudor and Jacobean England 1530-1630*. London: Tate Publishing, 1995, p. 178. Tabitha Barber also notes the similarities between the Trinity College portrait of Essex and a miniature of the same sitter by Isaac Oliver (National Portrait Gallery) and raises the question as to whether they shared head-patterns.





Cat. 9

ATT. TO GEORGE GOWER (C.1538-1596)

Henry Carey, 1st Baron Hunsdon (1526-1596)

Late 1560s

Oil on panel
24 ¼ x 16 ¾ in. (61.5 x 42.5 cm)

PROVENANCE

Dr. Thomas Loveday, Williamsote, Banbury, Oxfordshire;
Christie's, 20 April 1990, lot 3;
Private collection, Leicestershire;
Weiss Gallery, London, 2006;
Private collection, UK, acquired from the above



Henry Carey, 1st Baron Hunsdon, or ‘my Harry’, as he was affectionately known to Elizabeth I, was one of the most prominent statesmen of the Elizabethan age and the founding patron of The Lord Chamberlain’s Men, the company of actors which included William Shakespeare.

Carey was the daughter of Mary Boleyn, former mistress of Henry VIII and sister to Anne Boleyn. As Elizabeth’s cousin, therefore, he was well-placed when she ascended to the throne in 1558 and enjoyed unparalleled intimacy with the queen throughout her reign. She swiftly knighted him, elevated him to the peerage as Baron Hunsdon in 1559, and endowed him with valuable estates. In the early years of the reign, he fulfilled ceremonial and diplomatic duties, serving as Captain of the Gentlemen Pensioners, the sovereign’s guard, and undertaking embassies to France. In 1561, he was also made a Knight of the Garter, one of the most prestigious chivalric orders in Europe. Yet Hunsdon’s reputation rested less on court pageantry than on action.

His first great political importance came in 1568 when Elizabeth appointed him governor of Berwick and warden of the East Marches, placing him at the sensitive Anglo-Scottish frontier during the crisis following the flight of Mary, Queen of Scots (cat.11) into England. Two years

later, during the Northern Rebellion of 1569–70, Catholic nobles rose against Elizabeth. Hunsdon moved decisively against the insurgents and defeated the forces of Leonard Dacre near Carlisle. Thereafter, Hunsdon remained one of the queen’s dependable men in northern and Scottish affairs. He repeatedly negotiated with Scottish factions, advised on relations with the young James VI and I, and became one of the council’s most experienced voices on border policy. Though often frustrated by Elizabeth’s caution, he was a faithful servant.

In 1577, he was appointed to the Privy Council, thrusting him to the centre of government. For the next two decades, he worked alongside leading ministers, including William Cecil, Lord Burghley (cat.6). In 1585, he became Lord Chamberlain of the Household, one of the highest offices at court. This role placed him in daily proximity to Elizabeth, controlled access to the monarch, and made him a key broker of patronage.

During the Spanish Armada of 1588, Elizabeth entrusted Hunsdon with the defence of her person, appointing him principal captain and governor of an army of 36,000 men. While she addressed troops at Tilbury, Hunsdon was effectively the commander of the force protecting the queen herself.

Hunsdon is equally remembered as an important patron of the theatre. Companies of players had long operated under his protection, but as Lord Chamberlain, his name became permanently associated with the most famous troupe of the age, the Lord Chamberlain's Men. Reorganised in 1594, the company included William Shakespeare and quickly became London's leading theatrical ensemble. Because the Lord Chamberlain oversaw court entertainments and exercised influence over performance licences, Hunsdon's patronage offered both prestige and practical protection. He successfully intervened with the Lord Mayor of London to allow his players to perform. Under his name, the company staged plays at court laid the foundations for what later became the King's Men.

Hunsdon died in 1596 at Somerset House and was buried in Westminster Abbey at Elizabeth's expense. Soldier, councillor, chamberlain, and patron, he was among the queen's most loyal kinsmen and one of the enduring figures of Elizabeth's reign.

The present portrait is the earliest of only two surviving portraits of Hunsdon painted during his lifetime. The authorship of the present is not known for certain, but it was evidently painted by a well-trained hand. In the past, it has been attributed to Steven van der Meulen, who was likely the same 'famous painter Steven' who travelled

to Sweden to paint a portrait of Erik XIV, which was then presented to Elizabeth in 1561.[1] Several recorded works by Van Der Meulen of English sitters survive, including a pair of portraits of Lord and Lady Lumley painted in 1563.[2] These works differ stylistically from the present work, casting doubt on the previous attribution. The haughty characterisation and the drawing of the facial features, in particular the treatment of the eyes, are reminiscent of George Gower, who was later, in 1581, appointed Serjeant Painter to Elizabeth.

Gower's earliest recorded works are the portraits of Thomas Kitson and his second wife, Elizabeth Cornwallis, and a portrait of Francis Willoughby, all painted in 1573.[3] These works reveal a talented and well-connected artist, indicating that Gower had already achieved a level of status by this date.[4] It is now thought that Gower, originally from York, was living in London by the mid-1560s, where there was an established community of painters and workshops that may have trained him or influenced his work. Several of these artists, including John Bettes, are known to scholars through primary sources and surviving works, whereas others, including Nicholas Lizard, a Serjeant Painter to Elizabeth, and Arnold Derickson, are known only by name.[5] Another artist, known as the Master of the Countess of Warwick, was also active in the 1560s

and may possibly be Derickson.[6] If the present work is indeed by Gower, it must have been painted by the late 1560s, as this style of narrow ruff had been superseded by broader examples by the early 1570s.

[1] It has also been suggested that 'the famous paynter Steven' was the medallist Stevan van Herwijck. See Edward Town, (2014) 'A Biographical Dictionary of London Painters, 1547-1625', *The Walpole Society*, Vol. LXXXVI, pp. 179-181.

[2] The Earl of Scarborough. Illustrated in Roy Strong, *The English Icon*, 1969, p.121

[3] The portraits of Thomas Kitson and Elizabeth Cornwallis are in the Tate collection, and the Francis Willoughby portrait is in a private collection.

[4] For a more complete account of Gower's life and career, see Town, E and David, J. (2020) 'George Gower: Portraitist, Mercer, Serjeant Painter', *The Burlington Magazine*, Vol. 161, No. 1410, pp. 730-747.

[5]

[6] The identification of Arnold Derickson as the Master of the Countess of Warwick was first suggested by Edward Town and was explored in the exhibition *Tudor Mystery: The Master of the Countess of Warwick*, at Compton Verney in 2023.



Cat. 10

**AFTER JOHN DE CRITZ THE ELDER
(1551/2-1642)**

Sir Francis Walsingham (c.1532-1590)

Late 16th century

Oil on panel
20 x 16 in. (51.5cm x 40.5cm)

PROVENANCE

Private Collection, UK ;
Bonhams, 29 October 2014, lot 21 ;
Philip Mould & Company, acquired from the above;
Private collection, UK, acquired from the above, 2015



Sir Francis Walsingham was a pivotal figure during the Elizabethan age. As ‘spymaster’ to the Queen, he effectively managed the intelligence and security networks that protected Elizabeth from foreign and domestic threats, and as such, wielded considerable authority both at home and on the international stage.

Walsingham was born around 1532 into a family already threaded into the fabric of royal service, a background that quietly prepared him for life Elizabeth’s court. Educated at Cambridge and later at Gray’s Inn, his early formation was sharpened by time spent on the Continent during the reign of Mary I, where exposure to Protestant circles and European politics left a lasting mark on his outlook.

His rise at court was slow but steady. In the 1560s he appeared in parliament and moved within networks shaped by figures such as William Cecil, Lord Burghley (cat.6) and Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester (cat.5). The turning point came in 1570 with his appointment as ambassador to France. In Paris, Walsingham used his position to great effect, and he forged a network of contacts that he maintained throughout his life. He became deeply involved in delicate negotiations, not least the proposed marriage between Elizabeth and the duc d’Anjou, while also engaging with wider Protestant strategy. The St Bartholomew’s Day Massacre had a

profound effect on him, and reinforced a wary, hard-edged view of Catholic power that would shape his advice to the Queen for years to come.

His return to England marked his ascent to the inner circle. Appointed principal secretary in 1573 and sworn into the Privy Council, Walsingham became a central figure in the Queen’s orbit. His role demanded constant attendance on the Queen, oversight of correspondence, and involvement in the most sensitive affairs of state. Though initially overshadowed by Burghley and Leicester, by the late 1570s, he had become Elizabeth’s leading secretary.

It was during the mid-1580s that Walsingham’s reputation as a spymaster was cemented. Convinced that Mary, Queen of Scots (cat.11) was the focus of Catholic plots against Elizabeth I, he built an intelligence network to monitor her correspondence and contacts. In 1586, he orchestrated the exposure of the Babington Plot, intercepting coded letters that appeared to show Mary approving plans to assassinate Elizabeth. This evidence led to Mary’s trial at Fotheringhay Castle in October 1586 and her execution on 8 February 1587.

Walsingham’s relationship with Elizabeth was never one of easy familiarity. He was not a favourite, nor a courtly ornament.

Instead, he was valued for his vigilance, his intellect, and his capacity for hard judgement. At times, he fell from favour, yet significantly, he was never dismissed.

By the end of his life, Walsingham stood at the nerve centre of Elizabethan government with an extensive network of information gatherers spanning Europe and the Mediterranean. Following the dispersal of the Spanish Armada in 1588, the naval commander Lord Henry Seymour famously wrote to Walsingham, “you have fought more with your pen than many have in our English navy fought with their enemies”. His career was not one built on intimacy, but on loyalty, cunning, and a shared understanding that the stability of the realm depended on thorough investigation and clear counsel.

The present work derives from the only recorded portrait type of Walsingham, thought to have been painted by John de Critz the Elder in the 1580s. It is known that de Critz received extensive patronage from Walsingham during this period and often travelled to the Continent to deliver letters on his behalf. In all the surviving portraits of this type, Walsingham is shown wearing a black cap, a lace ruff, and a black costume. Versions of a varying scale and quality are recorded, the best-known being the half-length portrait in the National Portrait Gallery. The present example was likely painted towards the very end of the 16th century and shows

the familiar head type, but in reverse. This is not uncommon for the period, as tracings of heads were sometimes inverted by portrait painters – perhaps to ensure continuity if part of a portrait set.

[1] John Cooper (2011). *The Queen's Agent: Francis Walsingham at the Court of Elizabeth I*. London: Faber & Faber, p. 317

[2] For Walsingham's iconography, see Roy Strong, *Tudor and Jacobean Portraits*, vol. 1, pp. 321-322.

[3] Edward Town, *A Biographical Dictionary of London Painters 1547-1625*, The Walpole Society, vol. 76, p. 66.



Cat. 11

**FRENCH SCHOOL, PARTIALLY AFTER
FRANÇOIS CLOUET (C.1515–1572)**

Mary Stuart (1542–1587), Queen of Scots

c. 1587

Oil on oak panel
12 x 9 ¾ in. (30.5 x 25 cm)

Inscribed label, probably in a 19th century hand, verso

PROVENANCE

Private collection, France, until 2024;
Weiss Gallery, London, acquired from the above;
Private collection, UK, 2025.



Mary, Queen of Scots, was one of the greatest political and dynastic threats to Elizabeth I, and as a result, portraits of her from the period are rare. The present work was likely painted in France around the time of her execution and appears to be a unique oil composition.[1]

As the granddaughter of Henry VIII's elder sister Margaret Tudor, Mary had a strong claim to the English throne. She was also a Catholic, and through her marriage to François II, was openly supported by the French. The unforeseen death of her husband, however, diluted her support in France and following several failed marriage proposals, she returned to Scotland, where, since the death of her father, King James V, soon after her birth, she had held the title of Queen of Scotland. Her reign in Edinburgh was marked by a series of disastrous romantic liaisons. In 1565, she married her cousin Henry Stuart, Lord Darnley, and although they had a son, the future James VI & I, the union was unhappy. After Darnley orchestrated the murder of David Rizzio, Mary's close friend and secretary, the situation worsened. In February 1567, Darnley's residence was destroyed in an explosion, and he was found murdered in a garden nearby. Only weeks later, Mary married James Hepburn, 4th Earl of Bothwell, who was widely suspected of complicity in Darnley's murder. Mary and

her new husband were soon the subject of a rebellion and forced to abdicate in favour of her son James VI, who was just one year old, and a regency was established under Lord Moray. Mary then fled to England seeking the protection of her cousin Elizabeth I, whom she believed would help her regain her throne. Given the underlying sympathies for Mary amongst the English Catholics, however, Elizabeth perceived her cousin as a threat and had her imprisoned in various castles and houses in England for almost nineteen years. Mary's presence was problematic, and after the exposure of several Catholic plots to overthrow Elizabeth, including the Ridolfi Plot, the Throckmorton Plot and finally the Babington Plot, Elizabeth had Mary executed at Fotheringhay Castle in February 1587.

This portrait shows Mary in black mourning dress and uses a head-type introduced earlier in France in 1561 by the Valois court painter François Clouet (fig. 11.1). The present composition was popularised through prints circulated immediately after her execution in 1587 - one such engraving, by Thomas de Leu (fig. 11.2), was circulated either just before or soon after her execution.[2] It seems most probable that De Leu had access to an original painting, perhaps this portrait, to serve as a reference for his printed likeness.



Fig. 11.1
 François Clouet (c.1515 – 1572)
Marie Stuart en deuil blanc
 Colour pencil on paper: 30 x 19.5 cm.
 Drawn circa 1561
 © Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris.



Fig. 11.2
 Thomas de Leu (1560 – 1612), *Marie Stewart, Reyne de France et Ecosse*, Engraving on paper: 15 x 9.6 cm., published 1587 – 1590 © Royal Collection Trust (RCIN 618290).

For the artist of the present work, the only accessible likeness of Mary in France would likely have been the Clouet portrait, as she never returned after her departure for Scotland in 1561. That the artist of this work relied on the earlier Clouet head-type and not, for example, the ‘Sheffield’ portrait of Mary, or those painted by Nicholas Hilliard in England in the late 1570s, suggests this work was indeed created in France

Although the artist of this work is at present unknown, they may have been connected to Thomas de Leu. We know, for example, that De Leu’s brothers-in-law were the painter Pierre Gourdelle and the engraver Léonard Gaultier, but it has also been suggested that De Leu’s print,

which was very popular in the wake of Mary’s execution, was based on a drawing by Antoine Caron.[3] As a favoured court painter, Caron would likely have had access to the royal portrait collection and could possibly have adapted, in oils, the Clouet drawing for De Leu to reproduce in print. Ultimately, given that De Leu sourced the designs for many of his portrait prints from works by other artists, it is difficult to establish exactly who was responsible for the present work. Not least because, to complicate matters further, De Leu was both an engraver and a printer who also published other engravers’ work.

[1] We are grateful to Charlie MacKay for sharing the material consulted in preparing this catalogue note, and for his

research into the prototypes underlying the composition and possible artists.

[2] Lionel Cust proposed that it was commissioned before Mary’s execution on 8 February 1587, believing the inscription indicated it was created during her lifetime. The accompanying verse evokes themes of beauty and nobility beset by danger and misfortune, reflecting how many of Mary, Queen of Scots’s Catholic supporters abroad, especially in France, viewed her during her lifetime. Others, including Andrée Jouan, have argued that the print formed part of a group of twelve portraits produced between 1587 and 1588.

[3] Lionel Cust, *Authentic Portraits of Mary, Queen of Scots*, London 1903, p. 117. As he correctly points out, the habit worn by Mary in this likeness is not seen in any

other portrait of her and likely derives from portraits of her former mother-in-law, Catherine de’Medici, when she was portrayed as a widowed queen of France.

Cat. 12

NICHOLAS HILLIARD (1547-1619)

King Henri III of France (1551-1589)

c. 1576

Watercolour and bodycolour on vellum
2 x 1 1/2 in. (50 x 37 mm)

Inscribed 'HENRICVS III D,G FRANCOR ET POL REX'

PROVENANCE

Pescheteau-Badin, Paris, 2 December 2013, lot 31;
Simon Dickinson, acquired from the above;
Private collection, U.K., acquired from the above through Philip Mould & Company,
2016.





Henri III of France was the last French king of the Valois dynasty and, from the summer of 1570 until early 1572, was considered a potential suitor for Elizabeth I. The present work, painted around 1576, is one of the few surviving miniatures by Hilliard depicting members of the French court.

As the fourth son of Henri II of France and Catherine de' Medici, he was not expected to inherit the throne. Following the deaths of his elder brothers, Francois II, who reigned for only a year, and Charles IX, who reigned for fourteen years, however, Henri became king at age 33 in 1574.

Henri's reign was dominated by religious civil war, factional rivalry, and the growing power of the Catholic League led by Henri I, Duke of Guise. His ambitions for a more religiously tolerant France were repeatedly challenged by his Catholic peers, whilst a powerful group of Catholic and Protestant aristocrats, led by his brother, Francois, Duke of Anjou, took issue with his absolutist attitudes. Questions of succession followed Francois's early death, as Henri III of Navarre, a distant Protestant cousin, was the legal heir presumptive. This caused concern amongst the Catholic League, which then demanded that all Protestants be excluded from the succession. The War of the Three Henrys, as it became known, was the result of the Treaty of Nemours, which excluded Henri of Navarre from the throne. Although against the treaty, Henri faced immense pressure and the

threat of rebellion from the Catholic League and so agreed to denounce the Protestant faith. Henri, frustrated by the Catholic League's interventions in his rule, had the Duke of Guise killed and was then himself assassinated in 1589.

The relationship between Elizabeth I and Henri III was complex and conditioned by diplomacy. Embassies, courtly networks, and artistic exchange sustained close ties between the two courts, while proposed marriage alliances—first with Henri himself and later with his brother François—offered periodic opportunities for rapprochement. Within this context, artistic patronage – specifically the commissioning of portraiture - became a subtle mode of political communication.

Hilliard likely travelled to France in the retinue of the English Ambassador Sir Amias Paulet, which provided him access to the highest echelons of the French court. Who do not know who or why the present work was commissioned, although its technical brilliance, as evidenced by its outstanding condition, suggests it was derived from a life sitting. The characterisation is strong and the modelling is highly refined. The detailing across the costume, particularly in the black cape, demonstrates his work at its most refined, as does the subtle gold highlighting on the jewels, which still glistens as it would have done when held in the hand 450 years ago. Discovered only recently in 2013, it is an important addition to Hilliard's oeuvre.



Cat. 13

ENGLISH SCHOOL

Portrait of Sir John Norris (c.1547-1597)

1590

Oil on panel
16 ¼ x 21 in. (41.3 x 53.3 cm)

PROVENANCE

Private collection, Ireland, until 2018;
Philip Mould & Company, London;
Private collection, U.K.;
Philip Mould & Company, London.



Sir John Norris was one of the great military commanders of the Elizabethan Age and a principal figure in the British defence against the Spanish Armada.

Norris became a soldier at a young age. He first saw active service in France in the train of his father, then English ambassador, fighting as a committed Calvinist on the side of the Huguenots during the French Wars of Religion. The experience of witnessing their underprepared forces proved formative, instilling in him a lasting concern for discipline, organisation, and supply.

On his return to England, Norris was sent to Ireland, where he proved a brutal commander, serving alongside the young Francis Drake. By the late 1570s, he was again engaged in warfare, this time in the Netherlands, where the collapse of a truce between Spain and the Protestant Dutch Provinces drew him once more into conflict on behalf of his co-religionists. His support for intervention aligned him with the faction of Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester (cat.5), and Sir Francis Walsingham (cat.10), in opposition to William Cecil, later Lord Burghley (cat.6), and, at times, Queen Elizabeth herself.

Norris was one of the most senior figures involved in preparations against the Spanish Armada. He was one of only four

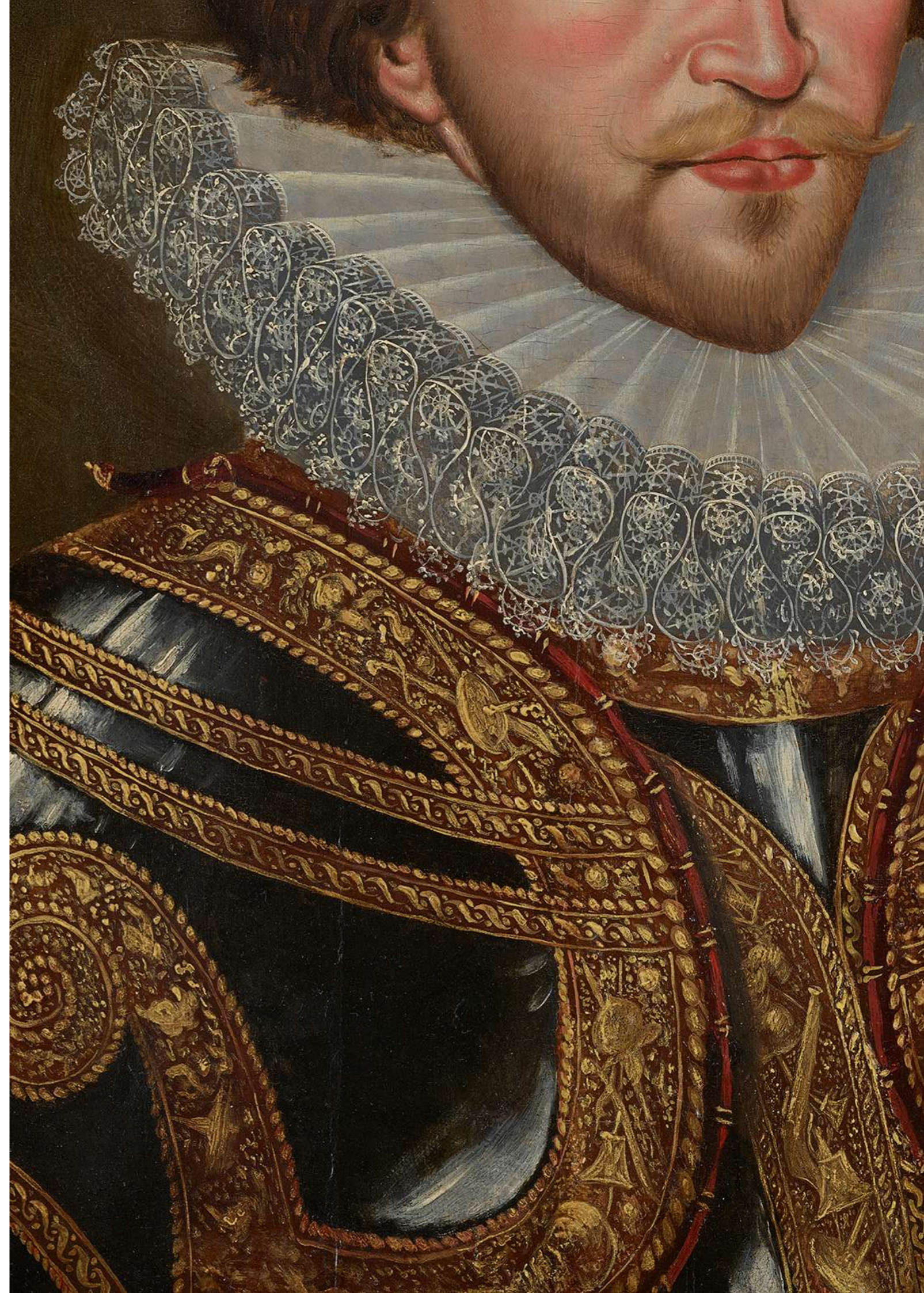
men to accompany Queen Elizabeth to give her famed Tilbury address on 8th August 1588. Working closely with Drake, Norris was responsible for training the English militia to a level that would enable it to effectively resist the Armada in the event of an invasion. Ultimately, the expedition failed to achieve its aims, but Norris's success in both organising and financing it, against significant odds, was considerable.

Renowned for his personal bravery, Norris favoured leading from the front and over the course of his career, he was wounded on at least nine occasions. The last years of his life were spent primarily in Ireland, where he was posted to help ready fortifications to defend against a feared second Armada. Following a brief interlude, which brought him again to France, Norris returned to Ireland. By this point, however, wounds sustained over the course of a long and violent career were beginning to take a toll on his health. Fearful of his flagging strength, his mother petitioned Sir Robert Cecil to have him recalled. Shortly after this request, Norris collapsed in the arms of his brother and died.

Norris's iconography is frequently confused with that of Drake; however, similarities between the present portrait and others depicting Norris confirm that the inscription is correct and that

it is indeed he who is represented here. [1] Until the mid-nineteenth century, this portrait was considered a touchstone portrait of Norris. It was copied by Sarah, Countess of Essex, in gouache for Lucy Aikin's *Memoirs of the Court of Queen Elizabeth*, published in 1825. It was also copied in 1818 by the portrait painter and watercolourist George Perfect Harding (1781-1853), who specialised in reproducing in watercolour important historical portraits in private collections.

[1] See for example, the portrait of Sir John Norris at Knole in Kent (Attributed to Jan van Belcamp) which is one of a set of 44 portraits depicting notable Elizabethan sitters probably commissioned by Thomas Sackville, 1st Earl of Dorset in c.1605. The Knole portrait was likely based on the portrait attributed to William Segar in a private collection (Private Collection LXVI, Heinz Archive). A further portrait, again deriving from the portrait attributed to Segar, was previously in the collection of the Norris family and was sold by the order of the executors of the late Christopher Norris at Christie's, 20 July 1990, lot 302 (as by George Gower).





Cat. 14

CIRCLE OF ROBERT PEAKE (C. 1551-1619)

Portrait of a Lady

c. 1615

Oil on panel
21 ³/₄ in x 17 ¹/₄ in. (55cm x 44 cm)

PROVENANCE

Robert D. L. Gardiner (1911-2004);
Christie's, New York, 26 January 2005, lot 288, sold by the above;
The Weiss Gallery, London, 2006, acquired from the above;
Appleby Castle, Cumbria, presumably acquired from the above;
Lyon & Turnbull, Edinburgh, 27 March 2024, lot 166, sold by the above;
Philip Mould & Company, London, acquired from the above.

LITERATURE

Jessica Malay, (2018) *Anne Clifford's Autobiographical Writing*. Manchester University Press, (illus. frontispiece).



The present portrait of an elegantly attired young woman is a fine example of the type of portraiture that spanned the Elizabethan and Jacobean periods. Rich with colour and detail, this style of painting dominated Elizabeth's reign and remained in vogue until the 1620s, when tastes began to shift towards a more dynamic mode of depiction.

Painted in the mid-1610s, this portrait shows a young woman bedecked in the trappings of wealth and status. Her hair is worn in a fashionable upswept manner and is embellished with a jeweled 'tire' of a floral design, which would have caught the light and shimmered as she moved. A broad lace ruff frames her delicate complexion, complemented by a large pearl – symbolic of purity – worn on her ear. The bodice of the dress is decorated with floral motifs and embroidered with glistening silver thread. Between her two fingers, the sitter gently holds a necklace, likely made of rock crystal – a costly accessory that was evidently of personal significance.

Stylistically, this portrait bears apparent similarities with a group of portraits by or attributed to Robert Peake, painted in and around 1615. These include the portraits of Lady Anne Pope, 1615,[1] Lady Elizabeth Pope, c. 1615,[2] and Portrait of a Lady, c. 1615.[3] All these works feature young female sitters, often with their hands raised to their chests, their heads slightly

tilted downward, and a hint of a smile.

Robert Peake was born into a prosperous Lincolnshire family and is first recorded by name on 30 April 1565 when he enrolled as an apprentice to the London goldsmith Laurence Woodham.[4] In 1576, he became a freeman of the London Goldsmith's Company and, over the next three years, was employed as a painter for the Office of Revels – a department of the Royal Household responsible for staging events such as banquets, masks, plays, and dances. He is now best known for his striking depictions of the royal family, particularly those of Henry, Prince of Wales, for whom he seems to have been the official portraitist. Having at one time been in danger of obscurity, Peake, as one of the few court painters of note not to be foreign, is now recognised as a major figure in the evolution of a British School of painting. Like his contemporaries in the de Critz and Gheeraerts families, Peake specialised in the meticulous depiction of costume and jewellery demanded by late Elizabethan patrons.

[1] Tate, T00068.

[2] Tate, T00067.

[3] Phillips, London, 12 December 1995, lot 32.

[4] The most up to date biography on Peake is Karen Hearn's entry in the Oxford Dictionary of National Biography (2008).



Cat. 15

ENGLISH SCHOOL

Portrait of a Gentleman, formerly identified as William Shakespeare

c. 1600-10

Oil on panel
20 5/8 x 18 1/8 in. (55 x 46 cm)

PROVENANCE

Richard Cosway (1742-1821), by 1803;
Hermann Rothschild, Berlin, 1933 (according to an old photograph in the Heinz Archive,
National Portrait Gallery, London);
Wallace Bradway, New Haven, USA;
Nadeau's Auction Gallery, 30 April 2022, sold by the executors of the above;
Philip Mould & Company, London, acquired from the above.

LITERATURE

Tarnya Cooper, (2012) *Citizen Portrait: Portrait Painting and the Urban Elite of Tudor and
Jacobean England and Wales*. New Haven and London: Paul Mellon Center, p. 191 (illus.).



During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, this portrait of an unknown sitter was widely regarded as a defining image of the world's greatest playwright, William Shakespeare. While in the collection of the artist Richard Cosway, it was catalogued as such, and this identification was further disseminated through an engraving by William Holl Sr., published by Abraham Wivell in 1827 [Fig 15.1]. The image was also copied in miniature by Charlotte Jones in 1808.

The identification of literary figures in portraiture of this period is notoriously problematic, as relatively few sitters can be securely named.[1] One of the most notable surviving examples is the portrait of John Donne, in the collection of the National Portrait Gallery, which presents the young writer dressed informally with his collar open and his arms crossed. This theatrical and daringly casual approach to portraiture was highly unusual but has since become recognised as a subgenre of image-making favoured by those who lived and worked in creative circles. These portraits, of which only a small number survive, can be broadly characterised by their relatively small scale, expressive poses, and informal style of dress.



Fig. 15.1
William Holl Sr. (1771-1838), 'Guglielm Shakspeare', 1827.
Engraving, 8 7/8 in. x 6 1/8 in. (225 mm x 155 mm).
National Portrait Gallery.



Fig. 15.2
Charlotte Jones (1768-1847), *Portrait of a Gentleman*, 1808.
Watercolour on ivory. Private collection.

The present portrait may belong to this group and plausibly depicts a poet. The sitter, shown with his head resting on his hand and gazing outward, conveys an air of introspection; as one scholar has observed: ‘*as if we are intruding on a private moment of personal reflection, perhaps of a man who is reflecting upon his love-torn heart.*’^[2] This visual expression of sorrow aligns with the Elizabethan notion of melancholy, associated with intellectual labour and emotional sensitivity.^[3] His informal dress, with the collar open at the neck, reinforces this impression. While such a mode of presentation would have been unconventional in a public portrait, it suggests that the work was intended for private display—perhaps as a gift within a close circle of friends, patrons, or intimates.

A half-length portrait of the same sitter has recently come to light [fig. 15.3], though it has previously been misidentified as the Welsh pirate Piers Griffith.^[4] This portrait, which was perhaps painted by the same artist as the present work, shows the sitter in an equally romantic manner, resting nonchalantly on a ledge with his left hand on the hilt of a sword and his collar wide open. Based on the existence of these two portraits, the sitter was evidently a man of some note, and further research into the recently emerged work – the whereabouts of which is at present unknown – might provide some answers.^[5]

[1] For a more comprehensive overview of literary portraits from this period see ‘Performance and Presence: Portraits of Playwrights, Actors and Artists’ Tarnya Cooper, (2012) *Citizen Portrait: Portrait Painting and the Urban Elite of Tudor and Jacobean England and Wales*. New Haven and London: Paul Mellon Centre.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 191.

[3] *Ibid.*

[4] Illustrated on the front cover of: Glenys Mair Lloyd, (2015) *Piers Griffith: Pirate of Penrhyn by Glenys Mair Lloyd*. Denbigh: Humprey Signs Ltd.

[5] The portrait was sold by Raphael Valls Limited, London, in the early 2000s. We are grateful to Raphael Valls for his assistance when researching this work.



Fig. 15.3

English School, *Portrait of a Gentleman*, c. 1600-10
Oil on panel, 20 5/8 x 18 1/8 in. (55 x 46 cm).
Whereabouts unknown.

20 DEC 1587

Æ 64.



Cat. 16

ROBERT PEAKE THE ELDER (B.C. 1551–1619)

Richard Wingfield (c. 1524–1591)

1587

Oil on panel
31 x 25 ¾ in (78.6 x 65.5 cm)

Dated and inscribed '20 DEC 1587/Æ 64.' upper left

PROVENANCE

Sir Allan Adair, Bt., Flixton Hall, Suffolk, by 1962;
Christie's, London, 14 April 1989, lot 95;
Private collection, UK.

LITERATURE

Richard Strong, (1969) *The English Icon: Elizabethan and Jacobean Portraiture*. London & New York: Paul Mellon Foundation, p. 229 [as 'Humphrey Wingfield'].



This characterful portrait, painted in 1587 by Robert Peake, exemplifies the robust individuality that underpinned his success as one of the leading court painters of the late Elizabethan and early Jacobean periods. The sitter, Richard Wingfield – a politician and landowner from Suffolk – is painted with a striking realism that anticipates a distinctly English tradition of direct portraiture that would continue through the work of artists such as William Dobson, William Hogarth, and Joshua Reynolds in the centuries that followed.

For many years this sitter was incorrectly identified as Humphrey Wingfield, a distinguished lawyer who served Henry VIII. Only recent examination of the heraldry has restored the portrait's true identity. The small black mullet within the Wingfield arms identifies the sitter as a third son, corresponding with documentary evidence for Richard Wingfield, while the inclusion of the Hardwick arms reflects his marriage to Mary Hardwick, daughter and co-heir of Sir John Hardwick. Such heraldic details were carefully constructed assertions of lineage, marriage, and inherited status.

Richard was born into a wealthy and respectable Suffolk family. His father Anthony was a distinguished military commander who was appointed Privy-Councillor and Vice-Chamberlain to Henry VIII in 1539.[1] Two years later he was made a Knight of the Garter, and in 1551-52 held the position of Lord-

Lieutenant of Suffolk, which made him responsible for managing the county's military forces on behalf of the king. His mother was Elizabeth, daughter of Sir George de Vere and sister and co-heir of John de Vere, 14th Earl of Oxford.

Particularly striking is Wingfield's display of jewellery. While female ornament often dominates discussions of Elizabethan fashion, jewels also played an important role in elite male self-presentation, sometimes signalling wealth and proximity to power. Wingfield prominently presents the viewer with an elaborate gold pendant decorated with enamel, gemstones, and a suspended pearl. At its centre is a carved cameo profile - during the Elizabethan period, the ancient art of gem engraving was revived and elaborate jewels such as this were worn as indicators of affluence and erudition. The jewel was almost certainly highly personal and may have been bestowed as a mark of patronage, loyalty, or service. The date '20 DEC' shown in the upper left was applied by a later hand but may possibly relate to a specific event which occasioned the presentation of the pendant.

Wingfield's deliberate presentation of the pendant is similar to that of Sir Christopher Hatton, in the collection of the National Portrait Gallery, whose own cameo presents an image of the Queen. Such objects could function as coded statements of allegiance and advancement within the culture of the Elizabethan

court. Nearby, Wingfield's two signet rings further reinforce his identity and authority. One bears the Wingfield arms in reverse for sealing formal documents, and the other, decorated with wings punning on the family name, was perhaps reserved for more private correspondence.

[1] R.J.W. Swales, (1982) 'WINGFIELD, Sir Anthony (by 1488-1552), of Letheringham, Suff.', *The History of Parliament Online*. [online] Available at: <http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1509-1558/member/wingfield-sir-anthony-1488-1552> [accessed: 19 Feb. 2021].

[2] Natasha Awais-Dean, (2019) *Bejewelled: Men and Jewellery in Tudor and Jacobean England*. London: The British Museum.

[3] NPG 2162.





Cat. 17

ENGLISH SCHOOL

Portrait of a Lady

1590s

Oil on panel
22 1/4 x 15 3/4 in. (56.5 x 40 cm)

PROVENANCE

Rafael Valls, London;
Private collection, U.S.;
Stair Galleries, New York, 29 October 2025, lot 37;
Philip Mould & Company, London, acquired from the above.



In the Tudor period, commissioning a portrait offered a means of displaying wealth and refinement. Such works were often associated with key moments in a sitter's life, and the youth of the present figure suggests it may have been painted to mark her marriage. At this time, marriage was as much about social mobility and financial security as it was about love and friendship.

Portraits associated with marriage frequently emphasised beauty, virtue, and prosperity, qualities that were intended to reflect both the individual and the wider ambitions of her family. Costume played a central role in communicating these ideas. The sitter is shown in richly detailed dress, her bodice adorned with intricate gold embroidery. Such textiles were expensive and often imported, signalling access to international trade and considerable financial means. The elaborate lace ruff framing her face is particularly notable. At the height of fashion in the late sixteenth century, ruffs required large quantities of fine fabrics and skilled labour to produce and maintain. The highly elaborate ruff here is a clear indication of wealth and adheres to contemporary courtly style.

The sitter's exquisite jewellery reinforces this impression of refinement. Her necklace, composed of gold flowerheads set with what appear to be small pearls, is particularly striking. The flowers resemble

roses, possibly in reference to the Tudor rose. Pearls also carried significant symbolic associations of purity and femininity – a trope often used by Queen Elizabeth herself, particularly towards the end of her reign. The jewelled edging along the sitter's neckline, from which suspended pearls drop, is particularly sophisticated and conveys the sheer luxury of contemporary court dress. The sitter's hair is worn up, with loose curls framing the face and drawing attention to the elaborate necklace and matching pearl ornament in her hair.

As art historical records from the Tudor period remain sparse, information that might otherwise illuminate the identities of the painters responsible for these often elaborate portraits is frequently lacking. Few artists working in sixteenth-century England signed their work, and documentary evidence relating to commissions, workshops, and patronage has rarely survived. Although the identity of the artist remains unknown, the assured handling of the painting points to an accomplished and experienced hand.



Cat. 18

ENGLISH SCHOOL

Portrait of Sir Robert Dudley (1574-1649)

1594

Oil on paper laid on canvas
16 1/2 x 11 3/8 ins. (42cm x 29cm)

Inscribed on reverse: 'Old picture/brought from/Trentham/& cleaned/1850.-/
supposed to be Sir F. Drake./& by Hilliard'

PROVENANCE

The Dukes of Sutherland at Trentham Hall, Stoke-on-Trent, by 1850 (according to an inscription on the reverse of the canvas);
By descent to George Granville Sutherland-Leveson-Gower, 5th Duke of Sutherland (1888-1963), by whom sold;
F. Lair-Dubreuil, Paris, 6 December 1924, lot 58;
Bacri Antiquaire, Paris, 1958-2017;
Sotheby's, Paris, 30 March 2017, lot 18;
Philip Mould & Company, acquired from the above;
Private collection, UK, acquired from the above, 2017;
Philip Mould & Company, acquired from the above, 2021;
Private collection, UK, acquired from the above, 2022.



The sitter of this unusual portrait is almost certainly Sir Robert Dudley, the illegitimate son of Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester (cat.5). Given his status as an illegitimate son, Dudley's prospects at court were limited, and he was unable to inherit his father's titles and political standing. He was, nevertheless, a cultivated and ambitious figure, and as can be observed clearly in the present work, he led an interesting life.

In a bold move, young Dudley, who lacked experience but wielded the same flair and confidence as his father, decided in 1594 to lead an expedition to the West Indies. Exploration was an opportunity to increase wealth, bolster status, and demonstrate bravery – an exciting prospect, no doubt, for a fledgling courtier eager to escape the shadow of his dominant father. After initial hesitation – likely on account of the ship's value and Dudley's inexperience – the Queen granted her permission and Dudley set sail on 6 November 1594 with a crew of 275. Although his initial attempt was scuppered by a storm, his second departure was successful, and by December, he was in Tenerife, where he captured two Spanish ships. The aim of the expedition was to pursue and capture Spanish vessels, so it was a positive start. Dudley and his men then sailed to Trinidad and anchored at Cedros Bay at the end of January 1595. It was there that he discovered an island which he named 'Dudleiana' and claimed it for the English crown. Following a failed attempt to find

gold, Dudley and his fleet sailed north, where they captured a Spanish merchant vessel. Due to dwindling provisions, Dudley decided to sail home, and following a two-day tussle with a Spanish man-of-war, he finally arrived in St Ives, Cornwall, at the end of May 1595.

Following an expedition to Cadiz with Robert Devereux, 2nd Earl of Essex (cat.8), Dudley was knighted and soon after married Alice, daughter of Thomas Leigh of Stoneleigh. Following a failed attempt to claim his late father's peerages and establish himself at court, he left England with his cousin Elizabeth Southwell and converted to Catholicism. The pair were married in Lyon, and later settled in Florence, where Dudley became a naval advisor to Ferdinand I, Grand Duke of Tuscany. In 1607, on refusing to travel back to England on the orders of James I, Dudley's lands were confiscated, although he maintained contacts at the English court through a network of friends.

In his later years, Dudley self-published 'Dell'Arcano del Mare' ('The Secret of the Sea'), a six-volume maritime encyclopaedia including an atlas of the entire world. It was published in 1646-7 and covers topics including shipbuilding, navigation, and astronomy. Dudley died in 1649, and his collection of scientific instruments is now on display in the Museo Galileo, Florence.

The present work is dated 1594 and was therefore commissioned to commemorate his first voyage and discovery of ‘Dudleiana’ – an event possibly recorded in the present work. It was likely painted sometime after his return to England in 1595 and before he left England for Italy in 1605. Dudley’s iconography is sparse, and his best-known portrait is Nicholas Hilliard’s, in the National Museum of Fine Arts, Sweden, painted in the 1590s. Although painted in a different medium, Hilliard’s likeness of Dudley closely resembles the subject in our work.

In this portrait, Dudley is shown standing on the foreshore with his left hand on his hip and his right hand holding a halberd (a combination of spear and battle-axe). It is a pose of strength and defiance through which he adopts the guise of a conqueror. His intricately detailed helmet and shield are placed beneath a tree, symbolising strength, seriousness of purpose, and his willingness to fight for his cause. Ivy coils around the tree, a traditional symbol of immortality, perhaps here alluding to survival in the face of adversity. This sentiment is echoed in the small shield which hangs from a severed limb of the tree, bearing the Latin motto: *‘non reiecienda reiecta’* (*‘that which has been rejected should not have been rejected’*).

The painting may be read as a statement of achievement, referring either to his claim upon land previously ignored or

rejected by others, or to a more personal assertion in the face of his exclusion from his father’s inheritance. In either case, the portrait presents a deliberate act of celebratory self-fashioning. This sense of accomplishment is further reinforced by the small rocks flecked with gold in the lower left corner, positioned near the point at which he plants his halberd.

The present portrait was sold by George Sutherland-Leveson-Gower 5th Duke of Sutherland in 1924. According to an inscription on the reverse of the canvas, it was previously at Trentham Hall, Stoke-on-Trent. Trentham was inherited in 1605 by Sir Richard Leveson, who soon after married Katharine, the daughter of Dudley and his first wife, Alice. It was presumably through Katharine, therefore, that the present work found its way into the collection of the Dukes of Sutherland, who also owned a full-length portrait of Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, by Federico Zuccaro, which is thought to have been destroyed during the Second World War.



Cat. 19

NICHOLAS HILLIARD (1547-1619)

A lady traditionally identified as Elizabeth (1588-1633), née Stanley, Countess of Huntingdon

c.1603-1615

Watercolour on vellum laid onto a playing card with three diamonds verso
Oval, 62 mm high

PROVENANCE

According to a handwritten note on the back of the case, which identifies the sitter as the wife of Henry Hastings, 5th Earl of Huntingdon, part of the collection of Sir Horace Walpole (1717-1797), who has signed this note with his collector's mark, 'H. W. ++'; According to this same note, given by Walpole to 'Huntingdon', almost certainly a reference to Francis Hastings (1729-1789), 10th Earl of Huntingdon, with whom Walpole was friendly and with whom, on at least two occasions between 1759 and c.1784, he is documented as having exchanged gifts;

Presumed to have passed, on the death (without issue) in 1789 of the 10th Earl of Huntingdon, to his eldest sister, Elizabeth (1731-1808), who inherited several of her brother's subsidiary titles suo jure, becoming 16th Baroness Botreaux, 15th Baroness Hungerford, 13th Baroness de Moleyns, and 13th Baroness Hastings;

Presumed to have passed, by descent, to her son Francis Rawdon-Hastings (1754-1826), who was created 1st Marquess of Hastings in 1816;

Presumed to have passed, by descent, to his son George Rawdon-Hastings (1808-1844), 2nd Marquess of Hastings;

Presumed to have passed, by descent, to his daughter Edith Rawdon-Hastings (1833-1874), 10th Countess of Loudon, whose widower, Charles Clifton (1822-1895), was created 1st Baron Donington of Donington Park, in 1880;

Possibly amongst the items sold when Donington Park itself was sold, in 1901, by their son, Charles Rawdon-Hastings (1855-1920), 11th Earl of Loudoun and 2nd Baron Donington of Donington Park;

By 1926, in the collection of Walter Samuel (1882-1948), 2nd Viscount Bearsted, having 'until quite recently' been in the possession of descendants of the earls of Huntingdon;

Thence by descent in the Samuel family;

Philip Mould & Company, acquired from the above, 2024;

Private collection, U.K.



EXHIBITED

Burlington House/The Royal Academy of Arts, London, 'Exhibition of Seventeenth Century Art in Europe', 3 January – 12 March 1938, no. 763;
 Victoria & Albert Museum, London, 'Nicholas Hilliard and Isaac Oliver: An Exhibition to Commemorate the 400th Anniversary of the Birth of Nicholas Hilliard', 31 May – 31 August 1947 (no. 96);
 Manchester City Art Gallery, 'Sixteenth-Century Portraits of Famous Early Elizabethans', 12 May – 21 June 1953 (no. 6);
 Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, 'De Triomf van het Maniërisme/Le Triomphe du Maniërisme Européene/The Triumph of European Mannerism', 1 July – 16 October 1955 (no. 70);
 Royal Academy of Arts, London, 'British Portraits: Winter Exhibition', 1956/7 (no. 634);
 Victoria and Albert Museum, London, 'Artists of the Tudor Court: The Portrait Miniature Rediscovered', 1520-1620, 9 July – 6 November 1983 (no. 118);
 Philip Mould & Company, London, 'Miniatures from the Bearsted Collection', 19 November – 19 December 2025.

LITERATURE

G. C. Williamson, 'A New Piece of Information about Nicholas Hilliard,' *Apollo* (July 1926), pp. 31-32;
 Burlington House/The Royal Academy of Arts, Exhibition of Seventeenth Century Art in Europe (exh. cat., London, 1938), p. 224 (no. 763);
 G. Reynolds, *Nicholas Hilliard and Isaac Oliver: An Exhibition to Commemorate the 400th Anniversary of the Birth of Nicholas Hilliard* (exh. cat., London, 1947), pp. 34-35 (no.96);
 J. Pope-Hennessy, *A Lecture on Nicholas Hilliard* (London, 1949), p. 24 and pl. 25a;
 S. D. Cleveland and D. Piper, *Sixteenth-Century Portraits of Famous Early Elizabethans* (exh. cat., Manchester, 1953), p. 9 (no. 6);
 Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, *De Triomf van het Maniërisme/Le Triomphe du Maniërisme Européene/The Triumph of European Mannerism* (exh. cat., Amsterdam, 1955), p. 74 (no. 70);
 Royal Academy of Arts, *British Portraits, Winter Exhibition* (exh. cat., London 1956/7), p. 194 (no. 634);
 E. Auerbach, *Nicholas Hilliard* (Boston and London, 1961), pp. 154-56 (pl. 147); p. 313 (cat. 153);
 G. Reynolds, *Nicholas Hilliard and Isaac Oliver* (London, 1971), n.p. (no. 96);
 R. Strong, *Nicholas Hilliard* (London, 1975), pp. 32 and 47 (pl. 15b);
 R. Strong with contributions from V. J. Murrell, *Artists of the Tudor Court: The Portrait Miniature Rediscovered, 1520-1620* (exh. cat., London 1983), pp. 90-91 (no. 118);
 G. Reynolds, *English Portrait Miniatures* (rev. edn, Cambridge, 1988), pp. 16-17 (fig. 7);
 E. Goldring, *Nicholas Hilliard: Life of an Artist* (New Haven and London, 2019), pp. 264-67 (fig. 239);
 Elizabeth Goldring and Lawrence Hendra, (2025) *Miniatures from the Bearsted Collection*. London: Paul Holberton, pp.50-55.

This miniature, traditionally identified as Elizabeth Stanley, Countess of Huntingdon, belongs to the sophisticated culture of masque, allegory, and court performance that flourished at the transition from the reign of Elizabeth I to that of James VI & I. Elizabeth Stanley, a descendant of Henry VII and thus a potential claimant to the English throne, moved within the highest circles of the late Elizabethan and early Jacobean court. She was closely associated with the culture of court entertainment fostered by Anne of Denmark and is recorded as both patron and participant in masques staged by figures including Ben Jonson and John Marston.

Hilliard presents the sitter with flowing hair and elaborate headwear evocative of masquing costume rather than conventional court dress. Such imagery carried associations of performance, transformation, and idealised identity. The miniature is further enriched by a complex arrangement of emblems and mottoes surrounding the sitter. A crescent moon, a heart pierced by an arrow, and the Latin inscriptions 'facies mutabilis / sed amor stabilis' ('Changeable face, but steadfast love') and 'semel missa / semper fixa' ('Once cast, always fixed') suggest themes of constancy, devotion, and romantic attachment. Her gesture, with hand pressed to the heart, reinforces this language of emotional fidelity.

The miniature may have been commissioned to commemorate participation in a court entertainment or masque, ephemeral spectacles in which portraiture could serve as a lasting record of performance and identity. Hilliard's jewel-like technique is particularly suited to this world of artifice and display, rendering the sitter with extraordinary delicacy and precision.

The identity of the miniature's original recipient remains unknown, though Elizabeth's association with the diplomat Sir Thomas Roe has prompted speculation. Writing from India in 1616, Roe described her as unmatched in beauty, remarking that there was 'nothing in this new world' like her. Whether or not this miniature accompanied him abroad, the work survives as a remarkable expression of the emotional, literary, and performative culture of the early Stuart court.



Cat. 20

ISAAC OLIVER (c. 1565-1617)

A man, probably a follower of Robert Devereux, 2nd Earl of Essex

c.1596-98

Watercolour on vellum laid down on card; signed (lower left) with the artist's 'IO' monogram.

PROVENANCE

By 1938, part of the collection of Walter Samuel (1882-1948), 2nd Viscount Bearsted; Thence by descent within the Samuel family; Philip Mould & Company, London, acquired from the above, 2024; Private collection, U.K.

LITERATURE

Burlington House/The Royal Academy of Arts, Exhibition of Seventeenth Century Art in Europe (exh. cat., London, 1938), p. 224 (cat. 764);
G. Reynolds, Nicholas Hilliard and Isaac Oliver: An Exhibition to Commemorate the 400th Anniversary of the Birth of Nicholas Hilliard (exh. cat., London, 1947), p. 40 (cat. 145);
G. Reynolds, Nicholas Hilliard and Isaac Oliver (London, 1971), n.p. (cat. 145);
J. Finsten, Isaac Oliver: Art at the Courts of Elizabeth I and James I (New York: Garland [Outstanding Dissertations in the Fine Arts], 1981; orig. presented as the author's Ph.D. thesis, Harvard University, 1979), vol. 2, p. 62 (no. 36);
Philip Mould & Company, Jewel in the Hand: Early Portrait Miniatures from Noble & Private Collections. pp. 88-89 (cat. 25);
Elizabeth Goldring and Lawrence Hendra, (2025) Miniatures from the Bearsted Collection. London: Paul Holberton, pp.64-69.



This miniature by Isaac Oliver depicts an unidentified young man, probably a follower of Robert Devereux, 2nd Earl of Essex, at the height of the earl's political ascendancy in the late 1590s. Though once thought to represent Essex himself, the sitter's broader features suggest instead one of the many young courtiers and soldiers who aligned themselves with the Queen's charismatic favourite in the aftermath of the Cadiz expedition of 1596.

Miniatures of this kind functioned as highly personal objects, exchanged between allies, patrons, and courtiers. Their small scale encouraged close viewing, while their exquisite execution projected refinement and status. Oliver's technical brilliance is particularly evident here in the minute rendering of the sitter's beard, eyelashes, and lace collar, details

painted with extraordinary precision. Such works occupied a space between portrait, political statement, and token of allegiance.

Seen in this context, the miniature offers more than a likeness of an unknown man. It captures a moment when Essex's favour appeared secure and identification with his circle represented a meaningful political and social statement. With the earl's dramatic fall and execution for treason in 1601 still unforeseen, images such as this reflect the ambitions, loyalties, and shifting fortunes that shaped the final years of Elizabeth I's court.



Cat. 21

ISAAC OLIVER (c. 1565-1617)

An unidentified lady in masquing attire, formerly called Alice, née Spencer, Countess of Derby

c.1600-10

Watercolour on vellum laid onto a playing card with two hearts verso.
Oval, 57 mm high.

PROVENANCE

By 1938, Walter Samuel (1882-1948), 2nd Viscount Bearsted;
Thence by descent in the Smauel family;
Philip Mould & Company, acquired from the above, 2024;
Private collection, U.K.

EXHIBITED

Burlington House/The Royal Academy of Arts, London, 'Exhibition of Seventeenth Century Art in Europe', 3 January – 12 March 1938, no. 760;
Victoria and Albert Museum, London, 'Nicholas Hilliard and Isaac Oliver: An Exhibition to Commemorate the 400th Anniversary of the Birth of Nicholas Hilliard', 31 May – 31 August 1947, no. 172;
Manchester City Art Gallery, 'Sixteenth-Century Portraits of Famous Early Elizabethans', 12 May – 21 June 1953, no. 5;
Royal Academy of Arts, London, 'British Portraits: Winter Exhibition', 1956/7, no. 631;
Victoria and Albert Museum, London, 'Artists of the Tudor Court: The Portrait Miniature Rediscovered, 1520-1620', 9 July – 6 November 1983, no. 168;
Philip Mould & Company, London 'Jewel in the Hand: Early Portrait Miniatures from Noble & Private Collections', 12 March – 18 April 2019, no. 24;
Philip Mould & Company, London, 'Miniatures from the Bearsted Collection', 19 November – 19 December 2025.

LITERATURE

Burlington House/The Royal Academy of Arts, Exhibition of Seventeenth Century Art in Europe (exh. cat., London, 1938), p. 223 (no. 760);
G. Reynolds, Nicholas Hilliard and Isaac Oliver: An Exhibition to Commemorate the 400th Anniversary of the Birth of Nicholas Hilliard (exh. cat., London, 1947), p. 43 (cat. 172);



S. D. Cleveland and D. Piper, *Sixteenth-Century Portraits of Famous Early Elizabethans* (exh. cat., Manchester, 1953), p. 9 (cat. 5);
Royal Academy of Arts, *British Portraits, Winter Exhibition* (exh. cat., London 1956/7), p. 193 (no. 631);
G. Reynolds, *Nicholas Hilliard & Isaac Oliver* (London, 1971), n.p. (no. 172);
R. Strong with contributions from V. J. Murrell, *Artists of the Tudor Court: The Portrait Miniature Rediscovered, 1520-1620* (exh. cat., London, 1983), p. 111 (no. 168);
G. Reynolds, *English Portrait Miniatures* (rev. edn, Cambridge, 1988), p. 27 (fig. 13);
J. Finsten, *Isaac Oliver: Art at the Courts of Elizabeth I and James I* (New York: Garland [Outstanding Dissertations in the Fine Arts], 1981; orig. presented as the author's Ph.D. thesis, Harvard University, 1979), vol. 2, pp. 97-98 (no. 62);
Philip Mould & Co., *Jewel in the Hand: Early Portrait Miniatures from Noble & Private Collections* (exh. cat., London, 2019), pp. 86-87 (no. 24).

This remarkable miniature by Isaac Oliver depicts an unidentified woman in masquing attire, capturing the highly theatrical culture of the early Jacobean court. Shown in elegant profile against a deep blue ground, the sitter wears loose flowing hair, a flame-coloured drapery, and a revealing costume that exposes the breast – an appearance closely associated with the allegorical and often highly sensual world of court masque. Such entertainments combined music, dance, poetry, and elaborate costume to create spectacles in which elite women could temporarily assume mythological or symbolic identities.

Oliver's use of the profile format is significant. Derived from antique coins and medals, profile portraiture carried associations of authority, learning, and classical refinement. Oliver appears to have reserved it for particularly elevated or culturally sophisticated sitters, including Anne of Denmark and Prince Henry. Although the identity of the present sitter remains unknown, the miniature suggests

a woman deeply connected to the artistic and performative culture surrounding the Stuart court.

The image resonates strongly with descriptions of contemporary masques. Ben Jonson's *Masque of Beauty* (1608), for example, describes a character named 'Splendor' entering 'naked breasted' with 'briighthair loose flowing', while eyewitness accounts of aristocratic entertainments similarly describe female masquers with uncovered hair and vividly coloured drapery. Yet the miniature also contains a more intimate and enigmatic detail. Suspended from the sitter's pearl earring is a lock of hair, traditionally associated with remembrance or mourning. Its inclusion introduces an unexpected note of emotional complexity into an otherwise celebratory image, hinting at personal meanings now lost. Oliver's extraordinary delicacy of handling – visible in the translucent flesh tones, flowing hair, and luminous costume – heightens the sense of immediacy.



Cat. 22

ISAAC OLIVER (c. 1565-1617)

A lady wearing a masculine-style black and orange doublet and black hat (with hat jewel) and an orange sash

c.1600-1615

Watercolour on vellum, laid down on card
Oval, 54 mm high.

PROVENANCE

Part of the collection formed by Walter (1882-1948), 2nd Viscount Bearsted;
Thence by descent in the Samuel family;
Philip Mould & Company, acquired from the above, 2024;
Private collection, U.K.

EXHIBITED

London, Victoria and Albert Museum, 'Artists of the Tudor Court: The Portrait Miniature Rediscovered', 1520-1620, 9 July – 6 November 1983 (no. 167);
London, Philip Mould & Co., 'Jewel in the Hand: Early Portrait Miniatures from Noble & Private Collections', 12 March – 18 April 2019 (no. 13);
Philip Mould & Company, London, 'Miniatures from the Bearsted Collection', 19 November – 19 December 2025.

LITERATURE

J. Finsten, *Isaac Oliver: Art at the Courts of Elizabeth I and James I* (New York: Garland [Outstanding Dissertations in the Fine Arts], 1981; orig. presented as the author's Ph.D. thesis, Harvard University, 1979), vol. 2, p. 71 (no. 45);
Roy Strong, with contributions from V. J. Murrell, *Artists of the Tudor Court: The Portrait Miniature Rediscovered, 1520-1620* (London, 1983), p.111 (no. 167);
Philip Mould & Co., *Jewel in the Hand: Early Portrait Miniatures from Noble & Private Collections* (London, 2019), pp.54-55 (no. 13);
Elizabeth Goldring and Lawrence Hendra, (2025) *Miniatures from the Bearsted Collection*. London: Paul Holberton, pp.70-73.



This striking miniature by Isaac Oliver presents an unidentified young woman in deliberately androgynous dress, combining masculine and feminine elements to create an image that is both fashionable and provocative. Her broad-brimmed black hat, pointed doublet, jewelled aigrette, and vivid orange sash draw on conventions more commonly associated with male portraiture, while her loose hair and pearls retain associations of femininity, youth, and desirability. The result is a carefully constructed performance of identity that reflects the fluid culture of masque, court entertainment, and elite display in the final years of Elizabeth I's reign and the early Jacobean court.

Such attire was not entirely unconventional within aristocratic circles. Noblewomen adopted masculine costume for hunting, riding, and court masques, particularly under the influence of Anne of Denmark, whose court fostered a culture of theatrical self-fashioning. Oliver's sitter recalls the kinds of figures criticised in contemporary pamphlets railing against

the 'man-woman', yet the portrait itself suggests confidence rather than satire. The sitter's hand gently cradling her love-lock introduces an overtly romantic dimension, implying that the miniature may have been conceived as a love token intended for private exchange.

Oliver's extraordinary technical skill is evident here. The miniature survives in remarkable condition, its brilliant oranges remaining exceptionally vivid against the deep blue background and black costume. Particularly striking is the subtle movement of the suspended pearls, tilted slightly as though the sitter has only just turned towards the viewer. Such details create a sense of immediacy unusual in portrait miniatures, transforming this small work into a remarkably vivid study of performance, identity, and self-fashioning at the early Stuart court.

Cat. 23

NICHOLAS HILLIARD (1547-1619)

A wax seal of Queen Elizabeth I (1533-1603)

Designed 1584

Wax
5 7/8 in. (15 cm) high

PROVENANCE

Private collection, U.K.





This rare impression derives from the Great Seal of Elizabeth I designed by Nicholas Hilliard in the mid-1580s. Used to authenticate the most important documents issued in the Queen's name, the Great Seal functioned to guarantee genuine authenticity. Attached to grants, proclamations, and legal instruments, it served as the monarch's formal approval and embodied the presence of the Crown itself.

On 8 July 1584, Hilliard received a royal warrant with instructions to produce new designs 'with all convenient speed', suggesting the previous seal had worn through repeated use. The same warrant was issued to Derick Anthony, the chief graver to the Mint, who was tasked with engraving Hilliard's designs to a silver matrix from which wax impressions could be cast. Because only one official matrix could exist at any given time, long reigns frequently required seals to be redesigned and replaced.[1]

The commission came at a politically sensitive moment. By the 1580s Elizabeth had entered middle age without naming an heir, while England faced

mounting conflict with Catholic Europe, particularly Spain. In this context, royal imagery assumed renewed importance. Preparatory drawings in the Victoria and Albert Museum and British Museum reveal the care taken over the project, including Hilliard's decision to present the ageing Queen with conspicuously youthful features. The seal therefore formed part of the broader cultivation of Elizabeth's public image during the later decades of her reign.

The Queen's decision to entrust the project to Hilliard, rather than a specialist engraver, appears to follow a precedent established by Mary I, who commissioned the miniaturist Levina Teerlinc to design her own Great Seal during the 1550s. Stylistic similarities suggest that Teerlinc was also responsible for seal made at the beginning of Elizabeth's reign. The crispness of the present impression suggests it was taken early, before repeated use softened the clarity of the engraved details.

[1] Queen Victoria had four Great Seals during her reign.



Cat. 24

ENGLISH SCHOOL

A concealed portrait of John Stubbs (Stubbes) (c. 1541-1590)

c. 1590

Double-sided panel depicting the three graces (recto) and a severed hand with inscription (verso)

Oil on panel (recto with gilding)
7 3/4 x 6 3/8 in. (19.9 x 16.2 cm)

In an oak frame constructed in 2026 by Peter Schade

PROVENANCE

Frank Reeson Welsh (1931-2023), Flass House, Cumbria, by 1980;
Henry Aldridge & Son, Wiltshire, 3 October 2025, lot 586;
Philip Mould & Company, London, acquired from the above.

TECHNICAL ANALYSIS

Ian Tyers, Dendrochronological Consultancy Report 1676, November 2025.

Speaking out against Queen Elizabeth I, especially on the fraught matters of marriage and succession, carried serious risks, as the sitter in this rare, concealed portrait discovered.

John Stubbs trained as a lawyer and possessed an enviable combination of wit, intelligence and social connections. Born around 1541, he matriculated at Trinity College, Cambridge, in 1555 before entering Lincoln's Inn, where he moved among a circle of committed Puritans.[1] With friends such as Vincent Skinner and Michael Hicke – both of whom later became secretaries to William Cecil, Lord Burghley – he developed a reputation for his caustic criticism of the church. A particular objection of Stubbs and his peers lay with the retention of clerical vestments, which they viewed as dangerously reminiscent of Catholic tradition. These debates underpinned a broader appetite for reform and fuelled several pointed attacks on figures like Archbishop Parker, whose resistance to puritan concerns was a source of continued frustration. Stubbs' family life also connected him firmly to the Puritan movement. His sister Alice married the prominent Puritan Thomas Cartwright (c.1535-1603), while Stubbs himself married Anne, widow of Christopher Sharnborne of Norfolk, sometime between 1575 and 1579. [2]

Stubbs practised law following his call to the bar in 1572, although by this stage, he had become better known for his fiery political views. There was one particular view, which he made public, on which his

fame rests. In August 1579, he produced *The Discoverie of a Gaping Gulf*, a vehement denunciation of Elizabeth's proposed marriage to François, Duke of Anjou. His objections were framed in religious terms, asserting that it was against God's law for a Protestant monarch to wed a Catholic, but the tract also directly challenged the arguments marshalled by Thomas Radclyffe, Earl of Sussex in favour of the match. It has been suggested that Stubbs was provided information on the proposal by Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester and Francis Walsingham, who were known dissenters of the marriage.[3] Elizabeth certainly believed that Stubbs was assisted in his endeavours by members of her court, and when questioned, Stubbs revealed that an unnamed councillor had advanced knowledge of his text but did nothing to prevent its publication.[4]

Regardless, Stubbs was the author, and his critique was bold, personal and deeply unwelcome. Elizabeth, already sensitive to public scrutiny of her marriage plans, was furious. A royal proclamation swiftly banned the pamphlet. The consequences were immediate and dramatic. On 13 October 1579, Stubbs, printer Hugh Singleton, and the MP William Page were arrested. Elizabeth initially demanded their execution, but they were instead tried under a revived statute aimed at sedition. When the jury refused to convict, the men were retried and sentenced to the brutal punishment of losing their right hands. The sentence was carried out in Westminster marketplace, where surgeons stood ready to prevent the men from bleeding to death. Stubbs's remained

composed and, prior to receiving his punishment, declared his loyalty to the Queen and lamented that she denied him mercy despite having pardoned more serious offences committed by others.

The antiquarian William Camden attended the gory event and later described how the spectators were 'altogether silent, either out of horreur of this new and unwonted punishment, or else out of pity towards the man being of most honest and unblameable report, or else out of hatred of the marriage, which most men presaged would be the overthrow of religion.' [5] After the punishment was inflicted, Stubbs removed his hat with his left hand and shouted 'god save the Queen'. [6]

Stubbs continued to write; now signing himself 'John Stubbs, scaeva' (the left handed). He left the Tower in 1581, the same year that parliament passed the *Act against Seditious Words and Rumours Uttered against the Queen's Most Excellent Majesty*. He remained active in public life and became steward of Great Yarmouth in 1585 and MP for the borough four years later. During this period, he served on several parliamentary committees and drafted a petition challenging the use of the ex officio oath against Puritan ministers, though he did not have sufficient time to present it. In 1587, he was commissioned by Lord Burghley to respond to Cardinal Allen's critique of the government's treatment of the Jesuit Edmund Campion, though no printed version survives.

Beyond his political and religious activities,

Stubbs also served Peregrine Bertie, 13th Baron Willoughby de Eresby, acting as secretary and assisting with diplomatic and household affairs. This role took him to the Low Countries in 1588, and the following year, he accompanied English forces to France. There he died in early 1590. His hurriedly written will, proved in June that year, reveals a man still loyal to the Queen and devoted to his wife, to whom he left the bulk of his estate.

Stubbs's turbulent life, vividly encapsulated by the severed hand painted on the reverse of this panel, stands as a testament to the perilous politics of Elizabethan England and to the uncompromising integrity of one of its most memorable dissenters.

A CONCEALED LIKENESS

At first glance, the Elizabethan viewer of this work would have encountered a bucolic image of the three graces, representing ideals of beauty, charm and virtue, standing within an ornate architectural setting. After gently gripping the right section of the frame, they would have slid the covering panel to the right to reveal the portrait of Stubbs beneath. Dressed in a fashionable black outfit with short lace collar, Stubbs stands in a confident pose, showing the viewer a locket – possibly inset with a cameo or portrait miniature – worn on a red ribbon around his neck. A striking omission, of course, is his right hand, of which only a bloodied stump remains. Inscriptions recalling his virtues and mourning his early death could be read in Greek and Latin, and the date 1579 served as a grim



Li diez Collezuy xpi
L'ayn au ou t'ou
L'ayn xpi au ou
L'ayn xpi au ou
L'ayn xpi au ou
L'ayn xpi au ou
L'ayn xpi au ou
L'ayn xpi au ou
L'ayn xpi au ou
L'ayn xpi au ou

Helas helas cet parlarage
D'auis en prin temps de lon
Puis en vie heur eule
De fin bre dur et a guere
Ne point lais auis co he
Hureux qui souffre a
pauis hie co pauis

1579



reminder of the year in which his famous text was published. The final surprise for the viewer would come with the removal of the cover panel, for hidden on the reverse, they would have encountered the gruesome image of his severed hand.

The practice of concealing portraits was not uncommon in the Tudor period. Private panel portraits were often covered with curtains in long galleries or other spaces occupied by visitors, and their diminutive counterparts, portrait miniatures, were frequently set in lidded wood or ivory cases and kept out of sight. Examples such as the present work, however, which was concealed with a decorative panel painted on both sides, are rare. The tradition of concealed portraits in the format we see here, with a sliding panel covering a person's likeness beneath, can be traced back to antiquity, with surviving examples from Roman Egypt dating to the second century.[7] It was only much later, in mid-to-late fifteenth-century Europe, however, that secular portraits with hinged or sliding covers began to flourish. Generally, the covers were decorated with armorial designs indicating the illustrious lineage of the sitter beneath, but examples of covers inscribed with personal messages of friendship also survive.[8] On other occasions, portraits were concealed by sliding panels decorated with allegorical scenes referencing the various pious attributes of the sitter hidden beneath. The process of revealing the portrait was part of the viewer's experience and a playful way to engage with a familiar likeness.

The present work is an exceptionally rare survival, not only because the original cover has survived intact with the portrait, but also because the cover is painted on both sides and was evidently intended to be removed and studied alongside the likeness of Stubbs. Together, the images formed a narrative, and this playful requirement of engagement between a painted likeness and the viewer is a curious anomaly in portraiture from this period.

BACKGROUND

The circumstances surrounding the commissioning of the work are unknown, though several clues suggest where and when it was painted. Although the date 1579 appears on the portrait of Stubbs, this is a reference to the date the cleaver fell, not when the work was painted. In fact, we know from the English and Latin inscriptions on the reverse of the cover panel that the present work was created after Stubbs died in 1590. The wording refers to Stubbs and his hand being 'severed by Land & Sea' – his body was buried in La Havre – which is further confirmed by the last two Latin lines of the same inscription, which translates to: 'Here lies part of thy Stubbs. Whoever seeks the rest/Heaven will hold it, and France keeps what remains.' Above the inscription is a depiction of Stubbs' hand on a memorial plinth inscribed with the Latin word 'VIXI' ('I have lived'). The intriguing combination of multi-lingual inscriptions is apparent again on the portrait of Stubbs: to the left is an inscription in Greek, and on the right, a different inscription in Latin. They speak

to his moral integrity and the courage he showed in enduring punishment for expressing his convictions, while also mourning the premature end of his life.

The two panels comprising the present work were recently subjected to dendrochronological analysis (tree-ring dating) to establish an earliest plausible creation date. Whilst analysis results were not obtainable on the covering panel due to the absence of discernible tree growth rings, the panel depicting Stubbs was found to have derived from an English tree and was likely used from c.1516 onwards. In all likelihood, therefore, both panels were probably recycled from an earlier item such as a cupboard or door.[9]

[1] Natalie Mears, (2004) "Stubbs [Stubbs], John (c. 1541–1590), religious writer." *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. 23 Sep 2004; Accessed 10 Mar. 2026. <https://www-oxforddnb-com.lonlib.idm.oclc.org/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-26736>.

[2] Ibid.

[3] For a complete overview of the conflicting points of view on this subject, see Mears, Natalie. "Counsel, Public Debate, and Queenship: John Stubbs's 'The Discoverie of a Gaping Gulf', 1579." *The Historical Journal* 44, no. 3 (2001): 629–50. <http://www.jstor.org.lonlib.idm.oclc.org/stable/3133577>.

[4] Mears, Natalie. "Counsel, Public Debate, and Queenship: John Stubbs's 'The Discoverie of a Gaping Gulf', 1579." *The Historical Journal* 44, no. 3 (2001): 629–50. <http://www.jstor.org.lonlib.idm.oclc>.

[org/stable/3133577](http://www.jstor.org/stable/3133577), fn.13.

[5] William Camden, *The History of the Most Renowned and Victorious Princess Elizabeth*, 3rd ed. (London, 1635), p. 239.

[6] Ibid.

[7] See Egyptian Portrait of a Woman, 50–70 CE, The British Museum, (1889.1018.1)

[8] For an example of a sliding cover decorated with an armorial design see Albrecht Durer (1471–1528), *Hieronymus Holzschuber with sliding cover with coat of arms*, 1526. Staatliche Museen zu Berlin-Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Gemaldegalerie (557E). For an example of a cover inscribed with a personal message see *Attributed to Ludger Tom Ring the Younger (1522–1584), Portrait of a Woman with sliding cover*, c. 1560, Suermondt-Ludwig Museum, Aachen (GK 431).

[9] We are grateful to Ian Tyers for providing his thoughts on the dating and origin of the panels. see Ian Tyers, *Dendrochronological Consultancy Report 1676*, November 2025.



Here lye thou buryed thou blessed h
That lost thy selfe to save thy Native L
What if thou dyedst before thy doners
And now dost severed ty by Land. &
Yet thou thus dead, givst life to all the r
And makst thy selfe & all thy body bl

In Eandem.

*Pars jacet hic Stultus tui, qui quaeritat ultr
Longa via est Caelum, et Gallia habent rel*

