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DOSSIER

WEARING IMAGES

Edited by Diane H. Bodart

IMÁGENES PORTADAS

Editado por Diane H. Bodart



THE FLOWERING FOOT OF FLORA. DETAIL OF SANDRO BOTTICELLI, *PRIMAVERA*, LATE 1470S OR EARLY 1480S, TEMPERA ON PANEL, 202 X 314 CM, GALLERIA DEGLI UFFIZI, FLORENCE.

CONCEALING AND REVEALING PICTURES 'IN SMALL VOLUMES': PORTRAIT MINIATURES AND THEIR ENVELOPES¹

OCULTANDO Y MOSTRANDO IMÁGENES EN "PEQUEÑOS VOLÚMENES": LAS MINIATURAS RETRATO Y SUS ENVOLTORIOS

Marianne Koos²

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Abstract

This paper examines a group of artifacts that are paradigmatic for images worn on the body: the portrait jewel. In particular the article focuses on the envelopes in which English Renaissance portrait miniatures –like human bodies– were protected. Historical sources reveal very different materials: Besides paper, silk, ivory or velvet we find jeweled metal containers that made it possible to fix the portrait on one's own body. The article analyzes how, both in images of an official and very intimate nature, these jeweled artifacts interact with the wearer's body. It does so by focusing on the process of handling: Portrait jewels always demanded an act of opening and closing, of turning and folding, through which they 'unfolded' their specific semantics –and their very agency. How exactly these tiny items could model, transform and question binary relations of object and subject is finally shown with a 'close reading' of the Heneage Jewel, the most complex of these artifacts.

Keywords

Portrait-jewel; miniatures; interaction; English; Reinsassance.

Resumen

Este documento examina una serie de objetos que representan ejemplos de imágenes que se llevan sobre el cuerpo: las joyas-retrato. En particular, el artículo se centra en los envoltorios con los que las miniaturas-retrato del Renacimiento Británico –al igual que el cuerpo humano– estaban protegidas. Las fuentes históricas nos revelan materiales muy distintos: además del papel, la seda, el marfil o el terciopelo, encontramos contenedores metálicos enjoyados que permitían llevar el retrato sobre el propio cuerpo. El artículo analiza cómo, tanto en imágenes de naturaleza

1. The term «in small volumes» refers to Nicholas Hilliard's definition of limning in his treatise. THORNTON, Robert K. R. and CAIN, Thomas G. S. (eds.): *Nicholas Hilliard. The Art of limning*. Northumberland, Carnet Press, 1992 [1981], p. 45.

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oficial como muy íntima, estos objetos enjoyados interaccionan con el cuerpo del usuario. Esto tiene lugar centrándose en su proceso de manipulación: las joyas-retrato siempre requerían de una acción de apertura y cierre, de giro y plegado, a través de la cual desplegaban su significado específico así como su propio cometido. El cómo exactamente estas diminutas piezas podían modelarse, transformarse y cuestionar sus relaciones binarias entre objeto y sujeto, se demuestra finalmente con una lectura pormenorizada de la joya Heneage, la más compleja de estas piezas.

Palabras clave

Joyas-retrato; miniaturas; interacción; inglés; Renacimiento.

.....

THE MEMOIRS of Sir James Melville, Ambassador of Mary Stuart to the London court in 1564, include a lengthy report that rewards close scrutiny. It recounts how Queen Elizabeth I, stirred by certain conversations, suddenly felt such longing for her «good Sister» Mary, Queen of Scots (Mary Stuart), that she wished to see her immediately. Since this wish could not be fulfilled, however, Elizabeth decided instead to contemplate Mary's image:

She took me to her Bed-chamber, Melville reports,

and opened a little Cabinet, wherein were divers little Pictures wrapped within Paper, and their Names written with her own Hand upon the Papers. Upon the first that she took up was written, My Lord's Picture. I held the Candle, and pressed to see that Picture so named. She appeared loath to let me see it; yet my Importunity prevailed for a Sight thereof, and found it to be the Earl of Leicester's Picture. I desired that I might have it to carry home to my Queen; which she refused, alledging that she had but that one Picture of his. I said, Your Majesty hath here the Original; for I perceived him [Leicester –M.K.] at the farthest Part of the Chamber, speaking with Secretary Cecil [...]» –an argument the Queen did not respond to.

Melville continues:

Then she took out the Queen's Picture [Mary, Queen of Scots –M.K.], and kissed it; and I adventured to kiss her Hand, for the great Love therein evidenced to my Mistress.

She shewed me also a fair Ruby, as great as a Tennis-ball. I desired that she would either send it, or my Lord Leicester's picture, as a Token unto the Queen. She said, If the Queen would follow her Counsel, that she would in process of Time get all she had; that in the mean time she was resolved in a Token to send her with me a fair diamond.³

This extraordinary report, which revolves around Elizabeth's plans to arrange a marriage between her cousin Mary, Queen of Scots (Mary Stuart), who was widowed in 1560, with her own favorite Robert Dudley (Figure 1) –thereby cementing at once her own status as Virgin Queen and England's royal succession⁴– vividly illustrates the great importance then assigned to small-format images. Dismissed today as a handicraft and stored *en masse* in display cases, during the Renaissance the miniature portrait became that splendid genre in which English painting saw its most remarkable achievements. Often featured in large-scale portrait tableaux,

3. *The memoirs of Sir James Melvil of Halhill: containing an impartial account of the most remarkable affairs of state during the sixteenth century, ...* Edinburgh, Ruddimans *et. al.*, 1735 [1683], pp. 96-97. „Good Sister« is the term Melville uses in this source for Mary, Queen of Scots, Queen Elizabeth's cousin.

4. Robert Dudley (1532-1588), who the Queen named the 1st Earl of Leicester in 1564, was for many years the favorite of Elizabeth I. Elizabeth's plans to marry him to her widowed cousin Mary Stuart would have directly influence the English royal succession. Wedlock with the English Protestant Leicester would have guaranteed the succession for Mary Stuart. The wedding never took place because Leicester refused to be sent off to Scotland and remained instead at the English court. On Hilliard's miniature of Dudley (c. 1571-74), see <<http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O78130/robert-dudley-earl-of-leicester-miniature-hilliard-nicholas/>> [retrieved: 04.05.2017].



FIGURE 1: NICHOLAS HILLIARD, *MINIATURE PORTRAIT OF ROBERT DUDLEY, 1ST EARL OF LEICESTER (1532-1588)*, 1571-4, WATERCOLOR ON VELLUM, DIAMETER: 4.4 CM, LONDON, © Victoria & Albert Museum.

carried proudly on the body or displayed in the hand, miniature portraits rose in the sixteenth century to become especially prized objects at the English court. They were guarded treasures to which their owners were deeply attached emotionally.

This exalted status cannot be explained merely by the artistry of its leading exponents such as Nicholas Hilliard, Queen Elizabeth I's preferred painter.⁵ Above all it is their very specific qualities which make portraits in miniature such remarkable objects. Portrait miniatures are, firstly, things *close to the body*. Unlike larger-format portraits that hang on walls and chiefly represent the person's standing and office, portrait miniatures are not meant to be experienced at distance or by the eyes alone. They demand to be taken into one's hands and, in a concentrated

act of immersion, studied in every detail. Unlike large-scale wall portraits (not to mention living cousins and favored courtiers) they permit at any moment a physically intimate relationship with the contemplator's body. They can be fetched, touched and –when held long enough– be warmed and, so to speak, 'animated'. Portraits in miniature are artifacts that –unlike real people– can be manipulated, turned around and regarded from all sides, given as gifts or be attached to one's own body (see Figure 4 and Figure 7). Their specific dimension and precision of detail practically invite being drawn close to the eye and even kissed, just as this account says the Queen did with the image of her cousin.

This remarkable act would be insufficiently grasped as a mere political gesture. Indeed, it gracefully depicts how effectively the portrait miniature, executed without any obvious traits of the artist's hand, could stand in as *pars pro toto* and substitute for the absent person.⁶ It is the tiny miniature, not the grand wall portrait, which the Queen seeks out when her distant cousin cannot be immediately made available. It

5. On Nicholas Hilliard (1547–1619), who worked for Queen Elizabeth I from 1572 onward, see AUERBACH, Erna: *Nicholas Hilliard*. Boston, Boston Books, 1961. REYNOLDS, Graham: *Nicholas Hilliard & Isaac Olivier*. London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1971. HEARN, Karen: *Nicholas Hilliard*. London, Unicorn Press, 2005. On the significance of Hilliard's *Treatise on Limning* [ca. 1600] see POPE-HENNESSY, John: «Nicholas Hilliard and Mannerist Art Theory», *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 6, 1943, pp. 89-100.

6. STEWART, Susan: *On Longing. Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection*. Durham, Duke University Press, 2003 [1984], esp. chap. 5, «Objects of Desire», pp. 132-169. ASMAN, Carrie: «Zeichen, Zauber, Souvenir. Das Porträtmedaillon als Fetisch um 1800», *Weimarer Beiträge* 43, 1997, pp. 6–18. PARKIN, David: «Mementoes as Transitional Objects in Human Displacement», *Journal of Material Culture* 4 (3), 1999, pp. 303-320.

is the intimate miniature portrait that she must keep, even if 'the original', her male favorite, the living Earl of Leicester, is at hand in the very same room. As the Queen argues, this is the only image she owns of Robert Dudley. And without a doubt, it was the only thing of her male favorite over which she had access to at any time and without restrictions (even «on the go» in moments of romantic compulsion). This is hinted at indirectly by the placement of the piece, at the very front of the Queen's locked cabinet.

Secondly, miniature portraits are *wandering things*. This, too, is clearly underscored in the above passage, in which the ambassador dares ask the Queen to make a gift of the Earl of Leicester's image to his Lady. No differently than precious stones, textiles or books, portrait miniatures have wandered back and forth among hands and bodies. Used as gifts they are highly mobile artifacts, clinching political and private networks among people of differing religious, cultural and sexual identities; in our case, between an (Anglican) English queen and a (Catholic) Scottish queen –while (for once) a man (through his image) becomes a pledge (of love) between women.⁷ In the sense of Marcel Mauss' studies of gifts and giving miniature portraits always obligate both sides: on the one hand the receiver, who is called on to reciprocate the gift, yet on the other hand likewise the giving person, who ventures through the gift to share a precious part of him- or herself, thereby permanently bonding with the receiver.⁸ Because of its character as a gift in addition to its material qualities (which we shall later examine more closely), miniature portraits were artifacts that (in the definition of Alfred Gell) possessed *agency*: the power of stimulating people to act, and of acting upon people so that binary relationships between a seemingly passive object and supposedly sovereign subject (between the miniature as a «lifeless thing» and the «living being» who wields it) are reversed, undermined and transformed.⁹

Thirdly, portraits in miniature are *secret things*. These small-format artifacts have always been associated with intimate secrets that provoke others' interest, want to be revealed, and even arouse the wish to seize as one's own possession. Just how confidential these objects really were can be discerned clearly by the above passage, in which the Queen refuses to give her cousin's ambassador a glance at that foremost piece in her cabinet titled «My Lord's Picture», the image of the man of her heart. A letter from William Brown to the Early of Shrewsbury in 1602 further illustrates the intimate secrecy associated with miniature portraits. In it, when

7. The term «homosocial» considers the woman as an object of exchange within male circles. In our example this situation is uncommonly reversed: The man becomes an object of exchange between two women (with exceptional social standing). On homosocial desire see SEDGWICK, Eve Kosofsky: *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire*. New York, Columbia University Press, 1985, pp. 1-5.

8. MAUSS, Marcel: *The Gift. The form for exchange in archaic societies, with a foreword by Mary Douglas*. London, Routledge, 2002 [*Essai sur le don*, 1924]. My definition refers to the courtly European romantic culture of the Renaissance.

9. GELL, Alfred: *Art and agency. An Antropological Theory*. London, Clarendon Press, 1998. For a good account of the significance of von Gell's model of *agent* and *patient* in regard to art. see OSBORNE, Robin and TANNER, Jeremy (eds.): *Art's Agency and Art History*, «Introduction: Art and Agency and Art History», Malden, MA, Blackwell Publishing, 2007, pp. 1-28. See also the position of ANT by Bruno Latour or the definition of *thing theory* in BROWN, Bill: «Objects, others, and us: (the refabrication of things)», *Critical Inquiry* 36, 2010, pp. 183-217, here 188. All these models discard the consideration of object and subject as opposite entities, regarding them instead as reciprocally constituting.

the Queen discovers a delicate locket around the neck of the young Lady Derby, concealed in the cleavage of her dress, she shows interest in what kind of jewel the beautiful object might be:

*The Lady Darby was curious to excuse the shewing of itt, butt the Queen wold have itt, and opening itt, and fynding itt to be Mr Secretarye's [Sir Robert Cecil –M.K.], snatcht itt away, and tyed itt uppon her shoe, and walked long-wth itt there; then she tooke itt thence, and pinned itt on her elbow, and wore itt som tyme there also [...]; And as Brown concludes: [...] I do boldly send these things to your Lo. wch I wold not do to any els, for I heare they are very secrett.*¹⁰

This and the source cited at the beginning make abundantly clear that miniature portraits were private artifacts to be revealed only to selected individuals. Precisely because viewing these tiny objects could be so readily denied, permission to do so was all the greater a privilege. Guarded no less closely than the precious gems with which they were kept (e.g. in Melville's report «a ruby the size of a tennis ball», «a pure diamond»), it was the painted portraits in miniature, not the luxurious stones, which aroused such great emotion in their owners. It was not to the sparkling ruby but to the image of her «good Sister» that the Queen bows down and even kisses as a sign of her devotion. If, in the case of the gems, it was the attribution of magical, healing qualities that constituted their preciousness (if not their concrete monetary value), in the case of miniatures it was the emotional bond to the portrayed person, i.e. to a small picture of little value in a purely material sense, but from a symbolic perspective surpassing any price offered.¹¹

In equal measure with their preciousness and intimacy –the 'secret' character of these delicate things– portraits in miniature were also carefully *guarded*. In the opening passage they are individually wrapped in paper, each one labeled by the Queen's own hand. As other sources document, miniature portraits could also be covered in silk, as Sir Philip Sidney mentions this in his *Arcadia*, where a fierce knight declares that he has carried the locket image of his lady in just this manner on his helmet.¹² Even when the historical sources do not explicitly say so, one can assume that all these miniatures were placed within a framing receptacle, for instance of metal, the front protected by glass or clear rock crystal, so that these delicate objects of gouache on the finest vellum, smoothed additionally using a dog's tooth and stuck to the stronger backing of a playing card, could be handled

10. LODGE, Edmund: *Illustrations of British History, Biography, and Manners, in the Reigns of Henry VIII, Edward VI, Mary, Elizabeth, and James I: Exhibited in a Series of Original Papers, Selected from the Manuscripts of the Noble Families of Howard, Talbot, and Cecil ... with Numerous Notes and Observations*. 3 vol., London, sold by G. Nicol, 1791, here vol. 3, Nr. CCCX, pp. 146-147.

11. On the assigning of magical qualities to gemstones in early modern England, see EVANS, Joan: *Magical Jewels of the Middle Ages and Renaissance, particularly in England*. Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1922, esp. pp. 140-166, pp. 167-183. COULIANO, Ioan P.: *Eros and Magic in the Renaissance*, translated by Margaret Cook. Chicago, The University of Chicago Press, 1987, pp. 138-143. SCARISBRICK, Diana: *Tudor and Jacobean Jewellery, 1508-1625*. London, Tate Publishing, 1995, pp. 51-53. On the interplay between material preciousness and symbolic value, see POINTON, Marcia: *Brilliant effects: a cultural history of gem stones and jewellery*. New Haven, Yale University Press, 2009.

12. «[...] the picture of Pamela [...], which in little form he ware in a tablet, and covered with silk had fastened it to his helmet [...]». SIDNEY, Sir Philip: *The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia (The new Arcadia, 1593)*, ed. with introd. and commentary by Victor Skretkovicz. Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1987, p. 102.

at all without causing damage.¹³ When not encased in metal, portrait miniatures of the Renaissance were often kept in circular receptacles of ivory. No differently than brass or copper, this precious material imported from distant lands protected the fragile miniature, as Hilliard's *Treatise* indirectly suggests when it hails ivory for its effectiveness in protecting whatever is inside against moisture.¹⁴



FIGURE 2: HANS HOLBEIN D. J., *BOX IN THE FORM OF A ROSE, WITH A MINIATURE PORTRAIT OF ANNE OF CLEVES*, 1539, MINIATURE: 4.35 CM, PAINTED (GUM) ON VELLUM; BOX: TURNED IVORY (GERMAN?), 1580-1600, DIAMETER OF THE BOX: 6.1 CM, DIAMETER OF THE LID: 5.95 CM, LONDON, © Victoria & Albert Museum.

One especially beautiful specimen of such receptacles is the small box into which Hans Holbein's miniature portrait of Anne of Cleves, the fourth wife of Henry VIII, was subsequently placed (Figure 2). This box still has its lid, designed in the extraordinary form of a blossoming rose. This form can be interpreted both as a heraldic symbol (Tudor Rose) and a metaphor for the portrayed woman, who is then complimented by this lid as an exquisite, sumptuous flower.¹⁵ Generally, however, these ivory containers were executed more simply, in circular rings with a portrait-format oval at their center, in accordance with the new form for miniatures that became established as the standard from c. 1580 (Figure 3).¹⁶ Interestingly, besides simply being kept in private chambers, portrait miniatures set in ivory

13. HILLIARD, Nicholas. *Treatise ...* pp. 75-77. COOMBS, Katherine: *The Portrait Miniature in England*. London, V&A Publications, 2005 [1998], pp. 40-44.

14. «[...] white sugar candy in like sort to be kept dry in boxes of ivory». HILLIARD, Nicholas. *Treatise ...* p. 53.

15. COOMBS Katherine: *op. cit.* pp. 20-21. <<http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O18966/box-in-the-form-of-portrait-miniature-holbein-hans/>> [retrieved 24.05.2017].

16. STRONG, Roy: *The English Renaissance Miniature*. London, Thames and Hudson, 1983, pp. 12-64 and 59, fig. 58. LLOYD, Christopher and REMINGTON, Vanessa: *Masterpieces in Little. Portrait Miniatures from the Collection of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II*. Woodbridge, Boydell, 1996, pp. 25-26.



FIGURE 3: NICHOLAS HILLIARD, *PORTRAIT OF AN UNKNOWN YOUNG MAN*, 1590-3, WATERCOLOR ON VELLUM STUCK ONTO CARD, IN AN IVORY BOX, 5 X 4.2 CM (DIAMETER: 6 CM, DEPTH OF THE BOX: 1 CM), LONDON, © Victoria & Albert Museum.

were also often placed in small silk pouches.¹⁷ This intensity of material alone suggests the function of such artifacts as courtly gifts of love. Unlike Holbein's portraits (Figure 2), Hilliard's later miniatures often indicate this purpose through their gestures and facial expressions. One example of many is the portrait from c. 1590/93 of a young blond man (Figure 3) who, clothed loosely in a gray coat lined with pink fur (i.e. somewhat in a state of *deshabillé*) appearing in front of a black (instead of the usual blue) background – symbolizing the constancy of love or, perhaps, melancholy. Bowing down to this small object, the viewer contemplates the portrayed man's smiling eyes pointing beyond the picture's confines, his hand placed underneath his opened white lace shirt on the bare skin of his almost equally pale chest. Unmistakably, the portrayed person is referencing his true, pure, honest heart and emotional bond with the addressed counterpart. (Concealed from

the viewer, i.e. practically a magical symbol in itself, the playing card does the same – a red Six of Hearts on which the vellum was stretched).¹⁸

Besides these framings in boxes of exotic ivory, burnished metal and clear glass or rock crystal –and an additional cover of paper, silk or velvet– there also existed the possibility of enclosing portrait miniatures in a lockable receptacle of gold, itself further decorated with jewels (Figures 5-6, 8-9). Here, the portrait miniature became a piece of jewelry in its own right, wearable on one's own body. Often placed over one's heart and displayed publicly (that is, in courtly society), such portrait jewels enabled the performative establishment and experience of intimacy and privacy by being lockable.¹⁹ With their seductive luster, signifying to all viewers the wealth of the owner, these luxurious artifacts attracted the gazes of others, prompting them to come closer out of curiosity, to then however make clear that their true preciousness lay not in the monetary value of the jewel, but in their concealed interior: the painted portrait, i.e. the immaterial, emotional relationship to the

17. KORKOW, Cory: *British Portrait Miniatures. The Cleveland Museum of Art*. London, Giles, 2013, (Cat. Nr. 5), p. 48.

18. <<http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O81994/an-unknown-young-man-portrait-miniature-hilliard-nicholas/>> [retrieved: 04.05.2017].

19. On the idea of the 'private' in Elizabethan culture, the enactment of the private and public for courtly self-representation –where, ultimately, everything was public, even the most private rooms such as the Queen's bed-chamber, see FUMERTON, Patricia: *Cultural Aesthetics. Renaissance Literature and the Practice of Social Ornament*. London, The University of Chicago Press, 1991, p. 69, pp. 76-77. On the idea of the 'intimate': Grootenboer, Hanneke, *Treasuring the Gaze. Intimate Vision in Late Eighteenth-Century Eye Miniatures*. Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 2012, pp. 9-14.

portrayed person.²⁰ As Marcia Pointon has pointed out, jeweled locket portraits are not unlike reliquaries: They hold that which the owner considers sacred, so to speak –the portrait of a ‘venerated’ person.²¹ Thanks to the magical effects that continued to be ascribed to gems in the Renaissance and their powerful tactile qualities, their availability to the touch, to be worn directly on the skin, portrait jewels functioned not only as reminders of the absent person but also as talismans or amulets with protective qualities.²²

In every instance, whether fixed within jewel-encrusted lockets or simply wrapped in paper, portrait miniatures are bound to the performative acts of concealing and revealing. It is on these performative acts that I wish to focus in the following. Today mostly deprived of their protective casings, portrait miniatures of the Renaissance were never handled or manipulated on their own, i.e. as paintings in delicate gouache on the finest vellum. They were always set in frames and additionally encased in some other material, often put in a little box that necessitated unveiling and, precisely through this act, became «charged», not least erotically, in a non-political context of love. Even if today’s museumgoer can hardly grasp this act of concealing and revealing anymore

–for miniatures, no matter how they are mounted, are displayed today like wall portraits in a fixed position– one must always keep in mind the original interrelation between the thing of the miniature and the handling person to adequately grasp the complexity of the semantics involved as well as the sheer *agency* of these diminutive artifacts (which is only established as such in the act of manipulation).

Just how fundamental the act of concealing and revealing, opening and closing, of moving and chasing these «portrait objects»²³ really are for their semantics, is sometimes explicitly stated by the portraits themselves. One especially charming example is Hilliard’s portrait miniature of a young bearded man against a background of flames (Figure 4) –the symbol of ardent, consuming love. Clothed only in a white lace shirt (this time even without the fur-lined coat that the young man in the aforementioned ivory box, Figure 3, had thrown on), the subject wears a long necklace and golden, jewel-encrusted locket with a large pendant pearl. A jewel in



FIGURE 4: NICHOLAS HILLIARD, PORTRAIT OF AN UNKNOWN MAN STANDING AGAINST FLAMES, C. 1600, WATERCOLOR ON VELLUM STUCK ONTO CARD, 6.9 X 5.4 CM (UNFRAMED), LONDON. © Victoria & Albert Museum.

20. On the constitution of trade value of things through social relations, see APPADURAI, Arjun (ed.), *The Cultural Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Practice*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2013 [1990], pp. 3-63.

21. On jewel-encrusted lockets as ‘reliquaries’, see POINTON, Marcia. *Miniature Portraits ...* p. 55, pp. 60-61, p. 67. TAMMEN, Silke: «Bild und Heil am Körper: Reliquiaranhänger», in MAREK, Kristin and SCHULZ, Martin (eds.): *Kanon Kunstgeschichte. Einführung in Werke, Methoden und Epochen*. Munich, Wilhelm Fink, 2015, 4 vol., here vol. 1, pp. 299-322.

22. EVANS, Joan. *op. cit.* 172. SCARISBRICK, Diana. *op. cit.* pp. 51-56. STRONG, Roy: *Gloriana: the Portraits of Queen Elizabeth I*. London, Thames and Hudson, 1987, p. 121. KELLY, Jessen: «The Material Efficacy of Elizabethan Jeweled Miniature: a Gellian Experiment», in OSBORN and TANNER. *op. cit.* pp. 120-122. For the middle ages TAMMEN, Silke. *op. cit.* pp. 312-313. And for the 18th c. POINTON, Marcia. *Miniature Portraits... op. cit.* p. 67.

23. On the term «portrait-objects» that indicates the touching and wearing of miniatures POINTON, Marcia. *Miniature Portraits ... op. cit.* p. 48.



FIGURE 5: NICHOLAS HILLIARD, JEWELLED LOCKET PRESENTED TO SIR FRANCIS DRAKE BY THE QUEEN («DRAKE JEWEL»), 1586/87; FRONT OF THE LOCKET, WITH THE IMAGE OF A BLACK AND A WHITE FIGURE BEHIND, SARDONYX, GOLD, RUBIES, DIAMONDS AND PEARLS; 17.7 CM, LONDON, © Victoria & Albert Museum.

the shape of a lily (one of the symbols of the Queen) adorns his ear, while on his little finger (the finger of love) one finds a ring. The young man's fixating eyes are pointed straight at the observer, no differently than the locket that he intentionally holds up to the viewer's gaze by his thumb and index finger, like a third eye. The remaining fingers of the same hand are curled back in a way that they point to his heart, the place where the image of his mistress truly lies concealed. This unusually intimate arrangement indicates on the one hand that, when not given as political gifts, jeweled lockets were commonly worn by men beneath the undermost layer of clothing, directly against the skin. On the other, it demonstrates to the viewer the performative act of concealing and revealing a secret picture of love: Just as the protective casing, the «second skin» of the shirt is being opened and uncovered to expose that which lies hidden underneath –whether it be the body of the portrait jewel or the body of the young man, in whose burning heart the image of his lover lies concealed– the protective cover of the locket can likewise be uncovered and opened, exposing the materially embodied image of the beloved one to foreign eyes. (The initiated knew moreover that the miniature was mounted on a playing card, which –in congruence with the image's symbolism– is an Ace of Hearts.)²⁴

The handling and touching of a miniature is not always referenced as explicitly as in this example. A somewhat less evident but all the more subtle allusion to the act of opening and closing, of turning and folding is found in the object known as the Drake Jewel (Figures 5-6), one of three portrait jewels that Queen Elizabeth bestowed upon her most worthy subjects.²⁵ On its exterior the jewel shows a cameo of a black African in front of a white European executed in sardonyx, here chiefly bearing witness to the imperial power interests that the Queen successfully established during her reign not least through the services of the gift's recipient, Sir Francis Drake, and the transatlantic triangular slave trade. A portrait by the Flemish painter Marcus Gheeraerts the Younger (Figure 7), which shows Drake sporting the Queen's jewel around his waist (on a level with a globe turned to show the Atlantic Ocean with Africa and England), expresses precisely this global expansion in rivalry with Spain (notably, the bright edge of the table directs one's gaze to the jewel with the African figure, which liases formally with the globe on the one hand and the face of Sir Francis on the other, the second white-skinned counterpart).²⁶ Turning the jewel

24. <<http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O16579/an-unknown-man-portrait-miniature-hilliard-nicholas/>> [retrieved: 05.05.2017]. FUMERON, Patricia., *op. cit.* pp. 84-85. The exact meaning and specific selection of the playing cards and their signs, which vary greatly, has yet to be decoded.

25. HOLLIS, Jill (ed.): *Princely Magnificence: Court Jewels of the Renaissance, 1500–1630*. London, Debrett's Peerage, 1980, cat. no. 40, p. 61. Drake was a seafarer who circumnavigated the globe and helped lead the English fleet to victory in the Battle of the Spanish Armada.

26. On the imperial claims to power that this jewel manifests through skin color, see HALL, Kim: *Things of Darkness. Economies of Race and Gender in Early Modern England*. Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1995, chap. 2, pp.



FIGURE 6: NICHOLAS HILLIARD, *JEWELLED LOCKET PRESENTED TO SIR FRANCIS DRAKE BY THE QUEEN («DRAKE JEWEL»)*, INSIDE WITH OPENED LID, PORTRAIT OF THE QUEEN, WATERCOLOR ON VELLUM, INSCRIBED ANO DNI 157[5?] / REGNI 2 [8], LID WITH A PHOENIX ABOVE FLAMES, VELLUM STUCK ONTO CARD, 4.2 X 3.3 CM, LONDON. © Victoria & Albert Museum.

around, one finds a flat blue back lid, behind which, opened downward, there is a watercolor portrait on vellum of the young Virgin Queen (in «the mask of youth») and underneath, the picture of a phoenix, that mythical bird reborn from its own ashes that is one of the symbols of Elizabeth I.²⁷

Here one could discuss at length the «figure of the two», the thresholds and hinges the symbolism of the white pearls contrasting with the dark sardonyx, the ambivalence of the golden ground between materiality and transcendence, or the meaning of the floral frame, set with rubies and diamonds and fashioned in back to white-and-gold points.²⁸ Within this context I wish merely to draw attention to the formal parallels between the spread wings of the phoenix rising from the flames and the Queen's collar –both elements that can be opened and folded. Firstly, this analogy between the mythical bird and the Virgin Queen affirms the never-ending golden reign of the (eternally youthful) monarch.²⁹ Secondly it alludes also to the performative act of turning and unfolding, of manipulating and transforming, through which the hidden symbolism of this precious object first 'unfolds'.

Objects such as the Drake Jewel illustrate best how essential the consideration of the act of handling is for understanding portrait miniatures. More than loose, ephemeral materials such as paper, silk or velvet and kept not only in a box, but in

their own, fixed and lockable receptacles, locket portraits demand to be repeatedly turned and unfolded, opened and closed, because one side is visible only when another is necessarily concealed. When, as in the case of the Drake Jewel, they are equipped with additional images, inscriptions or symbols, portrait jewels can – not unlike foldable altarpieces (trptychs), books, (tabernacle) doors, chest lids and cabinets– be considered as another group of those topological objects that have been investigated so productively in recent years as «foldable pictures.» These are artifacts in which, on the one hand, the stacking of individual images that, even when hidden and not immediately visible, still 'push through' and are remembered;

62-122, here pp. 222-226.

27. Several jewels and lockets survive that combine portraits of the Queen with that of a phoenix rising from the flames. HOLLIS, Jill. *op. cit.* cat. no. 35, 59. For an interpretation of the phoenix among the symbols of the Queen, see STRONG, Roy. *English Renaissance Miniature... op. cit.* pp. 82-83. The Queen's portrait carries the inscription «Ano Dni 1575 Regni 20». For the *the mask of youth*, the youthful image of the Queen that Hilliard produced regardless of Elizabeth's real age until her death in 1603, see STRONG, Roy: *The Cult of Elizabeth: Elizabethan Portraiture and Pageantry*. London, Thames and Hudson 1977, pp. 47-54. STRONG, Roy. *Gloriana ... op.cit.*, pp. 147-150.

28. NEUNER, Stefan et. alii. (eds.): «Die Figur der Zwei / The Figure of Two», 31. *Das Magazin des Instituts für Theorie* 14/15, 2010. On the ambivalence of gold, DEGLER, Anna and WENDERHOLM, Iris (eds.): «Der Welt des Goldes –der Wert der Golde. Eine Einleitung», *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte* 79, 2016, pp. 443-460.

29. DALTON, Karen: «Art for the Sake of Dynasty. The Black Emperor in the Drake Jewel and Elizabethan Imperial Imagery», in ERICKSON, Peter and HULSE, Clark (eds.): *Early Modern Visual Culture. Representation, Race, and Empire in Renaissance England*. Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000, pp. 180-214.



FIGURE 7: MARCUS GHEERAERTS THE YOUNGER, *PORTRAIT OF SIR FRANCIS DRAKE WITH THE JEWEL PRESENTED TO HIM BY QUEEN ELIZABETH I. IN WINTER 1586-7, 1591*, OIL ON CANVAS, 116.9 X 91.4 CM, GREENWICH, © The National Maritime Museum.

and on the other hand the performance of progressive unfolding from the outside to the interior, the sequence of views through the active handling of the pictorial medium, the «image absorption» by the viewer, become essential elements of the artwork's meaning.³⁰ No differently than in religious artifacts, the creators of worldly portrait jewels worked deliberately and precisely with the layering of images, materials and media. Their creations show frames, thresholds, spaces and hinges that direct one's gaze, encourage turning and opening and, through the process of intimate manipulation, decisively magnify both the object's symbolism and its power.

Only three portrait jewels survive that Elizabeth I personally bestowed upon her most worthy subjects as gifts. The earliest, created c. 1584-85, is the so-called Gresley Jewel, which I have examined elsewhere in detail.³¹ The Drake Jewel dated appx. 1591, is the second specimen of these surviving artifacts (Figures 5-7). Without a doubt, however, the most complex of these jewels is the Armada or Heneage Jewel, created

c. 1595, which we shall examine more closely here in conclusion (Figures 8, 9).³²

When one holds the Heneage Jewel in one's hand facing its protective front cover of clear rock crystal (Figure 8a), one sees a portrait of the Queen in gold in front of a cobalt blue background. As in medals, the portrait is in strict profile.³³ In the

30. For examples of the very broad research in this field, which focuses chiefly on medieval religious image media, see SCHNEIDER, Wolfgang Christian: «Die 'Aufführung' von Bildern beim Wenden der Blätter in mittelalterlichen Codices. Zur performativen Dimension von Werken der Buchmalerei», in *Zeitschrift für Ästhetik und Allgemeine Kunstwissenschaft* 47, 2002, pp. 7-35. MÖHLE, Valerie: «Wandlungen. Überlegungen zum Zusammenspiel der Außen- und Innenseiten von Flügelretabeln am Beispiel zweier niedersächsischer Werke des frühen 15. Jahrhunderts», in GANZ, David and LENTES, Thomas (eds.), *Ästhetik des Unsichtbaren. Bildtheorie und Bildgebrauch in der Vormoderne*. Berlin, 2004, pp. 147-169. SCHLIE, Heike: «Wandlung und Offenbarung. Zur Medialität von Klappretabeln», in *Das Mittelalter* 9, 2004, S. pp. 22-33. RIMMELE, Marius: *Das Tryptichon als Metapher, Körper und Ort. Semantisierungen eines Bildträgers*. Munich, Fink Verlag, 2010. JACOBS, Lynn F.: *Opening Doors. The Early Netherlandish Triptych Reinterpreted*. University Park, The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2012. GANZ, David and RIMMELE, Marius (eds.), *Klappereffekte. Faltbare Bildträger in der Vormoderne*. Berlin, Reimer, 2016. On the idea of the topological in relation to art: PICHLER, Wolfram and UBL, Ralph (eds.), *Topologie. Falten, Knoten, Netze, Stülpungen in Kunst und Theorie*. Vienna, Turia + Kant, 2009.

31. KOOS, Marianne: «Wandering Things. Agency and Embodiment in Late Sixteenth-Century English Miniature Portraits», *Art History* 37, 2014, pp. 836-859.

32. Sir Thomas Heneage was a privy chancellor and vice chamberlain at the English court when the Armada was defeated. Until 1902 the piece was in the possession of the Heneage family. For the details of this jewel, see HOLLIS, Jill. *op. cit.* cat. no. 38, p. 60.

33. On the Renaissance locket as a «materialized sign of social relations and intentions», PFISTERER, Ulrich: *Lysippus und seine Freunde. Liebesgaben und Gedächtnis im Rom der Renaissance oder: Das erste Jahrhundert der Medaille*. Berlin, Akademie Verlag, 2008, p. 255.



FIGURE 8A: NICHOLAS HILLIARD, *THE HENEAGE JEWEL* (ALSO CALLED *THE ARMADA JEWEL*), C. 1595, THE FRONT OF THE LOCKET, WITH THE PROFILE OF QUEEN ELIZABETH I, ENAMELED GOLD, TABLE-CUT DIAMONDS, BURMESE RUBIES, ROCK CRYSTAL AND A MINIATURE, 7 X 5.1 CM, LONDON, © Victoria & Albert Museum.



FIGURE 8B: NICHOLAS HILLIARD, *THE HENEAGE JEWEL* (ALSO CALLED *THE ARMADA JEWEL*), C. 1595, THE HINGED BACK OF THE LOCKET, ENAMELED OUTSIDE WITH THE ARK OF THE ENGLISH CHURCH ON A STORMY SEA AND THE INSCRIPTION «SAEVAS. TRANQUILLA. PER. VNDAS» (PEACEFUL THROUGH THE WAVES), LONDON, © Victoria & Albert Museum.

tradition of Old Netherlandish painting the figure thrusts itself like a *trompe l'œil* in front of the picture's framelike inscription, which names Elizabeth in her official rank as Queen of England, France and Ireland (ELIZABETHA D.G. ANG. FRA. ET. HIB. REGINA). Between a thin gold frame and a freestanding, light blue oval ring set with rubies and diamonds, delicate gold beams reach out, suggesting beams of radiance issuing from the royal portrait, the Queen inside a divine garland.³⁴ Turning the jewel around (Figure 8b), one sees a picture in gold and enamel of an ark in choppy seas with a storm looming. The framing inscription, SAEVAS. TRANQUILLA. PER. VNDAS («peaceful through the waves»), hails Elizabeth in her ecclesiastical authority as Guardian of the Anglican Church. This flat picture on the reverse, carried directly on the body, can be opened upwards like a door (Figure 9). With this act, like a vision from another reality, one reveals the ever-youthful face of the Queen –again, in the «mask of youth» (this picture is dated on the upper left at 1590).

The inside of the rear metal lid, folded upward, displays a red five-petal Tudor rose painted against a gold background, encircled by interwoven green shoots with the Latin inscription *Hei mihi quod tanto virtus perfusa decore non habet eternos inviolate dies* («So much virtue and beauty cannot remain forever unharmed»). Seeming at

34. KELLY, Jessen. *op. cit.* p. 121.



FIGURE 9A-C: NICHOLAS HILLIARD, *THE HENEAGE JEWEL* (ALSO CALLED *THE ARMADA JEWEL*), C. 1595, OPENED BACK LID SHOWING A MINIATURE OF THE QUEEN («MASK OF YOUTH»), WATERCOLOR ON VELLUM, AND AN ENAMELED DISC WITH A TUDOR ROSE ENCRICLED BY LEAVES AND AN INSCRIPTION, LONDON, © Victoria & Albert Museum.

first glance to reference only the rose and hence extending the political iconography of the jewel's exterior, this composition can immediately also relate to the youthful portrait underneath. As in Holbein's ivory box portrait of Anne of Cleves, which we have considered above (Figure 2), the lid refers to Elizabeth's family lineage (in red the lid highlights the Lancaster line), not without also equating the ideal, subtly blushing face of the Queen with a precious, luxurious flower.³⁵

Hence, the Heneage jewel shows two faces of Elizabeth, an official and stately (and current) one together with an unofficial, idealized (eternally youthful) Virgin Queen. The act of turning, opening and unfolding, i.e. the progressive penetration of the jewel's interior, reveals to the examiner/recipient the concealed, «private» portrait of the Queen, literally the reverse of the monarch's public image in strict profile.³⁶ Executed not in hard, everlasting gold, gems or enamel, but in the most perishable watercolors that threaten to pale when exposed to light, this inner portrait epitomizes fragility merely through its specific material qualities. The inscription «so much virtue and beauty cannot remain forever unharmed» underscores this delicacy of the beautiful woman and of the image itself, as whose synecdoche she functions. This dazzling multiplicity of meanings becomes manifest, however, solely when one

35. Sir Robert Cecil celebrated Elizabeth e.g. as «Beauty's Rose». Strong relates this to the youthful image of the Queen, the mask of youth. STRONG, Roy. *English Renaissance Miniature... op. cit.*, p. 118.

36. These two portraits of the Queen may be reminiscent of Kantorowicz's thesis of «The King's Two Bodies», which distinguishes between the natural (perishable) and political body, which symbolizes the state and government and its actions, and is therefore never-ending. KANTOROWICZ, Ernst H.: *The King's two Bodies. A Study in Mediaeval Political Theology*. Princeton, Princeton University Press 1985 [1957]. The locket's back exterior with the ark on the stormy sea may reinforce this view. One might also ask, however, why this supra-individual 'political body' is not simply represented through heraldry and insignias. Also, the eternally youthful, idealized mask of youth can hardly be considered a «natural body». It therefore seems to me that the distinction between «public» and «private», between the cult of power and that of love (which still resembles an artificial mask and should not be confused with real emotions) is more apt.

regards the jewel's interior not only with political and dynastic aspects in mind (the Tudor line that would be replaced by the Stuarts) and likewise not only considering the fragility of the Virgin Queen's secret watercolor portrait, but also –and once again– in consideration of the metaphorical world of courtly poetry.

This poetry is already referenced in the «secret» mask of youth portrait (Figure 9), as its many decorative gems such as pearls, diamonds, rubies and gold inevitably bring to mind all the metaphors with which (white, blonde) beauty has been described ever since Petrarch: ruby lips, ivory skin, pearly teeth, golden hair and diamond, emerald or sapphire eyes.³⁷ The eyes in her light-colored face, highlighted by her blond hair and wide white collar, stare straight out of the picture. This small detail is fundamental, however, because it is distinct from both the jewel's outer shell and the portrait inside the jewel, where the Queen gazes into the indeterminate distance (Figure 6). The ruff collar framing the face further emphasizes the beaming gaze, which according to the custom of the time (as seen above) was likened to arrows penetrating the eyes into the beholder's heart, inflicting the bittersweet wound of love. One further example elegantly illustrates the ambivalence of how agonizing yet yearned for these (pointed) gazes are: In Shakespeare's Sonnet 139, the poet beseeches his mistress to return her gazes back upon him that she now, for his protection, directs at others; «Yet do not so, but since I am near slain, / Kill me outright with looks, and rid my pain.»³⁸

It is precisely this ambivalence between joy and suffering, between desire and danger, that also underlies the image of the red rose in the interior of the Heneage Jewel. Though beautiful and noble, the blossom is surrounded by a thick weave of stems bristling with thorns. Another miniature by Hilliard's hand in an unusual vertical format, *Young Man Among Roses*, can help us clarify these details (Figure 10). It shows a youthful male (probably Robert Devreux, the 2nd Earl of Essex and a late favorite of the Queen) leaning against a tree with legs elegantly crossed, his right hand placed over his heart underneath a coat casually thrown over his left shoulder, his melancholy eyes gazing into the distance. All around him, thorny rose bushes grow densely, displaying five-petaled white blossoms –Tudor roses, the emblem of the Queen. They are painted over his black coat, white tights and broad collar in such a manner that they form a pattern on the man's clothing, becoming signs on his 'second skin' (and thereby from something exterior to a part of his very identity). Two of the stems reach high enough to point the viewer's gaze to the inscription along the picture's upper edge, which in light brown color reads: *Laudata fides dat poenas* –«praiseworthy fidelity causes suffering». This motto underscores the symbolism of the gestures, facial expression and not least the dense natural weave of the rose bush, which is echoed in the crossed legs and artificial weave of his fashionable clothing, which has not by chance been rendered in white (symbolizing purity and fidelity) and

37. «[...] if Saphyres, loe her eies be Saphyres plaine, / if Rubies, loe hir lips be Rubies sound: / If Pearles, hir teeth be pearles both pure and round; / if Yvorie, her forehead yvory weene; / if Gold, her locks are finest gold on ground; / if silver, her faire hands are silver sheene: But that which fairest is, but few behold, / her mind adornnd with virtues manifold.» ORAM, William A. (ed.), *The Yale Edition of the Shorter Poems of Edmund Spenser*. New Haven, Yale University Press, 1989, p. 609.

38. SHAKESPEARE, William, *Die Sonette –The Sonnets*, German by Klaus Reichert. Salzburg and Vienna, Jung und Jung, 2005, Sonnet 139, pp. 290-291.



FIGURE 10: NICHOLAS HILLIARD, *YOUNG MAN AMONG ROSES* (ROBERT DEVREUX, 2. EARL OF ESSEX), INSCRIPTION: *DAT POENAS LAUDATA FIDES*, C. 1587, WATERCOLOR ON VELLUM STUCK ONTO CARD, 13,5 X 7,3 CM, LONDON, © Victoria & Albert Museum (Bequeathed by George Salting).

in black (symbol of melancholy and the permanence of love). A thoroughly self-assured and vigorous figure when judged by his stylish garb, this young man is simultaneously captive to the shackles of love for his unattainable lady, the Virgin Queen (who refuses to wed), her colors being black and white; a love as sweet as a rose's scent and as painful as a thicket of thorns.³⁹

Hilliard's miniature *Young Man Among Roses* may be regarded as a reply to the symbolism of the inner back lid with the rose of the Heneage Jewel. *Young Man Among Roses* shows what the act of opening a locket portrait does to a man: it shackles him through beauty (of the ideal female opposite) into a self-imposed prison of fidelity that is desired and feared in equal measure.⁴⁰ Jewels like this are artifacts that can effortlessly undermine and transform conventional power relations between a supposedly passive object (the jewel, the portrayed female beauty) and allegedly active subject (the person manipulating the jewel, the male viewer). As in the love poetry of the Early Modern period, it is the gazing subject who involuntarily falls victim to the ideal mistress, i.e. the power of this portrait-object.⁴¹

The images in the interior of this jewel thus simply amplify the effect that the act of giving has already established. Worn by Heneage in all likelihood visibly on a chain or belt on his own body (as in Gheeraerts' painting of Sir Francis Drake, Figure 7), this jewel –with the official image of the Queen on its outside– first distinguishes its recipient. Like an amulet or talisman, the (twofold) image of the Queen and accompanying gemstones shield him with their magic forces. At the same time, however, the jewel also turns the recipient and bearer into an extended supporter and defender

of the imperial monarch's power. It literally chains and binds him to the Queen he received it from. Translated into the world of courtly love in the interior of the

39. Fumerton interprets the many crossed elements as the expression of unhappy or «crossed love». FUMERTON, Patricia. *op. cit.* pp. 81-83.

40. As Strong argues, these words are taken from Lucian's *De Bello Civili* and mean in a political context that praiseworthy fidelity leaves one vulnerable to deception. STRONG, Roy. *The Cult of Elizabeth ... op. cit.*, pp. 77-78. Fumerton sees the wit of the piece in that it functions both in a public and private context. See FUMERTON, Patricia. *op. cit.* pp. 83-84. As elegant as this interpretation may be, when one closely examines the facial expression, gestures and symbolism, it remains less than compelling. To me the model of courtly romantic poetry is stronger.

41. Because here once again a queen is the protagonist, the jewel confirms her –always safeguarded– dominant status. Miniatures such as *Young Man among roses* therefore followed courtly conventions regarding veneration of an unattainable lady.

jewel, this aspect is developed even further. Honored not only with the official, but also the unofficial, private portrait of the Queen, the recipient becomes personally distinguished by the jewel. It confirms him as her current favorite –while obligating him to defend and remain true to his youthful Queen, the ideal mistress, for the rest of his days.

Yet it is not only the Queen who binds and captivates the recipient with her powerful gift and ‘manipulates’ him in her own interest. Portrait jewels such as the Heneage Jewel not only reverse conventional relationships between a supposedly passive object and active subject. They can also complicate these ties in various ways.

What is essential here is the possibility of manipulation and transformation. One should note that the recipient ultimately decides whether to attach the jewel to his body or to shed it –along with its accompanying obligations. If not utterly ravished by beauty, i.e. the jewel, it is up to him how long he should remain exposed to the ideal beauty’s gaze or, with the act of closure, to cast off his bittersweet shackles.

In this context one must also keep in mind the reciprocity of gazes. Distanced and unapproachable on the jewel’s exterior, when encountered again further inside, the Queen –now eternally youthful and beautiful– returns her opposite’s gaze. This extraordinarily intimate exchange, with which the image both ennobles and painfully wounds and binds its opposite (as we have seen in Shakespeare’s sonnet), simultaneously, however, holds the danger that not only the viewer but also the object of his adoration herself could (someday) be hit by her opposite’s beaming gaze –thereby binding her, too in love. One of Hilliard’s many miniatures of the «mask of youth» (Figure 11) plays on precisely this inversion when one regards the jewels fixed to the space-filling, undulating folds of the lace collar around Elizabeth’s neck, resembling arrows aiming at her royal likeness (her dress shows a similar interwoven lace like ornament like the doublet of the *Young Man Among Roses*, Figure 10). Here the subtlety of the inscription «so much virtue and beauty cannot remain forever unharmed» is revealed: It can refer not only to the fragility of the (Tudor) dynasty or the image itself, but also to that of the Virgin Queen (Figure 9c).

Once the jewel has been gifted, it is its new owner who decides how long to expose the delicate image of the Virgin Queen to his own (beaming, arrow-like) gaze –respectively the rays of daylight– or to protect it by closing the locket. If he does the latter, he effectively shields the fragile image (the innermost secret) from his own gaze and those of others, not without simultaneously laying the thorny bush of roses (symbolizing love and the duties of the dynasty) over the Queen’s tender face. As if replying to the symbolism of the interior, this outer deed closes off the ‘private’ image of the Virgin Queen and replaces it with the official mask of the monarch in hard stone and enamel –with the figure that faithfully steers the fate of the Kingdom, irrespective of all courtly love games.

Not least, however, the possibility also existed that, with the aid of the jewel, the recipient could win over others for himself and the Queen. A historical source text can bring this possibility to life. In it, the English ambassador Sir Henry Unton showed a picture of Queen Elizabeth to the French King Henri IV while speaking with the monarch in 1595 on the Queen’s behalf. Very much as Elizabeth did in the passage cited at the beginning, Henri brought the ambassador into his private bedchamber



FIGURE 11: NICHOLAS HILLIARD, *QUEEN ELIZABETH I. (MASK OF YOUTH)*, C. 1600-1603, WATERCOLOR ON VELLUM STUCK ONTO CARD, 6,45 X 4,9 CM, LONDON, © Victoria & Albert Museum.

to speak about his mistress, Madame de Monceaux. Unton writes that in replying he ventured to claim that he possessed the picture of an even fairer lady. Curious as to who that could be, the King insisted on seeing the picture (if Unton indeed was carrying it on his person, i.e. in the form of a locket). «[U]ppon his Importunity, (I) offred it unto his Viewe verie seacretly, houlding it still in my Hande.»⁴²

As this source text shows, the owner has the option of denying outsiders the sight of the miniature portrait, or –in an intimate act involving huddled heads and cupped hands– to reveal it after all. If he does the latter, he has without a doubt committed a kind of betrayal. The owner shares a secret that was entrusted to him alone. Yet this secret also holds the power to bond the owner with outsiders in admiration and respect. The small-format image is therefore also an appropriate instrument for launching homosocial relationships between men. If, in this paper's opening quote, it was a miniature of a man (Sir Robert Dudley) that weaves a network of bonds between women (Elizabeth I and Mary, Queen of Scots) through exchange of a gift, here it is the precious, fragile image of the Virgin Queen that puts men in league with one another. It should also be noted that this does not necessarily mean that the Queen and her substitute image become fixed in the role of passive, 'manipulated' objects. Instead, by merit of its beauty and symbolic value, it can be the image (of the Virgin Queen) that 'captivates' and 'rules' both individuals –the owner and his/her new confidant(e).⁴³

When frozen inside glass display cases –as they are today– artifacts such as the Heneage Jewel are incomprehensible. Conceived as objects to be handled, portrait jewels depend on the acts of turning and transforming, revealing and concealing, opening and closing, through which their real value becomes manifest –a value beyond the financial, consisting far more of the intimacy established through the above acts. Whether set with sumptuous gemstones or wrapped in paper inscribed by one's own hand: The easy handling, turning and transforming close to one's own body, and wandering nature of these portrait objects concentrates both their symbolism and their power. Understood as gifts (of love) to be handled and worn on one's own body –like an amulet or magic symbol directly on the ('second') skin– and forging bonds between the people they become involved with –the portrayed, the recipient, and the outsider entrusted with the miniature's secrets– these small objects possess a remarkable agency that turns them into great and very complex things.

42. «[...] if, without Offence I might speake it, that I had the Picture of a farr more excellent Mistress, and yet did her Picture come farr short of her Perfection of Beauty. As you love me (sayd he) shew it to me, if you have it about you. I made some Difficulties; yett, uppon his Importunity, offred it unto his Viewe verie seacretly, houlding it still in my Hande.» Sir H[enry] Unton to her Majesty, from Councy, Feb. 3, 1595-1596, in BURGHLEY, William Cecil, *A Collection of State Papers Relating to Affairs in the Reign of Queen Elizabeth, from the Year 1571 to 1596*, transcribed by William MURDIN, London, Printed by William Bowyer, 1759, p. 718.

43. Kelly sees the image, i.e. the Queen in this situation in the passive position. This view, however, disregards the agency of the image, which can keep the upper hand (as Unton's account stresses). KELLY, Jessen. *op. cit.* 127.

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