

Image and secrecy in Elizabethan England

Riddles and self-fashioning in courtly
paintings for William Cecil and Christopher
Hatton

Doctoral thesis for obtaining the
academic degree Doctor of Philosophy (Dr. phil.)

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**Image and Secrecy in Elizabethan England
Riddles and Self-Fashioning in Courtly Paintings
for William Cecil and Christopher Hatton**

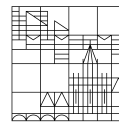
**Doctoral thesis for obtaining the
academic degree Doctor of Philosophy (Dr. phil.)**

submitted by

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at the

Universität
Konstanz



Faculty of Humanities

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Introduction: Two Courtiers and their Paintings

In an evening sale at Sotheby's in 2010, a curious painting was auctioned. An inscription on the painting identifies it as *A Riddle devoted to William Cecil* (hereafter the *Cecil Riddle*).¹ While neither the provenance nor the authorship of this object is definitively, its self-proclamation as a 'puzzle' already represents an enticing visual challenge for observation. However, at least equally interesting is its devotion to one of Queen Elizabeth I's most powerful courtiers: William Cecil (b. 1521), who was the first minister of the queen, the father of a political dynasty, and renowned patron of the arts. What kind of 'riddle' is displayed here? And why was it commissioned to one of the queen's advisors? When the *Cecil Riddle* was sold in 2010, it attracted some academic attention, but few articles have been published on its iconography. Given its narrative presentation, which was rare in the portrait-heavy Elizabethan period, it deserves a closer look to explore the variety of English picture production in that era. Since the painting was always in private collections and only exhibited once in 1996, a proper examination of the *Cecil Riddle* was close to impossible for a long time. Additionally, its location was unknown until very recently, and no technical analysis of the work has been conducted. While researchers have produced some crucial insights on the *Cecil Riddle* in the past years, especially regarding the origin of the riddle shown in the painting, there is still a need for a thorough investigation of the painting as an object that emerged from the Elizabethan tradition.

In 1929, another curious object from the Elizabethan era was auctioned by Christie's and purchased by the Northampton Museum and Art Gallery. This painting is remarkable not only for being an extraordinary portrait of another Elizabethan courtier, Sir Christopher Hatton, but also because it is painted on both sides. Thus, this double-sided painting, the *Portrait of Sir Christopher Hatton* (hereafter the *Hatton Portrait*), presents two pictures on the same painting.² Hatton's likeness is surrounded by a circular horoscope on one side of the panel, while the other side shows an emblematic scene with a long inscription. Christopher Hatton (b. 1540) is as much of an exciting figure of the Elizabethan era as

¹ Unknown: *A Riddle devoted to Sir William Cecil*, c. 1565–1570, oil on panel, 40.5 cm x 61 cm, Hatfield House.

² Unknown: *Double-Sided Emblematic Portrait of Sir Christopher Hatton*, c. 1580, oil on panel, 96 cm x 72.3 cm, Northampton Museum and Art Gallery. The term 'double-sided' is consciously chosen to describe the way in which the painting was crafted. Unlike the terms 'polyfrontal' or 'bifocal', which refer to sight, the term 'double-sided' implies that the object needs to be turned (i.e. that action has to be taken, which is how the *Hatton Portrait* is understood in this study).

William Cecil, though he represents a different type of courtier.³ Hatton was primarily known for his extraordinary dancing skill and pleasing outward appearance. Still, he was appointed to many offices during his career, and he even held the position of Lord Chancellor before his death in 1591. Together with Cecil, Hatton was part of the elite circle around the queen, and the two men corresponded with each other regularly.⁴

The provenance and authorship of the *Hatton Portrait* are still unclear. However, some singular articles have examined the object's iconography.⁵ In the last 20 years, new discoveries and propositions about the painting and its context have been made by scholars, most notably Tarnya Cooper.⁶ Still, an in-depth analysis of this unusual courtly portrait is missing and its particular status as a double-sided painting from Elizabethan England has never been thoroughly discussed. How was an object like this handled and displayed so that both sides could be seen? While such questions remain unanswered, they are crucial for an understanding and future museological presentation of the *Hatton Portrait*.⁷

These two Elizabethan objects, the *Cecil Riddle* and the *Hatton Portrait*, represent interesting paintings to be researched each by themselves. Together, as two objects from the same era and courtly circle, they may be analysed as case studies to gain a deeper understanding of the secretive character in Elizabethan paintings. During the Renaissance, the term 'secret' was often used to describe a recipe or formula, and it was therefore connected to the 'secrets' of nature that could be discovered to the benefit of humans.⁸ Unlike that type of 'secret', however, the notion of secrecy in paintings was linked to the

³ Interestingly, Hatton and Cecil became distant relatives during their lifetime, as Hatton's nephew William Newport married Cecil's granddaughter Elizabeth Cecil in the early 1590s. NICOLAS, Sir Nicholas Harris: *Memoirs of the Life and Times of Sir Christopher Hatton, K. G.: Vice-Chamberlain and Lord Chancellor to Queen Elizabeth. Including His Correspondence with the Queen and Other Distinguished Persons*, London 1847, pp. 476–479.

⁴ *IBID.*, pp. 124–125, p. 152, p. 172.

⁵ In this book, I use the term 'object' to talk about the paintings for two reasons. The first is to avoid any distracting repetition of the words 'image', 'portrait', and 'paintings'. Secondly, I use it to pay tribute to the special mode of manufacturing this panel, which was painted on both sides. As I explain in the following chapters, the painting must be understood as one that had to be touched to be perceived properly. Notably, in Elizabethan times, the terms 'image' and 'portrait' were used synonymously, as Shakespeare's *Henry IV* demonstrates. COOPER, Tarnya: *Citizen Portrait. Portrait Painting and the Urban Elite of Tudor and Jacobean England and Wales*, New Haven 2012, p. 26.

⁶ COOPER, Tarnya: "Memento Mori Portraiture", PhD Thesis, Sussex: University of Sussex 2001, pp. 322–325. COOPER, Tarnya and Amy ORRACK: "Double-Sided Emblematic Portrait of Sir Christopher Hatton", in: COOPER, Tarnya and Jane EADE (Ed.): *Elizabeth I & Her People*, Exhibition Catalogue, National Portrait Gallery London, 10 October 2013 to 5 January 2014, London 2013, pp. 86–89.

⁷ Still, no concept of how to present and convey the special way in which the panel was crafted exists for an exhibition context. I am thankful to Jane Seddon and Victoria Davies from the Northampton Museum and Art Gallery for taking the time to talk to me about possible displays and exhibition concepts.

⁸ WHEELER, Jo: *Renaissance Secrets. Recipes & Formulas*, London 2009, p. 7.

term ‘riddle’ and its various spellings, which appear frequently in Elizabethan literature and in connection to paintings.⁹

This aspect is largely self-evident in the case of the *Cecil Riddle* since the subject presents a puzzle for its beholders to decipher. However, as this study illustrates, the riddle is delivered not only in the form of a picture narration but also as a multi-layered complex of iconography, inscriptions, and references to the courtly system. In contrast, the *Hatton Portrait* is a less apparent and more concealed type of riddle-painting. While it is also a riddle in some sense, it is not explicitly presented as such. Just like the *Cecil Riddle*, the *Hatton Portrait* was made to be deciphered, but it presents a special kind of riddle. The painting is deliberately puzzling and necessarily holds some form of secrecy in its iconography, as there is always one side of the painting that cannot be seen. This study proposes an interpretation of these kinds of Elizabethan paintings as communicative and even dialogic objects that fulfilled a performative function within the courtly society for which they were made. They represented reflections on the culture of the court, and ultimately provided a playful riddle for their noble beholders to solve.

Additionally, both paintings show an obvious connection to the European concepts of courtliness and the courtier within the Elizabethan cosmos.¹⁰ While the *Hatton Portrait* is an unusual portrait of one of the queen’s favourites, the *Cecil Riddle* was a painting made for her first minister. The two paintings differ in measure and genre, yet they were both made for and functioned within the system of the court, which must be understood as the context of these objects. Accordingly, it is crucial for an earnest analysis of these two cases to consider the culture of the court and the discourses surrounding the courtiers and their paintings.

Despite its significance, the complex and intertwined role of Elizabethan paintings within the discourse of courtesy is still an undervalued and only partially researched topic. While scholars have widely discussed the unique quality and symbolic strategies of images in the early modern era, most works have concentrated on the role of portraiture.¹¹ Admittedly, portraiture is considered the dominant genre of the 16th century, and it perfectly

⁹ SCHILTZ, Katelijne: *Music and Riddle Culture in the Renaissance*, Cambridge 2015, p. 10.

¹⁰ Both women and men played important ceremonial roles in the Elizabethan court. However, given the connection of the two core objects to two male favourites, this study focuses on the role of the male courtiers.

¹¹ STRONG, Roy: *The Elizabethan Image. Painting in England 1540-1620*, London 1969. AUERBACH, Erna: “Holbein’s Followers in England”, in: *The Burlington Magazine* 93/575 (1951), pp. 44–51; GENT, Lucy (Ed.): *Albion’s Classicism. The Visual Arts in Britain 1550-1660*, London 1995.

demonstrates the Elizabethan court's social and cultural mechanisms.¹² Part of its prevalence can be traced back to the religious uncertainty characterising 16th-century England, which separated from the Catholic Church during the reign of Henry VIII.¹³ The insecurity of religious images strengthened the popularity of the portrait as a picture genre.¹⁴ The development of an 'Englishness' in portraits was closely connected to the European continent, especially paintings from Italy, France, and the Netherlands.¹⁵ As scholars such as Joanna Woodall have shown, distinct strategies of self-portrayal, sometimes regarding traditional concepts of portraiture, were widely established in 16th-century Europe by the aristocracy and by monarchs in particular.¹⁶ In the English context, royal portraits of Queen Elizabeth I have been well researched by scholars such as Roy Strong, and more recently Charlotte Bolland, whose works present English 16th-century portraiture as just one instrument for the broad expansion of the monarchy.¹⁷ In this context, portraiture fulfilled a distinct and important purpose: to disseminate the ruler's image throughout the realm. However, Elizabeth's image emerged not only in official and authorised forms but also in symbols, references in literature, pageantry, music, and various other forms.¹⁸

¹² Roy Strong has argued that most aristocratic families in England "[...] would not have owned anything beyond portraits of the family and one of the reigning monarch". STRONG, Roy: *The English Icon. Elizabethan and Jacobean Portraiture*, London 1969, p. 43. This has also been expressed by Elizabeth Goldring as follows: "[...] portraiture was a medium well suited to a court populated to a large degree by ambitious men [...] with new titles and new money who were keen to advertise and cement their status." GOLDRING, Elizabeth: *Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, and the World of Elizabethan Art. Painting and Patronage at the Court of Elizabeth I*, New Haven, London 2014, p. 5.

¹³ ASTON, Margaret: "Gods, Saints and Reformers. Portraiture and Protestant England", in: GENT, Lucy (Ed.): *Albion's Classicism. The Visual Arts in Britain 1550-1660*, London 1995, pp. 181–220.

¹⁴ Very few religious paintings survived from this period. While most of them might have fallen the victim to iconoclastic practices, studies have shown that they were still present in their own forms. BAILEY, Meryl: "'Salvatrice Mundi'. Representing Queen Elizabeth I as a Christ Type", in: *Studies in Iconography* 29 (2008), pp. 176–215.

¹⁵ The topic of drawing in England, and its connection to the Italian concept of *disegno* is not discussed in this study. However, it is addressed in BAXANDALL, Michael: "English *Disegno*", in: CHANEY, Edward and Peter MACK (Ed.): *England and the Continental Renaissance. Essays in Honour of J.B. Trapp*, Woodbridge 1990, pp. 203–214.

¹⁶ WOODALL, Joana: "Sovereign Bodies. The Reality of Status in Seventeenth-Century Dutch Portraiture", Manchester 1997, pp. 75–100, pp. 76–96. For a general introduction, see: WOODALL, Joana (Ed.): *Portraiture. Facing the Subject*, Manchester 1997.

¹⁷ STRONG, Roy: *Gloriana. The Portraits of Queen Elizabeth I*, London 1987, p. 12. BOLLAND, Charlotte and Tarnya COOPER: *The Real Tudors. Kings and Queens Rediscovered*, London 2015, p. 17. DORAN, Susan: "The Queen", in: DORAN, Susan and Norman JONES (Ed.): *The Elizabethan World*, Oxon, New York 2011, pp. 35–58. In acknowledging the different forms of images made of the queen with and without her consent, I avoid the word "cult" used by Strong to describe the propaganda of her personality.

¹⁸ STRONG, Roy: *The Cult of Elizabeth. Elizabethan Portraiture and Pageantry*, London 1999. Frye has also analysed Elizabeth's early and later self-representations in FRYE, Susan: *Elizabeth I. The Competition for Representation*, New York, Oxford 1993, pp. 36–38. On the development of literature in the 16th century, see RHODES, Neil: *Common. The Development of Literary Culture in Sixteenth-Century England*, Oxford 2018, pp. 19–25.

Compared to portraits of the queen, those of courtiers and citizens from 16th-century England have received less attention from art historians.¹⁹ While researchers have investigated individual figures, such as Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, and his use and commissioning of portraits, a proper understanding of the courtier's portrait is still lacking in art historical research on the Elizabethan era.²⁰ Unlike pictures of the queen, those of her courtiers were made not necessarily to show their status but to demonstrate their humility before the Crown and God.²¹ For this purpose, the courtier's portraits would utilise a variety of pictorial strategies. To understand and contextualise paintings such as the *Cecil Riddle* and the *Hatton Portrait*, it is vital to comprehend their visual language and cultural interdependency inside the courtly circle. Thus, their status as a primarily 'courtly' painting has to be taken seriously. While they are not seen as independent from the Elizabethan visual language as a whole, this book understands these paintings as a specified form of visual product which was heavily intertwined with the courtly elite, for whom and by whom they were made.²²

Each object presents a unique type of riddle to its audience and possesses a layer of secrecy that challenges its beholders.²³ To understand the relation between the court and the paintings, this book applies a theoretical framework based on the concept of self-fashioning to explore the significance of the paintings and the courtiers who owned and used them. Paintings such as the *Cecil Riddle* and the *Hatton Portrait* were used as objects to reflect the values and behavioural guidelines of the European elite, adjusted to the peculiarities of the Elizabethan court. In this way, they served as visual representations of the courtly microcosm, which highlights specific points for discussion.²⁴ This kind of early modern English picture was demanding of both its beholders and its artist because it challenged

¹⁹ An exception is, of course, COOPER: *Citizen Portrait*.

²⁰ GOLDRING: *Robert Dudley*. HEARN, Karen (Ed.): *Dynasties. Painting in Tudor and Jacobean England 1530-1630*, Exhibition Catalogue, Tate Gallery, 12 October 1995 to 7 January 1996, Peterborough 1995. FOISTER, Susan: "Sixteenth Century English Portraiture and the Idea of the Classical", in: GENT, Lucy (Ed.): *Albions Class.*, New Haven, London 1996, pp. 162–180.

²¹ COOPER: *Citizen Portrait*, p. ix.

²² A similar investigation of Van Dyck's portraits of courtiers has been done by PEACOCK, John: *Picturing Courtiers and Nobles from Castiglione to Van Dyck*, New York 2021.

²³ More on "secrecy" and the "secret" in connection to art and paintings has been written by ZACCARIA, Gino: *The Enigma of Art. On the Provenance of Artistic Creation*, Leiden, Boston 2021, pp. 247–257.

²⁴ To describe the ability of the audience to read such pictures, Brett Rothstein has developed the term "visual skill". ROTHSTEIN, Brett: "The Rule of Metaphor and the Play of the Viewer in the Hours of Mary of Burgundy", in: FALKENBURG, Reindert, Walter MELION and Todd RICHARDSON (Ed.): *Image and Imagination of the Religious Self in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, Turnhout 2007, pp. 237–275, pp. 18–21. An interesting series of publications focusing on the analysis of images from a different methodological approach is STÖHR, Jürgen: *Das Sehbare und das Unsehbare. Abenteuer der Bildanschauung*, Heidelberg 2018.

their intellect and communication abilities. Therefore, the function of these pictures can always be understood as equivocal and deliberately shrouded in secrecy. The examples chosen for this analysis illustrate the various functions of paintings in the Elizabethan era and the depth of their roots in the intellectual humanistic network.²⁵

While the term ‘self-fashioning’ has been utilised in different disciplines in the past decades, very few works have engaged with the concept at large. Of those that have, the most notable is Stephen Greenblatt’s *Renaissance Self-Fashioning*, which was the first work to embed the concept into a methodology of cultural analysis. According to Greenblatt, self-fashioning became an essential factor during the Renaissance because the era featured an “increased self-conscious[ness] about the fashioning of human identity as a manipulable, artful process.”²⁶ As a concept, self-fashioning is embedded in the cultural system in which individuals act, and by whose mechanisms they are created.²⁷ Greenblatt’s work demonstrates how English Renaissance literature, especially the writings of Shakespeare and Walter Raleigh in the Elizabethan era, functioned as texts that express and comment on the cultural code of their time.²⁸ Per Greenblatt’s definition, self-fashioning has a double meaning. On the one hand, it describes the physical form, character, or behaviour with which an individual addresses the world around them. On the other hand, it regards the cultural system and its mechanisms that create the need for such forming.²⁹

Greenblatt based his understanding of the Renaissance idea of the self on what Jacob Burckhardt calls the “discovery of man” in his *Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy* (1860).³⁰ While this approach was not without criticism,³¹ Greenblatt’s analysis of self-

²⁵ Here, I rely heavily on the research of Clim Wijnands, who has authored an article on the study of “devices [which] relied in the beholder’s active participation”. WIJNANDS, Clim: “*Reflections of the Hidden Duchess and the Moon King. The Tabula Scalata and the Engaged Beholder in Sixteenth-Century Italy*”, in: *Ikonotheke* 29 (2019), pp. 79–101, p. 79.

²⁶ GREENBLATT, Stephen: *Renaissance Self-Fashioning. From More to Shakespeare*, Chicago 1980, p. 2.

²⁷ Greenblatt calls it the “control mechanisms, the cultural system of meanings that creates specific individuals.” IBID., pp. 3–4. In reference to Greenblatt, Jan Veenstra has defined self-fashioning as “Renaissance awareness of the malleability of the self and to the pressures and control mechanisms that, at the expense of the much acclaimed human autonomy, were at work in shaping personalities.” VEENSTRA, Jan: “*Self-Fashioning and Pragmatic Introspection. Reconsidering the Soul in the Renaissance (Some Remarks on Pico, Pomponazzi and Machiavelli)*”, in: SUNTRUP, Rudolf and Jan VEENSTRA (Ed.): *Self-Fashioning Personen(selbst)darstellung*, Frankfurt am Main 2003, pp. 285–308, p. 286.

²⁸ GREENBLATT: *Renaissance Self-Fashioning*, p. 3.

²⁹ IBID., pp. 2–4, pp. 8–9. “Self-fashioning for Greenblatt means a dialectical and artful process whereby individuals are created by a cultural system of meanings. Selves come into existence in the interplay between texts and societies.” VEENSTRA: “*Self-Fashioning*”, p. 286.

³⁰ GREENBLATT: *Renaissance Self-Fashioning*, p. 161.

³¹ The notion that the Western self is viewed in a unique setting is especially seen as problematic in BURKE, Peter: “*Representations of the Self from Petrarch to Descartes*”, in: PORTER, Roy (Ed.): *Rewriting the Self. Histories from the Renaissance to the Present*, London, New York 1997, pp. 17–29, pp. 17–19.

fashioning in the network of Renaissance literature has since been adopted in other disciplines to explore different cultural forms, especially artists' self-portraits.³² For instance, Maurice Howard has applied it to connect the Elizabethan courtiers' ambitions and awareness of their society to their expansive building projects.³³ Tarnya Cooper has used the concept to explain her understanding of the portraits as "objects emended within their own matrix of social, cultural and religious concerns."³⁴

Following Cooper's adaption, the present study utilises the concept of self-fashioning as a theoretical framework to analyse the particular form of visual language seen in both the *Cecil Riddle* and the *Hatton Portrait* while remaining aware of the complex cultural circumstances of their time. Here, self-fashioning is defined as the form of interaction used by this elite to commission and observe courtly paintings. By employing this concept, this study is able to combine the objects with the cultural practices.

In addition, by accepting this definition, the study follows the direction of 'New Historicism', which was developed primarily by Greenblatt to investigate the role of socio-cultural interdependencies in interpreting early modern visual language.³⁵ Given the theoretical affiliation of New Historicism with literary studies, it is suitable to combine with art historical-iconographical methods to formulate an appropriate cultural reading of the two paintings, which emerged within a culture of multi-layered discourses that found expression in numerous forms. The core objects are understood to be products of an elitist circle that was highly aware of their courtly status and who transferred this discourse into

³² A gender-focused approach to self-fashioning has been employed by BARKER, Sheila: "*The First Biography of Artemisia Gentileschi. Self-Fashioning and Proto-Feminist Art History in Cristofano Bronzini's Notes on Women Artists*", in: *Mitteilungen des Kunsthistorischen Institutes* 60/3 (2018), pp. 405–435. For an adaptation in literature studies, see BURKE: "*Representations of the Self*". Peter Burke further uses the term 'self-fashioning' to discuss the concept of courtliness in BURKE, Peter: *The Fortunes of the Courtier. The European Reception of Castiglione's Cortegiano*, Cambridge 1995, pp. 1–18. Christiane Hille has shown that self-fashioning became a physical matter in the early Stuart period. HILLE, Christiane: *Visions of the Courty Body. The Patronage of George Villiers, First Duke of Buckingham, and the Triumph of Painting at the Stuart Court*, Berlin 2012, p. 32.

³³ HOWARD, Maurice: "*Self-Fashioning and the Classical Moment in Mid-Sixteenth-Century English Architecture*", in: GENT, Lucy (Ed.): *Renaissance Bodies. The Human Figure in English Culture. 1540-1660*, London 1990, pp. 198–217.

³⁴ COOPER: *Citizen Portrait*, pp. 5–6.

³⁵ Greenblatt's 'New Historicism' has been adapted mainly in English-American literary studies but has also been acknowledged in wider academic circles. Some academic discussions include the following: GALLAGHER, Catherine and Stephen GREENBLATT: *Practicing New Historicism*, Chicago 2000. LADEN, Sonja: "*Greenblattian Self-Fashioning and the Construction of 'Literary History'*", in: PIETERS, Jürgen (Ed.): *Critical Self-Fashioning. Stephen Greenblatt and the New Historicism*, Frankfurt am Main 1999, pp. 59–86.

a system through paintings, literature, and architecture.³⁶ Neither the *Cecil Riddle* nor the *Hatton Portrait* can be understood without taking account of the cultural context in which they were commissioned. While it is not possible to reconstruct every discourse from those times, those which are possible to clarify are discussed in this book. To determine how such highly concealed iconography can be read, threads must be spun on and beyond the visual presentation between portraits, symbols, and inscriptions and biographies, poems, and buildings.

By elaborating on these connections, this study illustrates how Elizabethan courtly paintings functioned in the intellectualised context of self-fashioning by developing a demanding yet playful relationship with their beholders. The paintings were made specifically for a courtly audience, who were likewise eager to view such paintings. They are not merely representations of a culture but are in fact complex iconographies which must be contextualised by the courtly discourse in order to be understood. While it is possible to discern a specific courtly symbolism and repertoire of symbols, the paintings ultimately remain in an ambiguous and concealed state. The observation of these objects plays a major part in their analysis. This study interrogates not only how the objects were seen, read, and interpreted but also, through a theoretical approach, how they were handled. Their observers would have to become active and handle the objects, sometimes even physically, in order to develop strings of meaning.³⁷ The *Cecil Riddle* and the *Hatton Portrait* demand highly active and even interactive forms of reception, albeit to different degrees, because they were fashioned as objects for the inner circle of the highly complex world of the Elizabethan court and those interacting within it.

This book understands the two case study objects as Elizabethan courtly paintings which function not only in the context of other paintings but within the whole complex of the courtly system. Based on this understanding, the book is divided into three parts. The first part provides background information about this system. Chapter 1 addresses the ideal of

³⁶ At this point, it is important to distinguish between the culture that uses the paintings in a culture of self-fashioning and the self-referentiality of paintings as such. The latter, while an interesting topic for early modern art, does not factor into this study. However, it has been as addressed by STOICHITA, Victor: *Das selbstbewusste Bild. Vom Ursprung der Metamalerei*, München 1998.

³⁷ This is connected to Peter Burke's observation that, next to the self-awareness of Renaissance individuals, the "presentation of self to others" was equally important. BURKE: *Representations of the Self*, p. 19. In an earlier European context, the concept of a 'mobile' beholder has also been analysed by BOGEN, Steffen: *Imaginäres Eindringen. Schwellen- und Schleierfunktionen von Bildern (um 1000 – 1400)*, in: GANZ, David and Stefan NEUNER: *Mobile Eyes. Peripatetisches Sehen in den Bildkulturen der Vormoderne*, Paderborn 2013, pp. 91–130.

the courtier and his ceremonial function, which first evolved on the European continent and later spread to England. The chapter especially discusses a courtier's duties as a statesman and the demand for him to be well versed in dancing. Both concepts are central to the intertwined role of the Elizabethan courtier and to Cecil's and Hatton's embodiments of this constructed role. Chapter 2 and Chapter 3 then present conscious adaptations of the courtesy discourse and discuss the relation of these surviving portraits to the notion of self-fashioning. To more fully comprehend how the courtly system worked in regard to images, the reputations of the men are addressed followed by a close reading of some paintings that can be connected to them. While various portraits of both courtiers exist, with many of Cecil in particular, only a few examples can be presented here. These close readings shape the idea of Hatton and Cecil as courtiers and give an introduction to the Elizabethan courtly painting and commissioning process.

The second part of this book contains four chapters which analyse the first core object, the *Cecil Riddle*. As a largely unknown painting that expressively presents a riddle, the work offers many layers for analysis. Chapter 4 begins with an overview of the history of the *Cecil Riddle* as an object and genealogical puzzle and its connections to other paintings and countries. Chapter 5 then discusses the distinct English form of this painting and its solution to the riddle. Subsequently, Chapter 6 illustrates how the painting's inherent puzzle extends beyond the depicted scene and is completed in the border of the iconography. Finally, Chapter 7 synthesises the findings of the preceding chapters. It presents the *Cecil Riddle* as a painting that was made for Elizabethan culture and especially to be possessed by William Cecil, one of the queen's most important courtiers.

The third part of this book is dedicated to the second case study, the double-sided *Hatton Portrait*. A close reading of the detailed iconography in this painting, which displays two images on one object, is presented in Chapters 8 through 11. As an object that is already strikingly curious because of how it was crafted, the painting is especially suitable for an analysis regarding courtly self-fashioning. It is suspected that this portrait shows a careful presentation of Christopher Hatton that was meant to function in the courtly cosmos in which the sitter acted. In relation to this idea, Chapter 12 discusses the portrait's role as a double-sided painting, an object that offers two sides for visual inspection, and its function in Elizabethan society.

Methodically, the findings of this study are necessarily based on deductive conclusions due to the lack of archival sources to determine a seamless provenance. The analyses of the

Cecil Riddle and the *Hatton Portrait* adhere to a mainly iconographical approach which acknowledges their function as sources on the Elizabethan era's cultural history. A compulsory part of this method is the inclusion of symbolic, emblematic, and textual sources belonging to the intellectual culture from which these objects emerged. This method aims to facilitate a detailed investigation of each painting as a case study for future art historical research on English and European courtly paintings. For the *Hatton Portrait*, results from art technological examinations performed at the National Portrait Gallery in London (NPG) were used to support the art historical analysis. While such an examination of the *Cecil Riddle* has not yet occurred, the present study highlights areas in which such research could prove very fruitful. Tarnya Cooper and Charlotte Bolland have already carried out a model work merging scientific analysis with art historical questions to produce new insights and answers about the objects.³⁸ In addition, the impressive project *Making Art in Tudor Britain* by the NPG is a noteworthy exemplar of such interdisciplinary research.³⁹

³⁸ BOLLAND/COOPER: *The Real Tudors*.

³⁹ NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY LONDON: "*Making Art in Tudor Britain*", <https://www.npg.org.uk/research/programmes/making-art-in-tudor-britain/> (accessed 03.11.2020). The research project has been further described in COOPER, Tarnya: "*Making Art in Tudor Britain. New Research on Paintings in the National Portrait Gallery*", in: *British Art Journal* 9/3 (2009), pp. 3–11.

Deutsche Zusammenfassung der Arbeit

Die vorliegende Arbeit beschäftigt sich mit zwei Objekten des Elisabethanischen Zeitalters, die in der bisherigen kunsthistorischen Forschung kaum Beachtung gefunden haben. Zu beiden Gemälden, dem sogenannte *Cecil Riddle* und dem *Hatton Portrait*, sind bisher nur sporadisch Untersuchungen veröffentlicht worden, was mit den jeweiligen verschlüsselten Ikonographien erklärt werden kann. Gleichzeitig stellen auch ihre Objektgeschichten Rätsel dar: Beide wurden von der Forschung im 20. Jahrhundert entdeckt, als sie über eine Auktion verkauft wurden. Die genaue Auftragslage oder der Künstler sind bis heute nicht geklärt. Noch weniger ist für beide ein Zusammenhang geschaffen worden, der diese in den Kontext der Diskurse über den idealen Höfling und das höfische Leben am Hofe einordnet. Denn beide Objekte stehen im Zusammenhang mit jeweils einem Höfling von Elisabeth I.: William Cecil und Christopher Hatton. Während Cecil als erfolgreicher Minister und Intellektueller von seinen Zeitgenossen geschätzt wurde, war Hatton vor allem durch sein gutes Aussehen, seine Tanzkünste und seine enge Beziehung zur Königin bekannt. Beide Höflinge sind im Kontext des ‚Höfischen‘ zu betrachten, in dessen Komplex auch demnach die höfischen Bilder der Zeit einzuordnen sind.

Das Ideal des Hof- und Staatsmannes war einer der am stärksten rezipierten Diskurse des europäischen 16. Jahrhunderts und wurde auch in England anhand von Übersetzungen und eigenen ‚How-To-Books‘ verbreitet. Für das Elisabethanische England beleuchtet diese Arbeit anhand der Beispiele von Baldassare Castigliones *Courtier*, Thomas Elyots *The Governour* und Roger Aschams *The Scholemaster* den höfischen Diskurs aus drei unterschiedlichen Perspektiven. Wer dem Ideal des Höflings entsprechen wollte, musste eine Reihe an physischen, intellektuellen und auch familiären Anforderungen erfüllen. Besonders der Tanz ist dabei als höfisches Zeremoniell am Hofe Elisabeth I. symbolhaft aufgeladen: Hier wird die gesellschaftliche Hierarchie widerspiegelt, mit der Königin an der Spitze. Der Tanz war somit ein wichtiger und anspruchsvoller Teil des höfischen Lebens, in dem sich gerade Christopher Hatton zu beweisen wusste. Im Gegensatz zu seiner historischen Rezeption konnte herausgearbeitet werden, dass Hatton es verstand den höfischen Diskurs zu nutzen, um sich eine Stellung am Hofe zu verschaffen. Dieser Themenkomplex spiegelte sich im *Hatton Portrait* wieder, in dem durch ikonographische Analysen verschiedene Deutungsangebote aufgezeigt werden. Noch genauer soll gezeigt werden, wie das *Hatton Portrait* als dezidiert höfisch-Elisabethanisches Bildobjekt eine Bildsprache benutzt, die unmittelbar mit den Betrachtenden verbunden ist und diesen auch

physisch miteinbezieht. Vor dem Bildobjekt, welches hier aus einer von beiden Seiten bemalten Holzplatte besteht, müssen die Betrachtenden durch genaue Untersuchungen die verschiedenen Symbole, Inschriften und Referenzen verbinden und zusammensetzen. Diese verweisen auf Hattons Biografie, den Hof, sowie auf Literatur und andere Ikonographien. Jedoch stellt das Bildobjekt dabei nicht eine Eindeutigkeit zur Schau. Es verschließt sich dieser sogar, denn durch seine spezifische materielle Gemachtheit führt es die Unmöglichkeit einer gleichzeitigen Betrachtung der zwei Bildseiten vor: Als von beidseitig bemalte Holztafel gibt es immer einer Seite, die bei der Betrachtung vor dem Objekt dem Blick verschlossen ist, die vielmehr immer hinter dem gerade Betrachtetem liegt. Wie gezeigt werden soll, hat diese Verbindung von materieller Beschaffenheit und vielschichtiger Ikonographie das Ziel eine Diskussion zu erregen und eine herausfordernde Verbindung mit einem bestimmten Publikum einzugehen. Erstmals wird für dieses Gemälde durch Vergleiche mit anderen vielansichtigen Bildobjekten diskutiert werden, wie und wo es gezeig haben könnte. In Kombination mit einer ausführlichen ikonographischen Untersuchung soll nicht nur dem *Hatton Portrait* eine kunstgeschichtliche Grundlage geschaffen werden, sondern auch seinem Status als doppelseitiges Bild im Elisabethanischen England, welches immer noch eine ungeklärte Objektgruppe in der Forschung darstellt.

Anders als Christopher Hatton ist William Cecil stets als idealer Minister rezipiert worden. In Verbindung mit dem höfischen Diskurs soll gezeigt werden, dass in seinen Porträts zusätzlich auch ein dynastisches Bewusstsein ausgestellt wird. An diesem Punkt knüpft die Analyse des *Cecil Riddle* an, welches mit seinem Bildsujet ausdrücklich ein Rätsel repräsentiert, genauer, ein Familienrätsel. Auf der Bildfläche sind sechs Personen dargestellt, deren Familienbeziehungen von den Betrachtenden herausgearbeitet werden sollen, während nötige Informationen über Inschriften geliefert werden. Schon frühere Forschung hat herausgefunden, dass es sich bei dem Bildsujet um eine europäische Bildtradition handelt. Mehrere Bilder mit dem gleichen Inhalt, doch in abgewandelter Form, sind in den Niederlanden gefunden worden, dem hier noch ein weiteres französisches Beispiel beigelegt wird. Diese Arbeit versucht nun zu zeigen, wie das *Cecil Riddle* eine besondere Nutzung dieses Rätsels darstellt. Es repräsentiert, zum einen, eine der qualitativsten Versionen der englischen Bildtradition des Familienrätsels, dessen Form und Lösungsanspruch hier erstmals detailliert untersucht und definiert wird. Zum anderen ist es das bisher einzige bekannte dieser Rätselbilder, welches ausdrücklich über eine Inschrift

einem Besitzer, William Cecil, gewidmet ist. In einem innerbildlichen Rahmen, der bisher nie untersucht wurde, wird dieser persönliche Bezug noch stärker herausgearbeitet und erstmals in einen Interpretationsvorschlag überführt: Der Rahmen mit seinen heraldischen Zeichen in den Ecken verweist auf eine höfische Verbindung Cecils mit einem anderen Höfling Elisabeths, der ihm dieses Bild geschenkt haben könnte. Diese Arbeit macht den Vorschlag, dass es zum Anlass der Hochzeit von Cecils Tochter überreichte wurde. Letztlich wird der gesellschaftliche Zusammenhang von Rätseln und ihre Beliebtheit im Elisabethanischen Zeitalter aufgezeigt. Dieser lässt vermuten, unabhängig vom persönlichen Charakter des *Cecil Riddles*, dass diese Art Familienrätsel als fertige Bilder in den Werkstätten verkauft wurden und einen didaktischen Auftrag erfüllen sollten, der junge Höflinge in den wichtigen Themen Genealogie und Erbfolge spielerisch schulte. Genau wie das *Hatton Portrait* zeigte sich auch im *Cecil Riddle* ein enger Einbezug der Betrachtenden, ohne die das Rätsel als solches nicht zu denken ist.

Anhand der zwei Fallbeispiele wird in dieser Arbeit die These entwickelt, dass im höfisch Elisabethanischen Bild eine Bildsprache entsteht, die über das pure Darstellen hinausgeht und im Kosmos des Hofes und seiner Diskurse gesehen werden muss. Die Bilder fungieren als vielschichte Deutungsangebote, welche ein bestimmtes Bildverstehen erfordern, das unmittelbar mit dem Ideal des Höfischen zusammenhängt: Der Status des Staatsmannes innerhalb des Hofgeschehens aber auch innerhalb seiner eignen dynastischen Funktionen zeigt sich in den Bildern in verschiedenen Facetten. Die Betrachtung erfordert einen mehrfachen Fokus, der sowohl auf der ikonographischen, aber auch auf der materiellen Ebene geschieht. Anders als die bisherige Forschung, zeigt diese Arbeit somit nicht nur eine englische Perspektive auf die Objekte, sondern strebt darüber hinaus auch eine Einordnung des englisch höfischen Bildes in die europäischen Vormoderne an. Die gewählten Vergleichsobjekte und Referenzstränge spiegeln in dieser Arbeit den englischen Kosmos um Elisabeth wieder und erweitern diesen gleichzeitig mit Hinblick auf das europäische Hofgeschehen. Das hier aufgezeigte Bildverständnis ist in einem europäischen Bildverstehen eingebettet, auf welchen diese englische Form referiert und mit dem es in einer Wechselwirkung steht. Um dies zu verdeutlichen, bedient sich diese Arbeit dabei des theoretischen Rahmens des von Stephen Greenblatt geprägten Begriffs ‚Self Fashioning‘. Besonders die Wechselwirkungen zwischen frühneuzeitlichem Individuum, welches sich bewusst innerhalb und mittels der Diskurse seiner Zeit formt, und eben jenen, die auch durch dieses Streben geformt werden, ist dabei leitend für die Untersuchung der

Kernobjekte. Somit reiht sich diese Arbeit methodisch letztlich auch in die Richtung des *New Historicism* ein und verbindet dessen Hauptanliegen des Kontextualisierens mit den Methoden einer ikonographisch-deduktiven Bildanalyse. Vor allem durch das Fehlen wichtiger archivalischer Quellen ist dieses Vorgehen notwendig und sich seiner Grenzen bewusst. Eine vollständige Analyse des Elisabethanischen Bildes, kann und soll hier nicht geleistet werden. Vielmehr ist es das Ziel der Arbeit den zwei bisher unerforschten Kernobjekten einen Kontext zu geben, und darüber hinaus als Fallstudie zu fungieren, die auf zukünftige Analysen höfisch europäischer Bilder übertragen werden kann.

Part I: Fashioning the Self. Courtiership in Elizabethan Society

As a localisation, the court can be understood as the focal point of early modern society. It was the central network of the powerful elite and an exclusive place to participate in cultural traditions which was tied to the figure of the monarch overlooking the scene.⁴⁰ As a social construct, the court can be seen as a “battleground” where positions, favours, and privileges were waged and granted but could also be taken away.⁴¹ During Queen Elizabeth’s reign, the court was the ceremonial, administrative, and physical sphere that surrounded her, and she was its centre. However, rather than any particular building, it was the men and women around her who represented the apparatus that maintained it. For instance, when the queen travelled through the country during her summer progresses, the court moved with her.⁴² For men such as William Cecil and Christopher Hatton, who wanted to be part of this elite circle, it was necessary to participate in such ceremonies. Often, a courtier had to act in the queen’s gaze in order to gain privileges or be accepted into her exclusive club of favourites. Her motto “Video et Taceo” (I see, and I am silent) underlines this thought.⁴³ Even when the queen herself was not present, a network of official representatives would ensure her presence.⁴⁴ In this network, which was established by, for, and around the queen, the members of her elite circle, including Cecil, Hatton, and other courtiers, acted, worked, and fashioned themselves.

Indeed, during the ceremonies, the courtiers participated in theatrical and musical entertainment, hosted royal visits, and competed in dance and sportive activities, which afforded opportunities to showcase and demonstrate their knowledge, noble qualities, and

⁴⁰ Here, I follow the socio-cultural ideas of ELIAS, Norbert: *Die höfische Gesellschaft. Untersuchungen zur Soziologie des Königtums und der höfischen Aristokratie*, Frankfurt am Main 2002, pp. 392–393. Particularly for the Elizabethan era, the court has been described as a central organ by CHAMBERS, Edmund: *Elizabethan Stage*, Vol. 1, Oxford 1967, p. 3. Rowse has also understood the court as “[...] the plane upon which the social life of the country was lifted and exposed [...]” ROWSE, A.L.: *The Elizabethan Renaissance. The Life of the Society*, London 2000, p. 30.

⁴¹ ADAMS, Simon: “*Favourites and Factions at the Elizabethan Court*”, in: ASCH, Ronald and Adolf BIRKE (Ed.): *Princes, Patronage, and the Nobility. The Court at the Beginning of the Modern Age c. 1450-1650*, New York 1991, pp. 265–287, p. 69.

⁴² NICHOLS, John: *The Progresses and Public Processions of Queen Elizabeth I. 1579-1595*, Vol. 3, ed. by Elizabeth GOLDRING, Oxford 2014, p. 27. COLE, Mary Hill: *The Portable Queen. Elizabeth I and the Politics of Ceremony*, Amherst 1999, p. 65. WILLIAMS, Penry: *The Tudor Regime*, Oxford 1979, p. 24, p. 293.

⁴³ ARCHER, Jayne Elizabeth and Sarah KNIGHT: “*Elizabetha Triumphans*”, in: ARCHER, Jayne Elizabeth, Elizabeth GOLDRING and Sarah KNIGHT (Ed.): *The Progresses, Pageants, and Entertainments of Queen Elizabeth I*, Oxford 2007, pp. 1–23, p. 11.

⁴⁴ Mary Crane, in analysing the mottoes and symbolic system used by the queen, has described the “Video et Taceo” motto as an expression of the “delicate balancing act between assertion and abnegation of authority upon which Elizabeth relied”. CRANE, Mary Thomas: “‘*Video et Taceo*’. *Elizabeth I and the Rhetoric of Counsel*”, in: *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900* 28/1 (1988), pp. 1–15, p. 2.

courtly skills. In this context, it is interesting to consider the qualities with which the courtiers fashioned themselves. Which ideal were they trying to meet with their self-representations? As this book shows, that image had already been constructed decades before it was adapted by Elizabethans, as it was detailed in countless courtier handbooks and treatises, most of which originated on the European continent. Elizabethans were eager to adopt the fashions of Italy, France, and the Netherlands, and these texts clearly describe the desired qualities and social behaviour of a courtier as well as his responsibility towards the monarch.⁴⁵

⁴⁵ NICHOLLS, Jonathan: *The Matter of Courtesy. Medieval Courtesy Books and the Gawain-Poet*, Suffolk 1985, pp. 3–4.

1. Becoming a Courtier: The ‘Englising’ of a Continental Concept

Treatises about the ideal courtly life were not invented in 16th-century England; rather, how-to books for monarchs were popular long before Elizabeth became queen. In 1532, while Henry VIII was still alive, Niccolò Machiavelli published *Principe*, which outlines the Italian notion of the ideal sovereign. Even earlier, Erasmus of Rotterdam had written *The Education of a Christian Prince* in England in 1516.⁴⁶ During this period, books concerning the perfect behaviour and education of a courtier became very common in Europe.⁴⁷ These books followed the long tradition of so-called courtesy books and princely mirrors, which had been written and read since Antiquity to establish guidelines for rulers as well as those who wanted to play a part in the state under the monarch.⁴⁸ In a time when the status of the nobility was still understood as God-given, the purpose of these books was to connect the elite’s privileges with the virtuous use of their position.⁴⁹

The rising popularity of these guide books for courtiers in England stemmed from the emerging tradition of writings on this subject by English authors in their own language and the reception and translation of many related books from the continent.⁵⁰ For 16th-century noble Englishmen, diplomatic relationships and increased possibilities to travel in Europe made it possible to experience foreign courts.⁵¹ The archetypal early modern courtier book is often said to be Baldassare Castiglione’s *Il libro del cortegiano* (1528), which was translated into English under the title *The Book of the Courtier* (hereafter *The Courtier*).⁵² Even before Castiglione’s publication, treatises on the behaviour demanded of young

⁴⁶ MAJOR, John M.: *Sir Thomas Elyot and Renaissance Humanism*, Lincoln 1964, pp. 39–40.

⁴⁷ NICHOLLS: *The Matter of Courtesy*, pp. 7–14.

⁴⁸ For example, Cicero’s *De Oratore* from 55 BC discusses the ideal speaker and how to become one. Thomas Aquinas wrote his *De regimine principum* in 1265. In English medieval literature, the ideal knight was promoted by Chaucer and Malory in their historical writings on English traditional knights. BURKE: *The Fortunes of the Courtier*, p. 17.

⁴⁹ Authors such as Mary Partridge and Norbert Elias have stressed that it was a pan-European phenomenon which has to be viewed in relation to the emergence of the early modern aristocracy. PARTRIDGE, Mary: *“Images of the Courtier in Elizabethan England”*, PhD Thesis, Birmingham: University of Birmingham 2008, p. 5; ELIAS: *Die höfische Gesellschaft*, pp. 115–134.

⁵⁰ SCHRINNER, Walter: *“Castiglione und die englische Renaissance”*, Berlin: Universität Breslau 1939, pp. 14–15. Cf. RICHARDS, Jennifer (Ed.): *Early Modern Civil Discourses*, Basingstoke, New York 2003.

⁵¹ The connections between England and the courts in Europe in the 16th century are analysed by several contributions in CHANEY, Edward and Peter MACK (Ed.): *England and the Continental Renaissance. Essays in Honour of J.B. Trapp*, Woodbridge 1990. An expression by Edward Hall from 1542 indicates that when Englishmen came home from their travels, they were “French in eating and drinking and apparel [...]” COOPER, Nicholas: *Houses of the Gentry. 1480 - 1680*, London 1999, p. 20.

⁵² STARKEY, David: *“The Court. Castiglione’s Ideal and Tudor Reality”*, in: *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 45 (1982), pp. 232–239. To avoid confusion, and because it analyses the English translation, this book proceeds to address Castiglione’s book as *The Courtier*.

noblemen were present in noble European households.⁵³ However, due to the state of the courtier's reputation, Castiglione's treatise had its fingers on the pulse of its time.⁵⁴ According to Mary Partridge, the reputation of "court acolytes in western Europe was consistently low throughout the classical and medieval periods."⁵⁵ As a stately figure, the general courtier had a negative reputation as a sloth and a pure beneficiary of favouritism, which effectively made him a target of disdain.⁵⁶ In this regard, Castiglione's dialogue was novel for proposing that courtiers could influence public affairs and stressing the importance of their role in the state. In the apparatus of the monarchy, courtiers had to legitimise themselves to be perceived as a truthful occupation that was not connected solely to wealth and self-indulgence.⁵⁷ At the same time, the shape of Castiglione's work, the dialogue, was not a novelty but a recourse to classical texts by Aristotle, Cicero, and many others.⁵⁸ In the case of *The Courtier*, this trope was deliberately situated in a courtly Renaissance setting. Most notably, there were more than two participants in the discussion, which made it more of a round table debate than a dialogue.⁵⁹

On all pages of *The Courtier*, the self-fashioning of the titular figure is the topic of discussion. Thus, *The Courtier* is an ideal source for studying the 16th-century courtly ideal. The book, which presented this topic to a broad audience, was immensely successful in European courts and recorded in the libraries of some of Europe's most significant monarchs and gentlemen.⁶⁰ Even before Elizabeth acceded the throne, the book had been widely read and adopted in England, though it was not until 1561 that Thomas Hoby (1530–1566) published the first translation into English.⁶¹ Although Hoby's book was the first

⁵³ "These treatises - The Book of Courtesy, Stans Puer ad Mensam, Urbanitatis, The Babees Book, and so on - consist in the main of warning readers or listeners against sleeping, breaking wind, scratching, or spitting in the wrong place when seated at table." BURKE: *The Fortunes of the Courtier*, p. 17.

⁵⁴ PELTONEN, Markku: *Classical Humanism and Republicanism in English Political Thought, 1570-1640*, Cambridge 1995, p. 19.

⁵⁵ PARTRIDGE: "Images of the Courtier", p. 3.

⁵⁶ IBID., pp. 130–183.

⁵⁷ IBID., pp. 3–4. For an analysis of Castiglione's text regarding the courtier as a statesman, see ALBURY, W.R.: *Castiglione's Allegory. Veiled Policy in The Book of the Courtier (1528)*, Farnham 2014, pp. 159–190.

⁵⁸ BURKE: *The Fortunes of the Courtier*, pp. 20–22.

⁵⁹ The book's setting is the palace of Duchess Elisabetta Gonzaga in Urbino. With her guests, the duchess discusses the concept of the courtier and his ideal qualities. The book is structured into four parts. The first and second parts address the ideal skills and behaviour of a courtier as well as the question of nobility, which was just one of the important socio-cultural questions of the time. The third part concerns the qualities of the courtly woman and her compulsory education and behaviour. In the fourth and last part, the speakers debate the relationship between the courtier and his sovereign as well as his role and duties in the monarchic system.

⁶⁰ BURKE: *The Fortunes of the Courtier*, pp. 139–157. Queen Mary of Scotland read *The Courtier*, as did Charles V, Francois I, Erik XIV of Sweden, Christian, the Prince of Denmark, and Rudolf II, which shows its wide distribution throughout Europe.

⁶¹ Raymond Waddington has investigated why, out of all of the Italian courtesy books, *The Cortegiano* was especially successful in England. He has noted Castiglione's connection to the Order of the Garter as a

‘Englished’ edition of *The Courtier*, it was not the country’s first book on this subject. In 1531, three years after Castiglione’s treatise was first printed in Italy, the courtier Thomas Elyot (1490–1546) published a distinctive English book on the education of the ideal statesman called *The Boke named the Governour* (hereafter *The Governour*). Elyot had been in the service of Elizabeth’s father, Henry VIII, when he wrote about the educational standards for “the childe of a gentilman, which is to haue authoritie in a publike weale”.⁶² In the second half of the 16th century, a different approach to the courtier and how he could be of value to his state was described by Roger Ascham (1515–1568) in his book *The Schoolmaster* (1568). This text presents a dialogue amongst a circle of well-read men who discuss the form of education and “good learning” for youth and noblemen.⁶³ *The Governour* and *The Schoolmaster* must both be seen within the broader climate emerging around *The Courtier*, which prompted discussions of what the ideal courtier should be like across the European continent.⁶⁴

Besides the three titles mentioned here, many other treatises about courtliness were written and translated into English during Elizabethan times.⁶⁵ However, these three books are especially interesting for a study of William Cecil’s and Christopher Hatton’s self-fashioning. Castiglione’s *The Courtier* in particular was one of the most-read courtesy books of the Elizabethan era, and W.O. Hassal has reported that Hatton owned an edition

possible explanation. WADDINGTON, Raymond B.: “*Elizabeth I and the Order of the Garter*”, in: *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 24/1 (1993), pp. 97–113, pp. 104–105. A Latin translation of the book was published in England by Bartholomew Clerke in 1571. PARTRIDGE: “*Images of the Courtier*”, p. 40. Peter Burke has elaborated on the topic of translation in BURKE: *The Fortunes of the Courtier*, pp. 55–80. The impact and development of Hoby’s translation has been further described by PARTRIDGE, Mary: “*Thomas Hoby’s English Translation of Castiglione’s ‘Book of the Courtier’*”, in: *The Historical Journal* 50/4 (2007), pp. 769–786. The reception of Castiglione’s book during the Renaissance and beyond has recently been analysed by PAULICELLI, Eugenia: “*The Book of the Courtier*”, in: PAULICELLI, Eugenia: *Writing Fashion in Early Modern Italy*, Farnham 2014, pp. 51–76.

⁶² ELYOT, Thomas: *The Boke Named The Governour*, London 1907 (1531), p. 18. For more on Elyot and his life, see LEHMBERG, Stanford: *Sir Thomas Elyot. Tudor Humanist*, Austin 1960, pp. 3–21. Of course, one can draw a connection between the emergence of *The Governour* and *The Cortegiano*, but it is not the topic of this book. For an in-depth comparison of the two books, see MAJOR: *Sir Thomas Elyot*, pp. 60–65. KENNEDY, Teresa: *Elyot, Castiglione, and the Problem of Style*, New York 1996, pp. 1–3.

⁶³ For more on Ascham and *The Schoolmaster*, see STROZIER, Robert M.: “*Theory and Structure in Roger Ascham’s The Schoolmaster*”, in: *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen* 74/1 (1973), pp. 144–162; SALAMON, Linda Bradley: “*The Imagery of Roger Ascham*”, in: *Texas Studies in Literature and Language* 15/1 (1973), pp. 5–23.

⁶⁴ BURKE: *The Fortunes of the Courtier*, p. 84.

⁶⁵ For example, *The Court of Civil Courtesy* (1578) by Simon Robson and John Keper’s translation of Annibale Romei’s *The Courtier’s Academie* (1598) were published, amongst many others. Additionally, literary adaptations of the ideal courtier and his opposite, the lying flatterer, were written by authors such as Edmund Spenser in *Mother Hubbard’s Tale* (1579) and John Lyly in two books about *Euphues* (1578–1580). For more information about the rise of discourses on civility in the 16th century, see RICHARDS (Ed.): *Early Modern Civil Discourses*; and SCHRINNER: “*Castiglione und die englische Renaissance*”, pp. 76–127.

of it, which was probably the French translation.⁶⁶ While it has not been proven that Cecil possessed Castiglione's book, he may be connected to it through his network and family. Castiglione's English translator, Thomas Hoby, was not only a recurring guest at Cecil's house but also his relative, as Hoby's wife Elizabeth was the sister of Cecil's wife.⁶⁷ This connection has been further strengthened by Mary Partridge's discovery that the printer of Hoby's translation, William Seres, was a household servant of Cecil's.⁶⁸ Moreover, the author of *The Schoolmaster*, Roger Ascham, became acquainted with Cecil as a fellow student at Cambridge, and Cecil is known to have patronised his work.⁶⁹ Meanwhile, Ascham is known to have read Castiglione's work and even advised readers of *The Schoolmaster* to read Castiglione's book, as it "would do a yong ientleman more good, [...], then three years trauell abrode in Italie."⁷⁰

The Schoolmaster represents a treatise about courtiers from inside the courtly circles, and it describes new possibilities to climb the social ladder thanks to a wide range of education. The importance of education had previously been stressed in the oldest of these treatises, *The Governour*, an English work by Thomas Elyot which was widely read when Hatton and Cecil first became active in the Elizabethan court. Therefore, Elyot's book can be considered the basis of the English-speaking adaptation of the courtier as a concept.⁷¹ Together, *The Governour*, *The Schoolmaster*, and *The Courtier* provide insight into the structures of the Elizabethan court in which courtiers, such as Cecil and Hatton, had to act.⁷²

⁶⁶ HASSALL, W. O.: "The Books of Sir Christopher Hatton at Holkham", in: *The Library* 5/1 (1950), pp. 1–13. See also BURKE: *The Fortunes of the Courtier*, pp. 4–9. However, it was not the only book. In her work on the Earl of Leicester, Elizabeth Goldring has discovered that Robert Dudley, Hatton, Cecil, and John Dee each had a copy of Giovo's *Elogia Veris Clarorum Virorum Imaginibus Apposita*, which was published in 1546. GOLDRING: *Robert Dudley*, p. 196

⁶⁷ ALFORD, Stephen: *Burghley. William Cecil at the Court of Elizabeth I*, New Haven, London 2008, p. 145, p. 229; PARTRIDGE: "Images of the Courtier", pp. 43–44; BURKE: *The Fortunes of the Courtier*, p. 163.

⁶⁸ For more on Hoby and his connection to Cecil and the royal court, see PARTRIDGE: "Thomas Hoby's English Translation", pp. 782–785; SICCA, Cinzia Maria: "The Courtier's Image. The Tomb Effigy of Thomas Hoby", in: ZIKOS, Dimitrios (Ed.): *Marks of Identity. New Perspectives on Sixteenth-Century Italian Sculpture*, Boston 2012, pp. 156–169.

⁶⁹ ALFORD: *Burghley*, pp. 22–23.

⁷⁰ ASCHAM, Roger: *The Scholemaster. Or Plaine and Perfite Way of Teachyng Children*, Chippenham 1994 (1570), fol. 20v–21r. Ascham further praises Hoby's translation of Castiglione and his own learned mind.

⁷¹ *The Boke Governour* was at least reprinted three times during Elizabeth's reign, next to Elyot's other books. LEHMBERG: *Sir Thomas Elyot. Tudor Humanist*, p. 36 and 197–198. KENNEDY: *Elyot, Castiglione, and the Problem of Style*, p. 37.

⁷² Regarding the terminology of this study, the terms 'courtier', 'statesman', 'noble man', and 'gentleman' are used interchangeably to describe the ideal of the courtier. This usage is based on an interwoven understanding of the courtier, which, as shown in this text, connects a statesman and a man of a noble family. For Castiglione, Thomas Hoby's translation is the source employed here for vocabularies. While some terms require a return to the Italian original, Hoby's book provides the possibility to consistently use the English language for the sake of legibility. At the same time, it should be kept in mind that the work of Castiglione and other continental treatises were read by the English courtiers in their native language. BURKE: *The*

The ideal courtier: A puzzle with many parts

In order to be understood and received by 16th-century authors and their audience, a courtier had to ‘frame himself’ with many things simultaneously.⁷³ These “vertues”, as Elyot calls them, were like different pieces of a puzzle.⁷⁴ First, the treatises describe a certain outward appearance that was desired of courtiers. In *The Courtier*, one of the speakers, Count Lewis, emphasises that a courtier ought not to be of a size that creates “a certaine spitefull wonder”.⁷⁵ Ideally, he would be average in height — not too short and not too tall. Furthermore, he should be “of good shape, and well proportioned in his lims, and to shew strength, lightnesse and quicknesse” and move gracefully.⁷⁶ The speakers admit that this grace does not always come naturally, so “shall our Courtier steale his grace from them that to his seeming have it.”⁷⁷ The importance of pleasing looks and apparel, as well as their public demonstration, is also stressed by Elyot.⁷⁸ More precisely, Elyot declares that the reward for a courtier’s virtue lies in the estimation of people, which is above all perceived by “excellencie in vesture”.⁷⁹ The manner in which a courtier should dress is also detailed in *The Courtier*, which prescribes that his choice of clothes should reflect modesty, and he should choose a robe that does not undermine his effort to avoid attracting too much attention. Accordingly, dark colours, such as black, were deemed ideal colours for a courtier to wear.⁸⁰

Nevertheless, a courtier’s outward appearance was not the only area in which he should concentrate his efforts. In Ascham’s *The Schoolmaster*, the author condemns the tendency

Fortunes of the Courtier, p. 18. The difficulties of the exact translation of Hoby with Castiglione have been written about by SCHRINNER: “*Castiglione und die englische Renaissance*”, pp. 89–103.

⁷³ The expression “frame himself” is used by Hoby and can be understood in a similar context as self-fashioning. Since the term “self-fashioning” is already an established term in Renaissance research, I continue to use it here, but I use Hoby’s own term in the quotations.

⁷⁴ ELYOT: *The Governour*, p. 20. For a discussion of the term ‘values’, which is not the same as morals, see BURKE: *The Fortunes of the Courtier*, pp. 8–9. The image of the desired courtier and statesman is closely related to the chivalric knight-warrior from medieval literature. FERGUSON, John: *Bibliographical Notes on Histories of Inventions and Books of Secrets*, London 1959.

⁷⁵ CASTIGLIONE, Baldassare: *The Book of the Courtier. Translated by Thomas Hoby*, ed. by J.H. WHITFIELD, transl. by Thomas HOBY, London 1974 (1561), p. 39.

⁷⁶ IBID., p. 40, p. 43.

⁷⁷ IBID., p. 45.

⁷⁸ “Lette it be also considered that we be men and nat aungels, wherefore we knowe nothinge but by outwarde significations.” ELYOT: *The Governour*, p. 200.

⁷⁹ According to Elyot, the “laudable report” is another possibility, albeit “not so common a token as apparayle.” IBID.

⁸⁰ CASTIGLIONE: *The Courtier*, pp. 106–110; CRANE, Mary: *Framing Authority. Sayings, Self, and Society in Sixteenth Century England*, Princeton 1993, p. 114; KUTCHA, David: *The Three-Piece Suit and Modern Masculinity*, Berkley, Los Angeles, London 2002.

to use physical appearance as a category when determining a child's career path.⁸¹ He laments that, as an educator, he had witnessed many cases where a child who did not meet physical standards was seen as “the worst” of the children and considered only good enough to become a scholar. To counter this tendency, Ascham argues that a well-built body can only be improved by an earnest education.⁸²

With respect to the abilities that a courtier should acquire, such skills can be divided into physical activities and intellectual abilities. Skills in both categories were required, and the courtier was expected to exercise all of them. The first and probably most important physical skill was the ability to handle weapons on a horse and on the ground.⁸³ This skill, as specified in *The Courtier*, also implied the need to be “a perfect horseman for everie saddle.”⁸⁴ A courtier should spend his time hunting, which was understood to have “a certaine likenesse with warre” and playing tennis, as both activities were considered “fit for one living in court.”⁸⁵ Elyot also mentions “swimming”, “ryding”, and “huntyng”.⁸⁶ He further judges “wrastlynge” as “a good exercise in the beginning of youthe.”⁸⁷ Ascham provides a similar list of skills which are “very necessarie for a Courtlie Ientleman to vse.”⁸⁸ Looking at these physical activities, it becomes clear that they resemble knightly qualities and skills. Like a knight, a courtier should be able to fight in war — not out of any actual need to become a soldier on the battlefield but rather to participate in the established traditions of the court and train in the customary noble sports. In some way, an early modern courtier still had to be a knight, but he was also expected to be a man of letters.⁸⁹

To demonstrate his intellectual abilities, the courtier was required to know how to write and how to speak. *The Courtier* states that he should “avoide curiosity” in both his use of language and his appearance, and he should know how to find the right words in his own

⁸¹ “For, if a father haue foure sonnes, three fair and well formed both mynde and bodie, the fourth, wretched, lame, and deformed, his choice shalbe to put the worst to learning, as one good enough to becum a scholar.” ASCHAM: *The Scholemaster*, fol. 8r.

⁸² “And how can a cumlie bodie be better employed, than to serue the fairest exercise of Goddes greatest gifte, and that is learning.” IBID. SCHRINNER: “*Castiglione und die englische Renaissance*”, p. 52.

⁸³ While appearing to be a purely physical exercise, it is stressed that “the practising of armes belongeth as well to the minde as to the bodie.” CASTIGLIONE: *The Courtier*, p. 73.

⁸⁴ IBID., p. 41.

⁸⁵ IBID., p. 43.

⁸⁶ ELYOT: *The Governour*, pp. 75–79.

⁸⁷ IBID., p. 73.

⁸⁸ “Therefore, to ride cumlie: to run faire at the tilte or ring: to plaie at all weapons: to shote faire in bow, or surelie in gon: to vout lustily: to runne: to leape: to wrestle: two swimme: [...] to hawke: to hunte: to playe at tennes [...]” ASCHAM: *The Scholemaster*, fol. 19v–20r. Partridge has shown that the same qualifications were cited in the dialogue *Of cyuile and vncyuile life*. PARTRIDGE: “*Images of the Courtier*”, p. 89.

⁸⁹ SCHRINNER: “*Castiglione und die englische Renaissance*”, p. 51.

language as well as in “sundry tongues”.⁹⁰ Italian, Latin, and Greek were of particular importance since a courtier had to be well versed “in those studies, which they call Humantie”.⁹¹ This knowledge of diverse languages should also be accompanied by a knowledge of literature. The ideal courtier should study poets, orators, and historiographers and be able to write rhymes and prose himself.⁹² Ascham advises the children to read Plato and Socrates, while Elyot specifically mentions Homer, Virgile, Aristeus, and Cicero.⁹³ Besides the study of poetry, *The Courtier* demands that the ideal statesman be well versed in music to such a degree that he can present music flawlessly.⁹⁴ It identifies the lute as a suitable instrument for a courtier because one can sing while playing it. Instruments with threads are deemed befitting in general “because the tunes of them are very perfect [and are full of harmony]”.⁹⁵ However, it is noted that the practice of musical skill should be limited to diversion or amusement and not pursued as an earnest career.⁹⁶ In *The Governour*, Elyot recommends that young gentlemen learn music and singing, but he warns against spending too much time on these activities.⁹⁷

The main reason for restricting this musical education relates to a courtier’s purpose and primary profession.⁹⁸ In *The Scholemaster*, Ascham addresses the importance of a courtier’s work: “You be indeed, makers or marrer, of all mens maners within the Realm. [...] you carie all the Courte with yow, and the whole Realme beside, earnestlie and orderlie to do the same.”⁹⁹ The ideal courtier would nurture his talents to be of service to the monarch so that the monarch can govern the country wisely. For Elyot, the above-

⁹⁰ CASTIGLIONE: *The Courtier*, p. 49, pp. 52–56.

⁹¹ IBID., p. 71. Elyot says that “[...] there can be nothing more conuenient than by little and little to trayne and exercise them in speaking of latyne.” ELYOT: *The Governour*, p. 21. Ascham also stresses the importance of the “knowledge if strange and diuerse tonges, and namelie the Italian tonge”, next to “the Greek and Latin tonge [...]”. ASCHAM: *The Scholemaster*, fol. 21v. This topic has been further addressed in HISCOCK, Andrew: “‘*englishing the Italian Ariost*’. *The Orlando Furioso Among the Elizabethans - Adaptation and Audience*”, in: EVERSON, Jane, Andrew HISCOCK and Stefano JOSSA (Ed.): *Ariosto, The Orlando Furioso and English Culture*, Oxford 2019, pp. 91–114; LAZARUS, Micha: “*Greek Literacy in 16th Century England*”, in: *Renaissance Studies* 29/3 (2015), pp. 433–458; Cf. RHODES: *Common. The Development of Literary Culture in Sixteenth-Century England*.

⁹² CASTIGLIONE: *The Courtier*, p. 71.

⁹³ ASCHAM: *The Scholemaster*, fol. 10r; ELYOT: *The Governour*, pp. 37–43. For an analysis of *The Courtier* in the context of “pastimes” and leisure, see BURKE, Peter: “*The Invention of Leisure in Early Modern Europe*”, in: *Past & Present* 146 (1995), pp. 136–150.

⁹⁴ CASTIGLIONE: *The Courtier*, p. 49.

⁹⁵ IBID., p. 101.

⁹⁶ IBID., p. 100.

⁹⁷ “But in this commendation of musike I wold nat be thought to allure noble men to haue so mache delectation therin, that, in playing and singynge only, they shulde put their hall studie and fecilite.” ELYOT: *The Governour*, p. 26; MAJOR: *Sir Thomas Elyot*, p. 63.

⁹⁸ LEHMBERG: *Tudor Humanist*, p. 62.

⁹⁹ ASCHAM: *The Scholemaster*, fol. 21v.

mentioned skills in language, literature, and the art of speaking were foundational for a courtier to be ideally suited to his intended function in the government.¹⁰⁰ Knowledge of rhetoric and law was also required to fulfil this duty in the best possible way.¹⁰¹

Similarly, *The Courtier* suggests that the purpose of a courtier's existence is to be a servant of the state.¹⁰² Of particular importance is how a courtier behaves in relation to his master, the prince. With his broad knowledge, a courtier must serve the sovereign, provide wisdom, and make use of the various abilities mentioned above. Physical exercise, humanistic learning, and music would support the courtier's courtliness, but, even more, be "helping of the prince to goodnesse, and the fearing him from evil, the fruite of it."¹⁰³ Still, a crucial distinction is made between the importance of the different skills and on which skills a courtier should concentrate. Unskillfulness in music and riding "hurteth no man", but from an unskillfulness "to governe people arise so many evils, deathes, destructions, [...] that it may be called the deadliest plague upon earth."¹⁰⁴ Thus, a courtier was expected to know his position and the obligations of his status. Since obedience to god and unquestioned loyalty to the crown were mandatory, courtiers in Elizabethan England had to be devoted to her majesty the queen.¹⁰⁵

In addition to the desired appearance and physical and intellectual skills, a courtier had to exhibit certain behavioural qualities, such as gentleness, modesty, and patience.¹⁰⁶ The adoption of these behavioural ideals by Elizabethan courtiers can be seen in William Cecil's advice to his son Robert in his *Precepts*, where he tells his heir to "be humble yet generous"

¹⁰⁰ "It is also to be remembered that in the lernyng of the lawes of this realme, there is at this daye an exercise, wherin is a maner, a shadowe, or figure of the auncient rhetorike." ELYOT: *The Governour*, p. 65.

¹⁰¹ CRANE: *Framing Authority*, p. 105. This clear definition of the courtier's duty can be seen as a development from a previous conflict between the scholar type of courtier and the soldier. WAGNER, Ann: "Idleness and the Ideal of the Gentlemen", in: *History of Education Quarterly* 25/1 (1985), pp. 41–55, p. 43. His true role is one of an adviser and servant to the monarch. BURKE: *The Fortunes of the Courtier*, pp. 115–116; BAUMLIN, James: "Ciceronian Decorum and the Temporalities of Renaissance Rhetoric", in: SIPIORA, Phillip and James BAUMLIN (Ed.): *Rhetorics and Kairos. Essays in History, Theory, and Praxis*, Albany 2002, pp. 138–168, p. 145. Frank Wigham's *Ambition and Privilege* demonstrates that the concept of courtiership was closely linked to rhetoric and the usage of a certain vocabulary. WIGHAM, Frank: *Ambition and Privilege. The Social Tropes of Elizabethan Courtesy Literature*, Berkeley 1984.

¹⁰² "[Let the Courtier] bee well spoken, and in discourses upon states, wise and expert and have such a judgement that he may frame himself to the manners of the Countrey where ever hee commeth." CASTIGLIONE: *The Courtier*, p. 111.

¹⁰³ IBID., p. 261.

¹⁰⁴ IBID., p. 264.

¹⁰⁵ PARTRIDGE: "Images of the Courtier", p. 101.

¹⁰⁶ CASTIGLIONE: *The Courtier*, pp. 106–110; ELYOT: *The Governour*, p. 232. More on the desired character traits in Castiglione's Italian *Il Cortegiano* has been discussed by BURKE: *The Fortunes of the Courtier*, p. 29.

towards his superiors and to behave respectfully and honourably towards those of equal or lesser status.¹⁰⁷

The Italian original version of Castiglione's *The Courtier* states that the quintessence of courtly qualities is a certain degree of "sprezzatura", which has proven to be a difficult word to translate into English.¹⁰⁸ In his 2002 translation of Castiglione's book, Daniel Javitch translates the term as "nonchalance", which suggests a desired "effortlessness" combined with "gracefulness".¹⁰⁹ However, the term "nonchalance" is not used in Hoby's translation, which instead describes "sprezzatura" as "to use in every thing a certaine disgracing to cover arte withall, and seeme whatsoever he doth and saith, to doe it without paine [...]".¹¹⁰ This concept of showing an effortlessness to the outside world while still being trained in various skills and fields of learning defines the framework in which Elizabethan courtiers, such as William Cecil and Christopher Hatton, fashioned themselves. In this social context, the individual behaviour is seen against the background of the courtly discourse, which built the network of ceremonies, buildings, and paintings in the Elizabethan society. Necessarily, this network involved an audience that understood the courtly discourse and could appreciate its use. Hence, the ideal of the courtier was naturally a concept that was made to be seen and perceived. A courtier who presented himself according to these rules would need to have an audience that was learned enough to recognise and appreciate such courtly behaviour. The self-fashioning of a courtier can thus be perceived as a double-sided process which presupposes an ideal as much as an audience. Having defined the most crucial qualities of a courtier in the 16th century, it is worth noting that this "holistic" image of the ideal courtier as an "uomo universal" was widely understood to be unreachable.¹¹¹ Rather than speaking of the 'perfect courtier', various categories were established in the 16th and 17th centuries to describe the kinds of courtly

¹⁰⁷ CECIL, William: "Certain Precepts for the Well Ordering of a Man's Life", in: WRIGHT, Louis (Ed.): *Advice to a Son. Precepts of Lord Burghley, Sir Walter Raleigh, and Francis Osborne*, Ithaca (NY) 1962, pp. 7–14, pp. 12–13; JONES, Norman: *Being Elizabethan. Understanding Shakespeare's Neighbors*, Hoboken 2020, p. 82.

¹⁰⁸ CRANE: *Framing Authority*, p. 106; RICHARDS (Ed.): *Early Modern Civil Discourses*, p. 461; SCHRINNER: "Castiglione und die englische Renaissance", pp. 22–23. Mary Partridge has called Castiglione's "sprezzatura" a science and has defined it in contrast to Cicero's "geniality". PARTRIDGE, Mary: "Lord Burghley and Il Cortegiano. Civil and Martial Models of Courtliness in Elizabethan England", in: *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society 19* (2009), pp. 95–116, pp. 96–98. See also PARTRIDGE: "Images of the Courtier", p. 32. PEACOCK: *Picturing Courtiers*, pp. 40–42.

¹⁰⁹ CASTIGLIONE, Baldassare: *The Book of the Courtier*, transl. by Daniel JAVITCH, London, New York 2002, p. 32.

¹¹⁰ CASTIGLIONE: *The Courtier*, p. 46.

¹¹¹ SCHRINNER: "Castiglione und die englische Renaissance", p. 75. See also PARTRIDGE: "Images of the Courtier", pp. 93–97, pp. 118–119.

men in English society. Robert Naunton (1563–1635), for example, describes these categories in his *Fragmenta Regalia, or observations on the late Queen Elizabeth, her times and Favorites* (1641). He defines three basic types of men surrounding the queen: “Togati, Militiae, and courtiers”, respectively referring to politicians or scholars, soldiers, and those who merely existed in the court without adding value.¹¹² As shown in Chapters 2 and 3, neither William Cecil nor Christopher Hatton was an expert in all of the demanded fields. Rather, each man represented a different form of courtier-specialist who used the discourse of the ideal statesman to display their distinct qualities. While Cecil was fashioned as a well-educated man of his office, Hatton’s role was mainly seen in connection with his skill in dancing, another key ability of courtiers with special significance in the Elizabethan court.

Dancing as participation in courtly ceremonies

Like music, dancing is counted amongst the “pastimes” of the courtier by Thomas Elyot, alongside other social activities, such as “playing cardes tables” and “the chess”.¹¹³ Yet, unlike these activities, dancing was ultimately linked to an understanding of the Elizabethan courtly society, so it presented a valuable opportunity for self-fashioning by courtiers. In the context of ceremonies and participation in court, dancing was one of the most important skills to have.¹¹⁴ Through dancing, a courtier could become an actor within the courtly cosmos and fashion himself according to the discourse of the ideal courtly servant. As Chapter 3 indicates, this mode of self-fashioning was used by Christopher Hatton to gain favour and a good reputation in the court. First, however, the meaning and development of dancing as a courtly practice deserves closer examination.

At the beginning of the 16th century, the appreciation for dancing in Europe was still accompanied by an ambivalent understanding of it as a practice. On the one hand, the Christian tradition associated dancing with the sexual tribes of men and regarded it as a

¹¹² Naunton called Cecil a member of the Togati, while Hatton was part of the courtiers. NAUNTON, Robert: *Fragmenta Regalia. Observations on Queen Elizabeth, Her Times & Favorites*, ed. by John CEROVSKI, London 1985 (1641), p. 27, pp. 53–55. Naunton’s judgements should be viewed with a healthy dose of criticism since they were motivated by personal animosities. Naunton was a friend of John Perrot, whom he called “a brave Courtier”, but was said to be the arch enemy of Hatton. BROOKS, Eric St John: *Sir Christopher Hatton. Queen Elizabeth’s Favourite*, London 1847, p. 15. More information on the critical reception of the courtier concept in Italy is given in UGOLINI, Paola: *The Court and Its Critics. Anti-Court Sentiments in Early Modern Italy*, Toronto 2020.

¹¹³ ELYOT: *The Governour*, p. 111.

¹¹⁴ MCGOWAN, Margaret: *Dance in the Renaissance. European Fashion, French Obsession*, New Haven, London 2008, pp. 16–17.

sin.¹¹⁵ On the other hand, dancing became one of the most popular *divertissements* and was highly theorised in European courts. With its strict sequences of steps and movements, dancing could be used as a ceremonial exercise in which the choreography imitated the social order.¹¹⁶ In contrast to unbridled peasant dances, courtly dances were considered regulated, sophisticated, and therefore noble.¹¹⁷ This theoretical and even scientific approach to dancing was further connected to the apparatus of royal propaganda. Regarding the French court in Paris, Ivana Rentsch has argued that dance had a tangible political dimension because it was instrumentalised for the absolutistic regime. Dance, especially the *Balet comique de la royne*, visualised the hierarchical structures in the court by mirroring the differences of rank in the choreography.¹¹⁸ This development was not unique to France, however, as it had been adapted from Italy and later transported to England as the modern ideal of dancing.¹¹⁹

In England, the first dancing instructions were translated from a French book and printed in *The maner of dauncyng of bace dauces after the use of France* (1521) by Robert Coplande.¹²⁰ This guide to dancing the *basse*, an internationally popular dance in the first half of the 16th century, was appended to a little book describing how to speak and write in French.¹²¹ This aspect already hints at the didactic function of group dances in the context of the wider European society. Dancing was not only a way to broaden the cultural horizon but also a pleasurable training to maintain good health. As an exercise, it could help transfer inner harmony to the outside of the human body, which, as shown, was ideally of equal proportions and a pleasing shape.¹²² Furthermore, for courtiers, dancing was an opportunity

¹¹⁵ BRISSENDEN, Alan: *Shakespeare and the Dance*, New Jersey 1981, pp. 12–14; BRAUN, Rudolf and David GUGERLI: *Macht des Tanzes - Tanz der Mächtigen. Hoffesste und Herrschaftszeremoniell 1550-1914*, München 1993, p. 11.

¹¹⁶ RENTSCH, Ivana: “*Divertissement und Sitten-Lehre. Zur gesellschaftlichen Funktion des Tanzes im 17. und frühen 18. Jahrhundert*”, in: *Hudebni veda 45/1* (2008), pp. 25–44, p. 26; NEVILE, Jennifer: “*Decorum and Desire. Dance in Renaissance Europe and the Maturation of a Discipline*”, in: *Renaissance Quarterly* 68/2 (2015), pp. 597–612, p. 601.

¹¹⁷ RENTSCH, Ivana: *Die Höflichkeit musikalischer Form. Tänzerische und anthropologische Grundlagen der frühen Instrumentalmusik*, Kassel 2012, p. 137.

¹¹⁸ *IBID.*, p. 46. The function of dancing in France has also been analysed by MCGOWAN: *Dance in the Renaissance*.

¹¹⁹ RENTSCH: *Die Höflichkeit musikalischer Form*, p. 49; MCGOWAN: *Dance in the Renaissance*, pp. 3–7; MCGOWAN, Margaret: “*Space for Dancing. Accommodating Performer and Spectator in Renaissance France*”, in: MULRYNE, J.R. et al. (Ed.): *Occasions of State. Early Modern European Festivals and the Negotiation of Power*, London 2019, pp. 143–166, p. 161.

¹²⁰ BRISSENDEN: *Shakespeare and the Dance*, p. 9. For more information on the *basse* dance, see MCGOWAN: *Dance in the Renaissance*, pp. 94–95.

¹²¹ BRISSENDEN: *Shakespeare and the Dance*, p. 9.

¹²² For more information on the connection of the inner and outer body of the dancing courtier, see RENTSCH, Ivana: “*Der adlige Tänzer. Soziale Norm und musikalische Form im 17. Jahrhundert*”, in: SITTIG, Claudius

to participate in official courtly activities. During Elizabeth's reign, dancing was highly prevalent in noble ceremonies. The queen herself was even known to dance in the morning for exercise, and she favoured dance as entertainment at the court.¹²³ Consequently, it was crucial for her courtiers to be equally knowledgeable about the different dances and able to perform at least some of them. The 1570s witnessed an enormous rise in the number of classes taken from individual dancing teachers in London, which reflects how the courtly society recognised a need to be well educated in this skill.¹²⁴ In 1574, Elizabeth even appointed official dancing teachers to ensure the quality of lessons available to her courtiers.¹²⁵

With this information in mind, it is not surprising that the courtesy books of the time identify dancing as an essential exercise for the ideal man of state to know. Ascham names the skill to “daunce cumlie” in his list of activities for future governors to learn.¹²⁶ For Castiglione, a courtier should not dance too energetically in public, as visibly sweating would betray the appearance of effortless.¹²⁷ However, in private, he should train and educate himself in dancing to learn how to do “every thing that hee doth [...] with a grace.”¹²⁸ Additionally, *The Courtier* mentions dancing alongside a knowledge of music, and it is one skill that receives a nearly mathematical description: “[...] in dauncing, one measure, one motion of a bodie that hath good grace, not being forced, doth by and by declare knowledge of him that daunceth.”¹²⁹ While this quote primarily discusses the importance of sprezzatura — the ideal that the courtier should be effortless in all that he does — it also introduces an understanding of dance as a metaphor for courtly harmony.

In *The Governour*, Thomas Elyot presents what has been called “the longest discussion printed during the 16th century in England”.¹³⁰ According to Elyot, dancing serves a health-related function of invigorating the body and mind. Still, it could also be used to practise a

and Christian WIELAND (Ed.): *Die “Kunst des Adels” in der Frühen Neuzeit*, Wiesbaden 2018, pp. 275–290, pp. 275–277.

¹²³ BRISSENDEN: *Shakespeare and the Dance*, pp. 5–6.

¹²⁴ IBID., p. 10. For more information on the rising popularity of dancing, see MCGOWAN: *Dance in the Renaissance*, pp. 17–19.

¹²⁵ BRAUN/GUGERLI: *Macht des Tanzes*, p. 19.

¹²⁶ ASCHAM: *The Scholemaster*, fol. 19r.

¹²⁷ BRISSENDEN: *Shakespeare and the Dance*, pp. 7–9.

¹²⁸ CASTIGLIONE: *The Courtier*, p. 42; BRISSENDEN: *Shakespeare and the Dance*, p. 10. For men, dancing was also a way to gain female approval. See MCGOWAN: *Dance in the Renaissance*, pp. 19–20.

¹²⁹ CASTIGLIONE: *The Courtier*, p. 46.

¹³⁰ BRISSENDEN: *Shakespeare and the Dance*, p. 8.

certain behaviour, thus supporting the teaching of societal values.¹³¹ In this sense, dancing could not only benefit the courtier's virtues but also satisfy a significant public function. In the Elizabethan court, dancing was an essential part of the ceremonial entertainment in which courtiers had to participate to fulfil their function and present themselves favourably. Hence, in the courtly context, performing dances was not a private matter but a public event in which the courtiers were observed and judged by the noble audience. On this basis, the dancing space can be regarded as a stage and element of Elizabethan visual culture.¹³²

For noblemen in the queen's court, one of the most important public opportunities to dance was the so-called court masque, which was an essential part of celebratory occasions. The court masque was a theatrical dancing festivity in which costumed members of the elite circle performed allegorical plays to honour the queen. At these events, a group of actors would stage a symbolically charged play, and they would invite the audience to join in during well-known dances.¹³³ Next to the entertainment function of such performances, the masques had the apparent theatrical purpose of providing a space to recite poems and create specific imageries that conveyed symbolic messages.¹³⁴ In doing so, they also fulfilled a calculated official function for the self-fashioning of courtiers who performed in the masques. As public spectacles, the masques allowed courtiers to demonstrate their noble abilities and their knowledge of literature, poetry, and dancing.¹³⁵ Moreover, they could take the opportunity to present topics of personal interest to them; for instance, a courtier could address the queen with a request for forgiveness, elevation, or even retirement by

¹³¹ Next to hunting and hawking, it was amongst those "exercises whiche be net utterly reprobod of noble actours, if they be used with opportunitie and in mease". ELYOT: *The Governour*, p. 79; BRISSENDEN: *Shakespeare and the Dance*, p. 8; MCGOWAN: "Space for Dancing", p. 56.

¹³² BRAUN/GUGERLI: *Macht des Tanzes*, p. 32. For a more detailed discussion of the term "visual culture" and how it applies to the spectator-maker culture of the Elizabethan court, see PORTER, Chloe: *Making and Unmaking in Early Modern English Drama. Spectators, Aesthetics and Incompletion*, Manchester 2013, pp. 18–28.

¹³³ BRAUN/GUGERLI: *Macht des Tanzes*, p. 35. In England, the masque enjoyed a long tradition and was further developed during the reign of the Stuarts in the 17th century. BUTLER, Martin: *The Stuart Court Masque and Political Culture*, Cambridge 2008; RAVELHOFER, Barbara: *The Early Stuart Masque. Dance, Costume, and Music*, Oxford 2006; ORGEL, Stephen: *The Jonsonian Masque*, Cambridge 1965; ORGEL, Stephen: "Antimasque", in: *Essays in Criticism 18/3*, pp. 310–321; ORGEL, Stephen: *The Illusion of Power. Political Theater in the English Renaissance*, Berkeley, Los Angeles 1975. For the Jacobean period, Christiane Hille has shown that the bodily presence in the act of courtly dancing and the performances in court masques can be viewed as a search to express the courtier's status at the court. Dancing, from this understanding, is an "aesthetic alternative in fashioning his personal image, which lay beyond that traditionally employed in the process of courtly myth-making". HILLE: *Visions of the Courtly Body*, p. 116.

¹³⁴ BRISSENDEN: *Shakespeare and the Dance*, p. 18; MCGOWAN: *Dance in the Renaissance*, p. 208.

¹³⁵ Ivana Rentsch has defined this function of social dancing in France from the 16th century onwards RENTSCH: "Divertissement und Sitten-Lehre", pp. 38–39. This has also been addressed by BRAUN/GUGERLI: *Macht des Tanzes*, pp. 35–37.

incorporating it into the story of the respective masque.¹³⁶ This was one reason why many courtiers patronised authors of masques or even wrote masques themselves.¹³⁷

On a larger scale in Elizabethan England, dancing was adapted as a practice that mirrored the courtly cosmos, therefore serving a special function.¹³⁸ In analogy to the hierarchical demonstrations through dancing in France, the dancing ideology in England was embedded into imagery of the order of the universe and the planets, in which a central role was reserved for the queen.¹³⁹ All subjects and celestial bodies were subordinate to queen Elizabeth since she was the head of the state and the church. This theoretical image is famously illustrated on the frontispiece of John Case's *Sphaera Civitatis* (1588). This book, which has been connected to Christopher Hatton, discusses the concepts of monarchy and political behaviour.¹⁴⁰ The print on the title page shows a portrait of Elizabeth I above a diagram of the Ptolemaic universe, ruling outside of this structured and God-given order.¹⁴¹ In this print, the different planets represent the traits of the ideal government, with justice in the middle.¹⁴² The design illustrates the link between dancing and planetary harmony to promote political order and stability. The planets, as the macrocosm, move through the universe in reference to each other, thus creating a "cosmic dance".¹⁴³ In this cosmic understanding, dancing within the microcosm of the court fulfils the function of a demonstrative performance of the social structure of Elizabethan society. The courtiers, like the planets, would dance around the all-mighty queen, who was powerful and life-

¹³⁶ This is further addressed in Chapter 2.

¹³⁷ As shown in a later chapter, Christopher Hatton himself co-wrote a masque called *The Tragedy of Tancred and Gismund*.

¹³⁸ BRAUN/GUGERLI: *Macht des Tanzes*, pp. 15–16.

¹³⁹ Penry Williams has famously called this central role of Elizabeth in her state "the central machine." WILLIAMS: *The Tudor Regime*, pp. 21–54; BRAUN/GUGERLI: *Macht des Tanzes*, p. 60.

¹⁴⁰ Case's book has been called "the fullest treatise on political thought to have been published in Elizabethan England". HUTTON, Sarah: "John Case", in: MALONE, Edward A. (Ed.): *British Rhetoricians and Logicians, 1500-1660*, Vol. 281, Farmington Hills 2003, pp. 26–35, p. 30. It is further discussed in Chapter 3

¹⁴¹ This Elizabethan world picture has been prominently described as "the great chain of being", by, for example, TILLYARD, E.M.W: *The Elizabethan World Picture*, London 1998, pp. 33–48.

¹⁴² BAILEY: "Salvatrix Mundi", p. 204; RENTSCH: *Die Höflichkeit musikalischer Form*, p. 103.

¹⁴³ TILLYARD: *The Elizabethan World Picture*, pp. 109–114; BRISSENDEN: *Shakespeare and the Dance*, p. 3. Elyot also expresses the relation between dancing and the planets when describing the beginning of dancing through an analogy with the emergence of the planetary system. ELYOT: *The Governour*, p. 87.

giving, like the sun.¹⁴⁴ This harmony expressed in the court dance was seen as opposing the chaotic forces that threatened this order.¹⁴⁵

In the Elizabethan discourse, dance was therefore an allegory for order and harmony.¹⁴⁶ Given this theoretical understanding, dancing was ultimately tied to the theory of music. As an almost mathematically regulated field, music followed a strict and tempered structure similar to that of dancing. The sound of the music and the movements of the body corresponded to eternal harmony in 16th-century beliefs.¹⁴⁷ In the microcosm of the Elizabethan court, they referred to the societal order, in which the queen was at the top. This imagery was discussed not only in prints and paintings, as shown in Part III, but also in various texts.

The best-known poem describing the Elizabethan understanding of dancing is *Orchestra* or *A Poem of Dancing*. This poem was written in 1594 by Sir John Davies, an Oxford scholar and lawyer, but was not published until 1596. In the poem, Davies tells the tale of Penelope, the wife of the Greek hero Ulysses, who waits for her husband to return after the Trojan War. When Antinous, one of her suitors, approaches her and asks her to dance, they engage in a dialogue about the function of dancing. This dialogue offers a prime textual presentation of the metaphorical and symbolic significance of dancing in Elizabethan society.¹⁴⁸ Dancing symbolised the orderly structure of the world and the heavens. Since all seven planets danced, all that is earthly did as well:

Dancing, bright lady, then began to be / When the first seeds whereof the world did spring, / The
fire air earth and water, did agree / By Love's persuasion, nature's mighty-king, / To leave their first

¹⁴⁴ “Thus, when the queen and her court danced they were exemplifying the harmony of the cosmic dance reproduced in the body politic. If the monarch was linked to the Sun her courtiers were as the planets.” DEACON, Malcolm: *The Courtier & The Queen. Sir Christopher Hatton and Elizabeth I*, Northampton 2008, p. 14.

¹⁴⁵ To date, the most substantial analysis of the Elizabethan instrumentalisation of dancing has been given by BRAUN/GUGERLI: *Macht des Tanzes*, pp. 15–56.

¹⁴⁶ The question of which dances were practised and performed in the Elizabethan court is of less importance here and is therefore not addressed. However, it is explained in detail in IBID., pp. 27–31; MCGOWAN: *Dance in the Renaissance*, pp. 91–122.

¹⁴⁷ This also explains why Castiglione mentions dancing and music together. RENTSCH: *Die Höflichkeit musikalischer Form*, pp. 133–139; Cf. LORENZETTI, Stefano: *Musica e identità nobiliare nell'Italia del rinascimento. Educazione, mentalità, immaginario*, Florenz 2003.

¹⁴⁸ Antinous describes dance as the younger twin brother of time and, furthermore, as the child of music and love. DAVIES, John: *Orchestra or a Poem of Dancing*, ed. by E.M.W TILLYARD, London 1947 (1594), p. 17–38, lines 23, 24, 38, and 96; BRAUN/GUGERLI: *Macht des Tanzes*, p. 33; BARDELMANN, Claire: *Eros and Music in Early Modern Culture and Literature*, New York 2018, p. 54; BRISSENDEN: *Shakespeare and the Dance*, pp. 3–4.

disorder's combating / And in a dance such measure to observe / As all the world their motion should preserve.¹⁴⁹

At the Elizabethan court, dancing united the different powers and structured them into a God-given harmonious existence as the ultimate form of order. Following the previously explained understanding of self-fashioning in this study, it is important to emphasise that courtiers were expected not only to have certain skills and abilities but also to publicly display them. While a courtier had to be modest, he should still demonstrate his courtly abilities, such as dancing, in a place and time that others would see in the public eye of the court. This public presentation of the courtier could be transferred to the topic of paintings and their position within Elizabethan society, and courtly portraits in particular could be theorised as fulfilling a similar function as the demonstration of noble manners and knowledge.

The “arte of painting”

In *The Courtier*, the “verie arte of painting” receives a dedicated discussion.¹⁵⁰ It is introduced as an aspect of such importance that “our Courtier ought in no wise to leave it out.”¹⁵¹ With respect to painting and drawing, the book addresses two sides of this skill: the courtier’s ability to paint or draw himself, and the need for the courtier to have sufficient general knowledge of the subject to converse about and evaluate beauty and proportions.¹⁵² However, the text frames a courtier’s education in painting as only a support for his courtly duties and noble ability to discuss objects of art, not as preparation for a serious profession: “[He should] never get other profit or delite in it (beside it is a helpe to him to judge of the excellencie of Images both olde and new [...]).”¹⁵³

¹⁴⁹ DAVIES: *Orchestra*, p. 19, line 17. Further see pp. 24-25, lines 37-41 and pp. 27-30, lines 49-61.

¹⁵⁰ In the treatises, it is sometimes hard to differentiate between the act of painting on the one hand and the knowledge of and ability to judge paintings on the other, as they are often mixed in the explanations.

¹⁵¹ CASTIGLIONE: *The Courtier*, p. 77.

¹⁵² “[...] it maketh him also understand the beautie of lively bodies, and not onely the sweetnesse of the Physiognomie, but in the proportion of all the rest, as well in men as other living creatures.” IBID., pp. 79-80, pp. 81-82. See also PEACOCK: *Picturing Courtiers*, p. 76.

¹⁵³ CASTIGLIONE: *The Courtier*, pp. 81-82. The significance of painting for the courtier is further addressed in a discussion that recreates the classical battle of the arts, the paragone of, ‘Which is of more importance — sculpture or painting?’ John Christopher Romano argues that, since carving requires more work, it is “of more arte, and of more dignitie than painting”. IBID., pp. 78-79. This is supported by the count’s argument that “images”, by which he means sculptures, are more durable, perhaps a man may say that they are of more dignitie.” He continues to elaborate on the function of both artforms: “For sith they are made for a memorie, [sculptures] better satisfie the the effect why they be made, than painting.” IBID., p. 79. However, these arguments are countered by the point that, since paintings are of colour, and sculptures are not, “painting is more noble, and containeth a greater workmanship than graving in marble.” IBID., p. 80.

Next to the aesthetically oriented function of painting, another didactic approach is presented by Thomas Elyot in *The Governour*, where he suggests using paintings as objects to decorate “the house of a noble man or man of honour.”¹⁵⁴ He refers to “painted tables, and images containing histories, wherein is represented some monument or virtue”, which should be displayed in the various rooms of a courtier’s house.¹⁵⁵ Equally, the courtier should have table settings with plates and cups “[...] ingraued with histories, fables, or quicke and wise sentences, comprehending good doctrine or counsailes”. These should be used when drinking or eating so that the wisdom displayed by the pictures would surround the courtiers and always be visible.¹⁵⁶

Nevertheless, the decorative function was only a secondary to the overall didactic purpose of painting. Elyot stresses the educational advantages of allowing a boy to paint and carve if he seems naturally suited to these activities.¹⁵⁷ As with the practice of music, training in painting and carving did not mean that the noble man should become “a commune painter or keruer [carver]” just that he could use these skills to complement his education.¹⁵⁸ Additionally, such training did not have an intrinsic purpose but was rather a way to prepare for and support another, apparently more crucial noble activity: war. According to Elyot, teaching a prince to paint and draw in his early training would serve him later when designing new war machines or improving existing ones.¹⁵⁹

In this context, portraiture had the special purpose of equipping a man to describe the appearance of his adversary.¹⁶⁰ Even in the study of history, a knowledge of portraiture was considered beneficial to learn from the classical models of rulers and governors: “[Actually], in portrayture, nat only the faict or affaire, but also the sondry affections of euery personage in the historie recited, whiche mought in any wise appiere or be perceived in their visage, countenance or gesture [...]”¹⁶¹ According to Elyot, to fulfil this didactic purpose, portraiture had to be of a certain quality and standard in its representation of a likeness. He claims that a portrait must have “a liuely spirite”, to really engage with beholders and instruct them more effectively. This ‘spirite’ should not be mistaken for the

¹⁵⁴ ELYOT: *The Governour*, p. 125.

¹⁵⁵ IBID.

¹⁵⁶ IBID., p. 126; MAJOR: *Sir Thomas Elyot*, p. 66.

¹⁵⁷ ELYOT: *The Governour*, p. 28.

¹⁵⁸ IBID., p. 31; MAJOR: *Sir Thomas Elyot*, p. 64; LEHMBERG: *Tudor Humanist*, p. 63.

¹⁵⁹ ELYOT: *The Governour*, p. 29.

¹⁶⁰ “More ouer the feate of portrayture shall be an allectiue to euery other studie or exercise.” IBID.

¹⁶¹ IBID., p. 30. For a discussion of Elyot’s argument see PEACOCK: *Picturing Courtiers*, pp. 76-77.

goal of imitating the subject; instead, he defines such quality as a form of grace that should pursue and instruct the beholder during observation.¹⁶²

This demand is very interesting for building an understanding of the Elizabethan portrait and paintings in general. Rather than just representing a subject as close to life as possible, a painting needed to create a strong interaction with the beholder. In his *Apology for Poetrie*, the courtier Philip Sidney expresses a similar understanding of the “more excellent” painter compared to lesser ones: while the cruder kind of painter would “counterfet only such faces as are sette before them”, the excellent painter would aspire to show both the subject’s beauty and their virtue.¹⁶³ The audience should be able to perceive not only the outward appearance but also the inner qualities of the subject.¹⁶⁴ Lawrence Humphrey made a similar request of portraits in 1563, emphasising that children should “gaze on the Images and titles of theyr auncestors; and not only read theyr vertues but learne to counterfayte them.”¹⁶⁵

To display these “titles” and “vertues”, Elizabethan portraits developed a significant pictorial language which incorporated inscriptions, symbols, and coats of arms and was unique to England in the 16th century. That which Lawrence Stone has called “functional rather than aesthetic in purpose” was indeed a unique understanding of painting that went beyond pure representation.¹⁶⁶ With the definitions of Elyot, Humphrey, and Sidney discussed above, the Elizabethan form of painting, and the portrait in particular, can be understood as being made to enter a didactical and dialectic relationship with the beholder. The images were used as highly charged objects with visual meaning. As this chapter has shown, the ideal courtier had to simultaneously be a lawyer, an advisor, a musician, and a dancer. To represent this intertwined cosmos of subjects and ideals, the courtly portrait had to assimilate multiple elements of visual expression, such as armoury, emblems, and scripture. The result was a complex, allegorical representation of the sitter’s status and

¹⁶² “And where the liuely spirite, and that whiche is called the grace of the thing, is perfectly expressed, that thinge more persuadeth and stereth the beholder, and soner istructeth hym [...]” IBID. The term “liveliness” as a specific Tudor model of vividness has recently been analysed by FARADAY, Christina J.: *Tudor Liveliness. Vivid Art in Post-Reformation England*, London 2023.

¹⁶³ SIDNEY, Philip: *Apologie for Poetrie*, ed. by Edward ARBER, London 1905 (1595), pp. 27–28. For more on the subject of poetry and painting, see GENT, Lucy: *Picture and Poetry 1560-1620*, Leamington Spa 1981.

¹⁶⁴ HULSE, Clark: *The Rule of Art. Literature and Painting in the Renaissance*, Chicago, London 1990, p. 123.

¹⁶⁵ HUMPHREY, Lawrence: *The Nobles, Or Of Nobility*, Amsterdam 1973, fol. 13. This is also addressed in FOISTER: “*Sixteenth Century English Portraiture*”, p. 168. The term “counterfayte” used by Humphrey is interesting, as it plays with the double meaning of taking the ancestors as a model by following in their footsteps and being able to draw or portray them themselves, which is similar to the approach Elyot chooses for the prince’s skill in drawing.

¹⁶⁶ STONE, Lawrence: *The Crisis of the Aristocracy 1558-1641*, Oxford 1965, p. 712.

ambition. In this way, this study understands the distinct form of Elizabethan portraiture as a visual solution for the problem of self-fashioning for courtiers at a time when their status was intensively discussed in courtesy books.¹⁶⁷

For beholders, these images posed a challenging invitation to decipher the distinct iconographies. As they were made for a specific aristocratic audience who could apprehend the affiliations, quotes, and references, these paintings displayed intellectually charged images which concealed their subjects through an allegorical form of presentation.¹⁶⁸ This heavy usage of multiple layers of meaning and allegory formed a visual language which Tarnya Cooper has aptly described as an “allegorical imaging of secrets.”¹⁶⁹ Portraits in particular were used to convey abstract messages that were connected to the sitter. The act of observing and deciphering can be compared to solving a visual riddle that employs cultural and social discourses to display, educate, and entertain.¹⁷⁰ Beholders had to possess knowledge of this kind of riddle to understand the meaning of the allegorical language used in portraiture and painting in general.¹⁷¹ They had to be familiar with not only the national, political, and continental discussions but also the biographical and dynastical details of the sitter in order to absorb the different layers of meaning in the pictures.¹⁷² Thus, for the meaning of such paintings, a component was always the specific moment and time in which it was shaped.¹⁷³

All of this contributed to a distinct form of painting in Elizabethan England which courtiers recognised and utilised to fulfil the need to fashion themselves in this cosmos. The following chapters show how particular courtiers used these paintings to apply to their own

¹⁶⁷ This has also been addressed by Tarnya Cooper: “The insistence upon declaring the artifice of representation within the visual language [...] allowed the portraits to be read as diagrams of likeness while privileging the status of the word with its own acknowledged meaning.” COOPER: *Citizen Portrait*, p. 33.

¹⁶⁸ For more on the interplay between allegory and reader, see QUILLIGAN, Maureen: *The Language of Allegory. Defining the Genre*, London 1979, pp. 224–278.

¹⁶⁹ Cooper used these words to describe the development and mixture of portraits and allegory. COOPER: *Citizen Portrait*, p. 8–9.

¹⁷⁰ An extreme form of allegorical entertainment in the German 17th century has been described by WARNCKE, Carsten-Peter: “*Allegorese als Gesellschaftsspiel. Erörternde Embleme auf dem Satz Nürnberger Silberbecher aus dem Jahre 1621*”, in: *Anzeiger des Germanischen Nationalmuseums*, 1982, pp. 43–62.

¹⁷¹ The ‘allegorical impulse’ in English art is analysed on both theoretical and practical levels in LEONHARD, Karin: “*Vom Wenden der Gewänder. Van Dyck malt Venetia Digby*”, in: FLEMMING, Victoria VON and Alma-Elisa KITTNER (Ed.): *Barock – Moderne – Postmoderne*, Wiesbaden 2014, pp. 147–177.

¹⁷² For more information on this and an example of a political-allegorical portrait see, Dimmock, Matthew: *Elizabethan Globalism. England, China and the Rainbow Portrait*, London 2019, pp. 59–60; Fischlin, Daniel: “*Political Allegory, Absolutist Ideology, and the ‘Rainbow Portrait’ of Queen Elizabeth I*”, in: *Renaissance Quarterly* 50 (1997), pp. 175–206.

¹⁷³ Parts II and III of this book demonstrate how these allegorical meanings can be formed from the references given in Elizabethan paintings.

form of courtliness. The examples of William Cecil and Christopher Hatton are discussed to illustrate two different kinds of courtier, each with a unique interpretation of that role in the cosmos of the court.

2. The Politics of Display: Cecil's Public Image, Portraits, and Dynasty

William Cecil, Lord Burghley was one of the most influential diplomats of the Elizabethan regime. Born in 1521, Cecil carried a family name that was already well known in the royal court. His grandfather, David Cecil (c. 1460–1540), was a nobleman from Wales who was a popular diplomat under King Henry VII and King Henry VIII as well as a member of the parliament for Stamford.¹⁷⁴ Cecil's mother, Jane Heckington, was also from an established Lincolnshire family.¹⁷⁵ William Cecil was educated at Cambridge, where he met with English intellectuals such as Roger Ascham, an author and educator who was the teacher of Elizabeth Tudor before she became queen, and John Cheke, a prominent advocate of teaching the Greek language in English schools.¹⁷⁶ Cheke's sister Mary became Cecil's first wife and gave birth to his first son, Thomas, in 1542.¹⁷⁷ Unfortunately, Mary died in 1543. Three years later, Cecil married Mildred Cooke, with whom he had several more children. For Cecil, building a pedigree that was favourable to his political career and his family's status was essential. He demonstrated an intense interest in genealogical topics and researched his own ancestry, which he put on display at his various properties.¹⁷⁸ For his sisters and his children, Cecil negotiated marriages with high members of Elizabethan society.¹⁷⁹ His second wife was also a favourable choice in this regard because she came from a well-connected family. Most famously, her sister Anne married Sir Nicholas Bacon and was the mother of the philosopher and statesman Sir Francis Bacon.¹⁸⁰

Early in his career, Cecil was employed by the Lord Protector, the Duke of Somerset and became Secretary of State under Edward VI in 1550.¹⁸¹ During the Catholic Reformation of Mary I, he did not fall out of favour, though he lost the office of Secretary of State. He later regained that role when Elizabeth acceded the throne, and he held the post until

¹⁷⁴ His year of birth has long been subject to debate. See ANONYMOUS: *The Anonymous Life of William Cecil Lord Burghley*, ed. by Alan SMITH, Lewiston 1990 (1598), p. 11

¹⁷⁵ ALFORD, Stephen: *The Early Elizabethan Polity. William Cecil and the British Crisis 1558-1569*, Cambridge 1998, p. 5.

¹⁷⁶ On Cecil's time in Cambridge, see ALFORD: *Burghley*, p. 17–23; ALFORD: *The Early Elizabethan Polity*, pp. 15–16.

¹⁷⁷ ALFORD: *Burghley*, p. 22.

¹⁷⁸ AIRS, Malcolm: "'Pomp or Glory?'. *The Influence of Theobalds*", in: CROFT, Pauline (Ed.): *Patronage, Culture and Power. The Early Cecils*, New Haven 2002, pp. 3–20, p. 10.

¹⁷⁹ ALFORD: *Burghley*, p. 145.

¹⁸⁰ WHITAKER, Jane: *Gardens for Gloriana. Wealth, Splendour and Design in the Elizabethan Garden*, London, New York 2019, pp. 21–22.

¹⁸¹ This period of Cecil's life has been described by ALFORD: *Burghley*, pp. 33–49.

1572.¹⁸² That same year, he assumed the role of Lord High Treasurer, an office at the head of the Privy Council, an obscure body of carefully chosen men who administrated the government's routine business. This position granted Cecil enormous authority over the state.¹⁸³ Also in 1572, Cecil was appointed Baron Burghley, which elevated him into the peerage of England.¹⁸⁴ He continued to acquire several offices and was an active member of the English council until his death in 1598.¹⁸⁵

Next to serving his state, Cecil considered education a vital topic, and he dedicated much of his time to the proper education of his children. For his two sons, Thomas and Robert, he wrote precepts, "advertisements and rules for the squaring of thy life as are gained rather by much experience than long reading."¹⁸⁶ Apart from supervising his own children, Cecil held the post of Master of the Wards, an office created to ensure the good training and marriage of aristocratic orphans whose fathers died before they came of age. Hence, as Master of the Wards, Cecil held a powerful position in the social network of the Elizabethan elite.¹⁸⁷

Several 16th- and 17th-century biographical descriptions of Cecil's life were written by, for example, the Elizabethan historians William Camden (1551–1623) and John Clapham (1566–1619), who had been in Cecil's service themselves.¹⁸⁸ The most personal biography was published anonymously soon after Cecil's death. Since the author describes Cecil's properties, finances, and habits in great detail, Alan Smith has concluded that he was a personal servant of Cecil, most likely his secretary Michael Hicks (1543–1612).¹⁸⁹

Overall, these three accounts of Cecil's life paint the picture of a well-educated, well-mannered, and well-connected man. They emphasise his noble ancestry as a member of a

¹⁸² For more information on Cecil's career under Mary I, see CHARLTON, W. H.: *Burghley. The Life of William Cecil, Lord Burghley, Lord High Treasurer of England*, Stamford 1847, pp. 22–40. Cecil's shift from being Mary's minister to Elizabeth's minister is described in more detail in ALFORD: *Burghley*, pp. 87–102.

¹⁸³ ALFORD: *Burghley*, p. 198. More on the Privy Council has been written by VINES, Alice Gilmore: *Neither Fire nor Steel. Sir Christopher Hatton*, Cincinnati 1975, pp. 17–18.

¹⁸⁴ The ceremony is described in ALFORD: *Burghley*, p. 197.

¹⁸⁵ CHARLTON: *Burghley*, pp. 89–92.

¹⁸⁶ With these words, he introduced the precepts to his son Robert, who was supposed to follow in Cecil's professional footsteps. CECIL: "Certain Precepts", p. 9

¹⁸⁷ For more on this office, see ALFORD: *Burghley*, p. 112; HURSTFIELD, J.: "Lord Burghley as Master of the Court of Wards, 1561-98", in: *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 31 (1949), pp. 95–114.

¹⁸⁸ Clapham had worked as a clerk for Cecil when he was a young man, COOPER: *Citizen Portrait*, p. 161. Camden, as will be shown later, can be connected to Cecil through patronage.

¹⁸⁹ ANONYMOUS: *Life of William Cecil*, pp. 8–11. This identification has been accepted by later researchers of Cecil. See, for example, CROFT, Pauline: "The New English Church in One Family. William, Mildred and Robert Cecil", in: PLATTEN, Stephen (Ed.): *Anglicanism and the Western Christian Tradition*, Norwich 2003, pp. 65–89, p. 76; SUTTON, James M.: *Materializing Space at an Early Modern Prodigy House. The Cecils at Theobalds, 1564 - 1607*, Aldershot 2004, p. 80.

“gentleman’s house” on both his father’s and mother’s sides.¹⁹⁰ Yet, even more than his pedigree, the biographical accounts underline his qualities as an advisor and a scholar. Camden, for example, praises the “singular wisdom”, Cecil displayed as Elizabeth’s minister.¹⁹¹ Meanwhile, Clapham acknowledges Cecil’s various interests and deep knowledge of those topics.¹⁹² The source ascribed to his secretary Michael Hicks further recalls Cecil’s good character, faith, and generosity towards the poor.¹⁹³ The queen herself, who reportedly called him her “spirit”, also cherished his skills and advisory nature.¹⁹⁴

In the years after these three accounts were recorded, researchers took up the image of William Cecil as the model of a humble statesman. Robert Naunton called him a “person of most exquisite abilities [...]”, which “had not to do with the sword [...], [but] through his own rhetorical knowledge [...]”.¹⁹⁵ Many researchers stressed his intellectual abilities, sobriety of dress, and moderate household.¹⁹⁶ Others, such as Mary Crane and Paula Henderson, also mentioned his ability to reflect on and direct his reputation. Crane described Cecil as having “most clearly exemplified the style and stance of the humanist statesman-advisor”,¹⁹⁷ while Henderson named him “an extremely image-conscious man.”¹⁹⁸ Furthermore, Cecil’s reputation as a scholar and supporter of learned men has been closely connected to his patronage activities.¹⁹⁹ Eleanor Rosenberg suggested that

¹⁹⁰ CLAPHAM, John: *Elizabeth of England. Certain Observations Concerning the Life and Reign of Queen Elizabeth*, ed. by Evelyn PLUMMER READ and Conyers READ, Philadelphia, London 1951 (1603), p. 71. Further ANONYMOUS: *Life of William Cecil*, pp. 40–41.

¹⁹¹ CAMDEN, William: *The History Of Most Renowned And Victorious Princess Elizabeth. Late Queen Of England*, ed. by Wallace MACCAFFREY, Chicago, London 1970 (1607-1629), p. 40.

¹⁹² “[He had] by much conference and long experience attained such general knowledge as he was able judicially to discourse of matters concerning the best and most learned professions; yea even to descend into the science of artisans and men of mechanical trades.” CLAPHAM: *Elizabeth of England*, pp. 82–83.

¹⁹³ “He used also to answer the poorest soul by word of mouth, appointing times and places of purposes so long as he was able, but after he grew impotent and weal and could not go abroad, as his nature was ever prone to do good, he neglected no means to perform it.” ANONYMOUS: *Life of William Cecil*, p. 67. On his devotion to God, see IBID., p. 90. Hicks also notes that Cecil used to give 500 pounds to the poor every year, IBID., 96. Hicks even finds more idealised words to describe his master: “There was never any man living, in his place, did more respect and esteem the nobility than his lordship [...]” IBID., p. 99.

¹⁹⁴ Some of the letters in which the queen used this nickname are preserved in WRIGHT, Thomas (Ed.): *Queen Elizabeth and Her Times. Original Letters Selected from the Private Correspondence of Burghley*, Vol. 2, London 1838, p. 201; BROOKS: *Sir Christopher Hatton*, p. 95. As shown later, the queen had nicknames for most of her favourites and important courtiers.

¹⁹⁵ NAUNTON: *Fragmenta Regalia*, p. 55.

¹⁹⁶ His household is extensively described in ANONYMOUS: *Life of William Cecil*, pp. 87–90. For more on his reputation as a humble man, see PARTRIDGE: “*Lord Burghley and Il Cortegiano*”, p. 132.

¹⁹⁷ CRANE: “*Video et Taceo*”, pp. 6–7.

¹⁹⁸ HUSSELBY, Jill: “*The Politics of Pleasure. William Cecil and Burghley House*”, in: CROFT, Pauline (Ed.): *Patronage, Culture and Power. The Early Cecils*, New Haven 2002, pp. 21–46, p. 23.

¹⁹⁹ In her comprehensive book on the literary patronage of Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, Eleanor Rosenberg makes it a point that patronage in the Tudor times was not a sheer act of philanthropy but was rather a necessity to maintain control of the public opinion. ROSENBERG, Eleanor: *Leicester. Patron of Letters*, New York 1976, p. 3. At the same time, patronage was an established instrument of support and power all

Cecil purposefully chose whom to patronise depending on which project appealed to his agenda and personal passions.²⁰⁰

Mary Partridge has theorised that this historical representation of Cecil as primarily a statesman who embodied the image of the learned and wise advisor was heavily influenced by courtesy books, such as those by Castiglione, Ascham, and Elyot.²⁰¹ In other words, Cecil's reception as a statesman was linked to the same books written as how-to books for men like him. Indeed, his noble family background, good character, and range of skills, which his biographers emphasised, are in line with the previously discussed ideal of the courtier. As this chapter suggests, this image of the powerful yet responsible statesman not only resulted from discourse on the perfect statesman but can also be seen as an intentional self-fashioning using the courtesy discourse present in England. At the same time, Cecil's reputation was highly dependent on the queen, and he, like other courtiers, needed to devote himself to her.²⁰² In turn, Elizabeth used this image of William Cecil to "reassure her subjects that she was receiving suitable advice".²⁰³

This chapter demonstrates how Cecil's portraits display his devotion to his queen and his office. The latter, however, must be regarded as serving the double role of strengthening his personal reputation as a statesman while simultaneously laying the foundation for the dynastic presence of his family. As someone who ascended to the English peerage as late as 1572, Cecil worked hard to earn his family's status through diligent service.²⁰⁴ Indeed, the Cecils went on to become one of the most influential families in England's political history, and William Cecil himself acted as their founder.

Portraits of a family man in the public service

Since William Cecil was a powerful man, multiple portraits of him were made during and after his lifetime, and he commissioned very few of them himself. Roy Strong has named Cecil as the courtier whose likeness was copied most frequently during his lifetime —

over Europe, and it promised a certain degree of public praise for generous patrons. DORSTEN, Jan VAN: "Literary Patronage in Elizabethan England. The Early Phase", in: LYTLE, Guy Fitch and Stephen ORGEL (Ed.): *Patronage in the Renaissance*, Princeton (N.J) 1981, pp. 191–206, pp. 191–194; DORSTEN, Jan VAN: "Mr. Secretary Cecil, Patron of Letter", in: *English Studies* 50 (1969), pp. 545–553, p. 548.

²⁰⁰ ROSENBERG: *Leicester*, pp. 100–101. This is further suggested for the Cecil family as a whole in CROFT, Pauline: "Introduction", in: CROFT, Pauline (Ed.): *Patronage, Culture and Power. The Early Cecils*, New Haven 2002, pp. ix–xxi, p. ix.

²⁰¹ PARTRIDGE: "Lord Burghley and Il Cortegiano", pp. 97–98.

²⁰² This has been expressed by, for example, CRANE: *Framing Authority*, p. 106.

²⁰³ CRANE: "Video et Taceo", pp. 7–12.

²⁰⁴ CRANE: *Framing Authority*, pp. 100–101.

second only to the queen.²⁰⁵ Strong has interpreted the high number of portraits as a reflection of Cecil's "outstanding importance [...], but [it] may also indicate that he was aware of the value of portraits as personal propaganda."²⁰⁶ Given his prominence as an Elizabethan courtier, it is suspected that portraits of Cecil were often copied and given as gifts to courtiers or diplomats in England as well as on the continent.²⁰⁷ Following Strong's hypothesis, one could suggest that Cecil's portraits used an iconography of Cecil that aligned with the image of the ideal courtier, and the portraits were thus made to be closely observed and deciphered by Cecil's fellow courtiers and family. The majority of Cecil's portraits were made after he had acquired a certain degree of importance through his appointed role as Secretary of State from 1558 to 1572.²⁰⁸ To this day, some portraits of Cecil remain in the possession of the family in Hatfield House, which is a strong indicator that Cecil himself directly commissioned them.²⁰⁹ These portraits offer multiple layers of reference for interpretation and can be further connected to his dynastic approach.

In general, William Cecil's portraits do not vary significantly in their portrayal of him, which suggests a generally monotone representation of the diplomat.²¹⁰ The frequency with which his image was copied can partly explain this apparent consistency in Cecil's likeness. Drawing or painting a portrait from a pattern was a common practice in Elizabethan workshops.²¹¹ By choosing a style of representation that was not overly complex, Cecil might have hoped to control the picture of him which circulated.²¹² Offering a copyist little room for alteration could minimise any damage caused by how they presented him. Cecil might have chosen to limit representations to the necessary aspects of his public image, such as his robe and stately ward. While his appearance in his portraits seldom shows more than those elements, it should not be mistaken for monotone iconography. When looking

²⁰⁵ STRONG, Roy: *Tudor & Jacobean Portraits*, Vol. 1, London 1969, p. 31.

²⁰⁶ IBID.

²⁰⁷ For example, portraits of Cecil and his wife Mildred were found in the possession of the scholar Gabriel Goodman, who acted as the Dean of Westminster Abbey in 1561. Goodman later gave these portraits to Cecil's first son, Thomas. COOPER: *Citizen Portrait*, p. 153.

²⁰⁸ STRONG: *Tudor & Jacobean Portraits*, p. 31.

²⁰⁹ Erna Auerbach and Kingsley Adams called William Cecil the "founder of this splendid collection" in Hatfield. AUERBACH, Erna and C. Kingsley ADAMS: *Paintings and Sculpture at Hatfield House*, London 1971, p. 21.

²¹⁰ STRONG: *Tudor & Jacobean Portraits*, p. 31; EADE, Jane: "William Cecil, 1st Baron Burghley", in: COOPER, Tarnya and Jane EADE (Ed.): *Elizabeth I & Her People*, Exhibition Catalogue, National Portrait Gallery London, 10 October 2013 to 5 January 2014, London 2013, pp. 84–85, p. 85.

²¹¹ STRONG: *Gloriana*, p. 14. More information on the difficulties associated with this constant copying is given in NICHOLS, John: *The Progresses and Public Processions of Queen Elizabeth I. 1533-1571*, Vol. 1, ed. by Elizabeth GOLDRING, Oxford 2014, pp. 370–372.

²¹² While not all copies are considered, a list of his then-known portraits is given in STRONG: *Tudor & Jacobean Portraits*, pp. 27–33.

at the details offered for observation in the portraits, a complex iconography referencing the courtly discourse and Cecil's aspirations evolves. However, these details demand a close inspection and prior knowledge in order to be recognised, and they are thus more concealed than the apparent representation of Cecil's likeness.

One of the most interesting portraits demonstrating this concealed iconography is the so-called *Marble-Column Portrait* in the NPG (**Fig. 1**).²¹³ Despite the array of symbols and references in this portrait, discussions of them have mainly been limited to exhibition catalogues or short mentions in publications.²¹⁴ It has been estimated that this portrait was painted in the 1560s, which distinguishes it as one of the earliest known portraits of Cecil.²¹⁵ Roy Strong has noted that this portrait must have been made when Cecil was already Secretary of State, as such role is symbolised by his white staff and robe, but before he became Knight of the Garter, as the badge of the Garter is not shown in the image.²¹⁶ The portrait situates Cecil against a richly decorated background. A heavy green curtain is seen to his left, while a detailed marble column stands to his right. In his right hand, Cecil holds the white staff of office, and he wears a black robe decorated with golden buttons and a white ruff. This plain yet noble fashioning of his apparel is completed by his black cap and 'forked' beard.²¹⁷ At the top in the middle, in golden letters, an inscription is added to the scene:

“VOTA·DEI·OBSERVANS·CECILI·PATRIAE·O·SECVNDANS·VIVE·PIE·SOLITVS·VIVE·DIV·VT·MERITVS“ (Do God's will, Cecil, give thy country succour strong, Live pious as thy wont is; live, as thy need is, long).²¹⁸ This plea, which is directed to the portrayed man himself, can be interpreted as an indication of the political importance Cecil already held at the time of the portrait's production.

The prominent pillar in the background offers yet another reference to Cecil's political position. During the Renaissance, a pillar was a popular symbol of imperial power and stability in combination with monarchs.²¹⁹ In a portrait of a courtier, a pillar might symbolically mark the statesman's ideal role within the state apparatus as a servant to his

²¹³ Unknown: *William Cecil, 1st Baron Burghley*, 1560s, oil on panel, 95.3 cm x 71.8 cm, National Portrait Gallery London, NPG 2184.

²¹⁴ STRONG: *Tudor & Jacobean Portraits*, p. 28; BOLLAND, Charlotte: *Tudor & Jacobean Portraits*, London 2018, p. 58.

²¹⁵ IBID., p. 58.

²¹⁶ STRONG: *Tudor & Jacobean Portraits*, p. 31.

²¹⁷ HAWKSLEY, Lucinda: *Moustaches, Whiskers & Beards*, London 2014, p. 27.

²¹⁸ BOLLAND: *Tudor & Jacobean Portraits*, p. 58.

²¹⁹ STRONG: *Gloriana*, p. 101.

sovereign and a foundational support for their reign.²²⁰ The use of the pillar as such a sign of the statesman’s service is echoed in an emblem in Whitney’s *Choice of Emblems* which portrays a pillar with the motto “Te stante, virebo” (As long as you stand, I shall flourish).²²¹ This detail of the pillar references the Elizabethan discourse of the ideal minister, which was intended to be understood by the courtly audience.



Figure 1:
Unknown:
William Cecil, 1st
Baron Burghley,
1560s, oil on
panel, 95.3 cm x
71.8 cm, NPG
2184, ©National
Portrait Gallery
London.

²²⁰ He was called the “pillar of Britain” by William Camden, HUSSELBY: *“The Politics of Pleasure”*, p. 27.

²²¹ The text under the emblem, which has the function of further explaining the image and the motto, says: “[...] And while it standes, the same both bloome on highe, / But when it shrinkes, the iuie standes in dowl: / The Pillar great, our gratious Prince is [...].” WHITNEY, Geoffrey: *A Choice of Emblemes*, ed. by Henry GREEN, Aldershot 1989 (1586), p. 1.

The clothes he is portrayed in also underline Cecil's function as a stately servant. They are dark and modest, as recommended in Castiglione's courtesy book.²²² However, since black cloth was costly, it also represented wealth and was often worn by wealthy merchants and elder statesmen.²²³ The golden buttons create a contrast with his humble attire and highlight the richness of the cloth. An attribute of even greater importance is the staff of office, which is held directly in Cecil's hand for him to use. This portrait represents Cecil as a pillar of support for his country in the function of his office, which had been bestowed upon him by his sovereign.

The discourse of the ideal statesman ultimately leads to Elizabeth. As Cecil's queen, Elizabeth granted him his offices and privileges; thus, his position was necessarily tied to her. The inscription urges Cecil to honour his responsibility to his country and to give "thy country succour strong", which was simultaneously a reminder to beholders that the function of a courtier lies in his support of the sovereign. While Cecil is the pillar supporting the monarchy, the queen herself embodies the monarchy and is therefore also present in the pillar, which consequently holds a double meaning. However, the green curtain on the other side of the background leads the picture's message in a different direction and implies a connection with another portrait of the same subject.

An almost identical version of the marble portrait is in the possession of the Marquess of Salisbury at Hatfield House and has been ascribed to the painter Hans Eworth (**Fig. 2**).²²⁴ The fact that the Cecil family still owns this portrait strongly suggests that Cecil personally commissioned it. The version at the NPG is widely believed to be a copy of the portrait at Hatfield House, which would mean that the latter was painted earlier, though probably also in the 1560s.²²⁵ Most likely, the portrait was either commissioned by Henry Lee, who owned the Ditchley estate at that time, or was gifted to him.²²⁶

²²² CASTIGLIONE: *The Courtier*, pp. 106–110.

²²³ COOPER: *Citizen Portrait*, p. 78.

²²⁴ Hans Eworth (attr.): *William Cecil, 1st Baron Burghley*, c. 1565, oil on panel, 94.1 cm x 71.2 cm, Hatfield House. Illustrated in AUERBACH/ADAMS: *Paintings and Sculpture at Hatfield House*, Colour Plate II; CROFT, Pauline: *Patronage, Culture and Power*, New Haven 2002, plate IV.

²²⁵ Erna Auerbach and Kingsley Adams suggest that the Hatfield version was always in the possession of the family and present inventory entries in AUERBACH/ADAMS: *Paintings and Sculpture at Hatfield House*, pp. 46–47. While it is unclear when or by whom this copy was made, Roy Strong has found a record of it at Ditchley in 1718. STRONG: *Tudor & Jacobean Portraits*, p. 28.

²²⁶ Research on the painting style and technique of this NPG version during the Making Art in Tudor Britain project resulted in its attribution to an Anglo-Netherlandish artist. Previously, it had been ascribed to Arnold van Bronckhorst. NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY LONDON: "William Cecil, 1st Baron Burghley", in: *Tudor and Jacobean Portraits Database*,



Figure 2:
Hans Eworth (attr.):
William Cecil, 1st
Baron Burghley, c.
1565, oil on panel,
94.1 cm x 71.2 cm,
Hatfield House.
Picture quote:
AUERBACH/ADAMS:
Paintings and
Sculpture at Hatfield
House, Colour Plate
II.

While the Hatfield version is almost identical to the NPG version in terms of the iconography, it bears several differences which shift its message towards the context of a family collection. The first difference concerns Cecil's primary attribute: instead of the white staff, he holds a little book over a case with four hourglasses, all of which stand upon a delicate wooden table. Another difference is that the Hatfield version contains no inscription. While the NPG version identifies the statesman through the text on the panel, the Hatfield portrait does not provide such information to the audience.²²⁷ Hence, in this painting, William Cecil must be recognised by connecting his likeness to the attributes of

<https://www.npg.org.uk/collections/search/portraitConservation/mw00916/William-Cecil-1st-Baron-Burghley> (accessed 19.06.2022). This early portrait can be seen as the model from which several others were made. Famously, in the NPG collection, NPG 751 and NPG 604 show the same subject.

²²⁷ This is probably why it was often mistaken for a portrait of Ambrose Dudley, Earl of Warwick. AUERBACH/ADAMS: *Paintings and Sculpture at Hatfield House*, p. 47.

an ideal statesman which are equally prominent in both versions: the pose, the pillar, and the robe. These elements are completed by a handwritten letter visible under an hourglass and the book which Cecil holds in his right hand. With these attributes, Cecil is again presented as a humbly dressed and noble statesman. In this version, however, the details of the letter, the book, and the hourglass are more personal attributes of his depiction. As such, they represent core elements of his status as a minister at the court who had to live an ordered, well-managed life and be well read and knowledgeable.²²⁸ Moreover, in accordance with the courtesy books, he needed to have a mild-tempered and patient character.

The curtain in the background underlines the personal layer of the painting. While simply an accessory in the NPG version, it becomes charged with a private and dynastical significance in the Hatfield collection. As Jill Hesselby has suggested, this detail in the background creates the appearance of a real-life environment.²²⁹ Cecil is situated in an interior which could have actually existed in one of his houses. This detail reveals the function of this portrait and explains the absence of any identifying elements on the panel: the portrait was meant to be placed in a home of the Cecil family and observed by his peers and descendants, who would already be aware of his identity. In this sense, the picture implicitly opens a dynastical reading which requires knowledge about the portrayed individual. As the portrait conveys, the Cecil dynasty was not embodied by heraldic achievements but by a devotion to the state, the office, and courtesy.²³⁰ Thus, the pillar in the Hatfield version signifies not only Cecil's role as the basis of the realm's stability but also his position as the founder of a family dynasty. In the 1560s, around the time the portrait was likely painted, Cecil and his wife Mildred welcomed several children, of whom two survived past infancy. Cecil's first son, Thomas, was already in his twenties and ensured a legitimate heir to the Cecil line.²³¹ As Chapter 6 shows, Cecil was heavily interested in genealogy and family histories and was concerned with developing his family's pedigree.²³² A portrait of him as the ideal statesman and a dynastic model would

²²⁸ Hourglasses and timepieces in general were very complex symbols in Tudor England. This has been analysed by FARADAY, Christina Juliet: "*Tudor Time Machines. Clocks and Watches in English Portraits c.1530–c.1630*", in: *Renaissance Studies* 33/2 (2019), pp. 239–266, pp. 247–253.

²²⁹ HUSSELBY: "*The Politics of Pleasure*", p. 27.

²³⁰ Writing about the Elizabethan portrait, John Buxton has stated, "The portraits [...] were intended to show to the sitter's descendants not what kind of man he had been, but what office he had held, what dignity he had achieved." BUXTON, John: *Elizabethan Taste*, New York 1966, p. 111.

²³¹ However, Thomas did not meet his father's expectations. ANONYMOUS: *Life of William Cecil*, p. 19.

²³² This is further discussed in Chapter 6.

have served a didactic purpose for the generations that followed, thus assuming the function of portraiture defined by the courtesy books.²³³

A portrait of Cecil's second wife, Mildred, was made around the same time as the Hatfield portrait, probably in 1563 (**Fig. 3**).²³⁴ Since this portrait of Mildred is also preserved in the family collection at Hatfield House, it was likely commissioned by the Cecils as well.²³⁵ The quarter-length portrait shows Mildred Cecil standing in a richly designed dark interior.²³⁶ She is dressed in a black-and-white dress adorned with buttons. Her overall appearance is enhanced by multiple pieces of jewellery, including an embroidered cap on her head, several rings on her fingers, and a long chain with a double-headed eagle around her neck. A little vase, which is barely visible in the lower part of the panel, hangs from a chain held in Mildred's left hand. Her dress itself is further decorated with embroidery and ruffs. In her right hand, she holds a bundle of cherries. She leans against a green chair which sits in the left side of the background, and a familiar green curtain can be seen to the right. Only the right half of a coat of arms appears on the left, which hints that the portrait was intended to be the pendant to a portrait of Mildred's husband.²³⁷ Yet, no such pendant portrait has been found. The existing portraits of William Cecil in the Hatfield collection fit with the iconography and style but differ too much in measure.²³⁸ While they do not qualify as companion portraits, the similar background designs reveal a shared pictorial programme and dynastical message.

Mildred was William Cecil's second wife and the mother of his two daughters and his son Robert, who became his successor and Earl of Salisbury. Mildred was known for her intelligence and came from an influential intellectual family, the Cookes.²³⁹ Her father, Anthony Cooke, had tutored Elizabeth's brother Edward, and he ensured that all of his children, including his daughters, had a fundamental humanist education. Like her husband, Mildred often received dedications in books praising her ability, which implies that she was

²³³ See Chapter 1, 'The arte of painting'.

²³⁴ Hans Eworth (attr.): *Mildred, Lady Burghley*, c. 1563, oil on panel, 104.2 cm x 78.8 cm, Hatfield House. Illustrated in AUERBACH/ADAMS: *Paintings and Sculpture at Hatfield House*, Colour Plate I.

²³⁵ *IBID.*, p. 46.

²³⁶ The ascription of both William's and Mildred's portraits to Hans Eworth was based on stylistic research and is not a topic of this book. AUERBACH, Erna: "Some Tudor Portraits at the Royal Academy", in: *The Burlington Magazine* 99/646 (1957), pp. 9–13, p. 10.

²³⁷ AUERBACH/ADAMS: *Paintings and Sculpture at Hatfield House*, p. 46.

²³⁸ *IBID.*, p. 47.

²³⁹ Gemma Allen researches Mildred and her family in ALLEN, Gemma: *The Cooke Sisters. Education, Piety and Politics in Early Modern England*, Manchester 2013.

a very active patron.²⁴⁰ While her husband's portraits present him as the model of the ideal courtier, Mildred's portraits show her in an equally courtly context. Upon close observation, there is a noticeable similarity in their clothes. Like William, Mildred is dressed mainly in plain dark colours, with precious decorative features on her costume and white sleeves.



Figure 3: Hans Eworth (attr.): *Mildred, Lady Burghley*, c. 1563, oil on panel, 104.2 cm x 78.8 cm, Hatfield House. Picture quote: AUERBACH/ADAMS: *Paintings and Sculpture at Hatfield House*, Colour Plate I.

²⁴⁰ CROFT: “*William, Mildred and Robert Cecil*”, p. 66, p. 79, p. 82. Hatfield House has another, earlier portrait of Mildred Cecil which shows the same background with the green curtain. However, Mildred is wearing a different costume and appears to be younger. It is described in AUERBACH/ADAMS: *Paintings and Sculpture at Hatfield House*, pp. 44–45.

Besides their costume, an even more apparent commonality is the green curtain. The curtain in Mildred's portrait resembles the curtain in her husband's portraits, which creates a homely atmosphere. The presence of the curtain in both portraits suggests that they were displayed in the same collection. This shared pictorial element forges a visual connection between the spouses' paintings, even if they are not pendants in size. Figuratively speaking, Mildred and William belong to the same background and represent two parts of the same family. Moreover, since it has been proven that the green chair behind Mildred actually existed in one of Cecil's houses, it may hint at the estate in which the portraits were painted. According to research by Jill Hussey and Paula Henderson, imported green leather and velvet chairs from Antwerp were part of the rich furniture collection in the Cecils' London residence.²⁴¹ Once again, the portrait's background here represents the real-life living situation of the Cecil family, and probably also the locality in which the painting was displayed.²⁴² The curtain forms a dynastical background and addresses its beholders on a personal level by evoking Cecil's home life and status.

In Mildred's portrait, the representation of her family's interior is supported by another pictorial element: her coat of arms.²⁴³ Her figure was connected to her heraldic achievements, and thus to her pedigree as well. While the picture presented her likeness to be recognised by her peers and descendants, it also displays her position within the Cecil pedigree and her importance for them as a powerful family.

Closer observation of the manner in which Mildred's figure is depicted further supports this notion. In this picture, her belly is enlarged and round, which suggests that she is pregnant.²⁴⁴ Thus, besides being portrayed as a member of the Cecil family and a companion to her husband, Mildred is shown in her dynastical function as a wife carrying a child. This portrait is estimated to have been painted in 1563, which is the birth year of Cecil's second son and heir, Robert.²⁴⁵

²⁴¹ HUSSELY, Jill and Paula HENDERSON: "Cecil House in the Strand", in: *Architectural History* 45 (2002), pp. 159–193, p. 184.

²⁴² HUSSELY: "The Politics of Pleasure", p. 27.

²⁴³ Adam Eaker has used the phrase "domestic (dynastic) interior" to describe a similar observation in Van Dyck's portrait of the Countess of Mar. EAKER, Adam: *Van Dyck and the Making of English Portraiture*, New Haven 2022, pp. 107–108.

²⁴⁴ This has elaborated in detail by HEARN, Karen: *Portraying Pregnancy from Holbein to Social Media*, London 2020, pp. 36–39. It has also been mentioned previously in AUERBACH/ADAMS: *Paintings and Sculpture at Hatfield House*, p. 46.

²⁴⁵ Erna Auerbach and Kingsley Adams have suggested that this portrait indeed shows Mildred expecting Robert in 1563. IBID., p. 46.

In the context of the Elizabethan court, the depiction of Mildred's pregnancy assumes yet another layer of meaning. The black and white colours of her dress connect her not only to her husband but also to the queen; as her personal colours, Elizabeth used white, the colour of innocence, and its contrast, black. These colours became part of the reference system around the queen which was used by her courtiers.²⁴⁶ Since Elizabeth was still unmarried in the 1560s and was not expected to take a husband any time soon, the question of the stability of the English crown was a perpetual concern. The emerging concern about the security of one's family lineage amongst the English aristocracy was a reaction to the lack of succession in the royal lineage.²⁴⁷ For Mildred Cecil, being displayed as a woman and expecting mother was a way to open her representation up to Elizabethan discussions of family continuity and dynastic achievements.²⁴⁸ Thus, Mildred is shown in her motherly function, which was vital for the whole Cecil family.

In the context of the Elizabethan court, an additionally layer is added to Mildred's pregnancy. With the black and white colours of her dress, she is not only making a connection to her husband but also to the queen. Elizabeth used white, the colour of innocence, and its contrast black as her personal colours. They became part of the reference system around her, which was used by her courtiers.²⁴⁹ Since Elizabeth was still unmarried in the 1560s and was not expected to take a husband any time soon, the question of the stability of the English crown was a perpetual concern. The emerging concern about the security of one's family lineage amongst the English aristocracy was a reaction to the lack of succession in the royal lineage.²⁵⁰ For Mildred Cecil, being displayed as a woman and expecting mother was a way to open her representation up to Elizabethan discussions of family continuity and dynastic achievements.²⁵¹ This discourse necessarily involves questioning the stability of the monarchy as well as one's own family pedigree.²⁵² The

²⁴⁶ Of course, in the 16th century, the gender of a child could not be determined during pregnancy. Thus, a reading of this portrait that focuses on the significance of Robert for the family's legacy is nugatory.

²⁴⁷ This has also been suggested and called "dynastic pregnancy" by HEARN: *Portraying Pregnancy*, p. 39.

²⁴⁸ On motherhood in images see L'ESTRANGE, Elizabeth: *Holy Motherhood. Gender, Dynasty and Visual Culture in the Late Middle Ages*, Manchester 2008.

²⁴⁹ MCCracken, Grant: "Dress Colour at the Court of Elizabeth I. An Essay in Historical Anthropology", in: *Canadian Review of Sociology & Anthropology* 22/4 (1985), pp. 515–533.

²⁵⁰ This thought has also been expressed by HEARN: *Portraying Pregnancy*, pp. 39–40.

²⁵¹ Karen Hearn has reconstructed how 16th-century England had a self-congratulatory discourse on the side of the father for a successful pregnancy, though it also depended on the respective dynamic of the couple. *IBID.*, pp. 40–46.

²⁵² Of course, such an interpretation raises questions regarding the role of the woman in 16th-century England. The gender roles have been critically discussed by AMUSSEN, Susan D. and David E. UNDERDOWN: *Gender, Culture and Politics in England, 1560-1640. Turning the World Upside Down*, London, New York 2017, pp. 21–50.

connection to William Cecil's depiction as the ideal courtier becomes even more apparent at this point. In his function as a courtier and the head of his family, Cecil had to care for both the monarchy's future and his own family's noble lineage. Together, the portraits discussed here conveyed these courtly and dynastic messages to a specific audience: the Cecil family.

The display of a dynasty: William Cecil's houses and orchestrated succession

While the analysis of his portraits offers insight into William Cecil's self-fashioning with respect to the courtly discourse, it is also necessary to examine the other instruments he used to create his dynastical presentation. In this regard, his most ambitious projects were certainly his several houses, which served to literally build up his family legacy. These projects must be considered within the context of the overall splendour of the Elizabethan estates.²⁵³ In their display of grandness and status, the houses of an Elizabethan courtier fulfilled the very public purpose of representing their owner and providing locations where he could host the court. If the queen took pleasure in visiting a courtier's estate, she would stay there as part of her summer progresses, during which she travelled through England.²⁵⁴ To host the queen was essentially to become the centre of the court for a short time, with all influential diplomats present.²⁵⁵ It was a chance to stage carefully chosen entertainment, demonstrate one's own importance, and gain or retain the queen's favour. The building of one or more grand houses was thus a calculated political act and, at the same time, an enormous financial burden.²⁵⁶ To fit into the network of the court, a house had to meet specific standards of the splendour and wealth of its owner.²⁵⁷ In their private function,

²⁵³ In fact, it was not so much the queen who commissioned large buildings and patronised architecture than it was the group of her courtiers. Elizabeth herself built no new palaces. See HOWARD: *"Self-Fashioning and the Classical Moment"*, p. 217; AIRS, Malcolm: *The Building of Britain. Tudor and Jacobean*, London 1982, p. 50.

²⁵⁴ ARCHER/KNIGHT: *"Elizabetha Triumphans"*, p. 7. While all European monarchs travelled and recognised the necessity of travelling to demonstrate their presence in their large countries, Elizabeth took this fashion to an extreme. During her 45-year reign, she visited over 400 individuals — most of them frequently. COLE: *The Portable Queen*, p. 1. Only an exclusive circle was allowed to participate in the visits, which underlines the social hierarchies of the regime. IBID., p. 163. Of the 53 English counties, Elizabeth visited only 25, and she mainly visited individuals who already had an established standing at the court. For example, William Cecil was visited 20 times, while Robert Dudley received 23 visits. IBID., pp. 23–26.

²⁵⁵ IBID., 65; SUTTON: *Materializing Space*, pp. 79–128.

²⁵⁶ GIROUARD, Mark: *Life in the English Country House. A Social and Architectural History*, New Haven, London 1979, pp. 84–86; COLE: *The Portable Queen*, pp. 76–77.

²⁵⁷ For instance, the queen was not too shy to tell Nicolas Bacon in 1572, when he was Lord Keeper, that his house Gorbambury was too small. ALFORD: *Burghley*, p. 143. Additionally, a courtier had to be able to pay for the costly visits of the monarch, which transformed their personal home into a royal palace. For example, in 1575, the queen's stay at Cecil's house Theobalds cost him 340 pounds and 17 shillings — a very high sum by 16th-century standards. The largest part of the money was spent on food, with the amount of beef eaten costing 42 pounds alone. IBID., pp. 211–212. Mark Girouard has explained how each progress must

such houses were made specifically for the courtier's family and their allies. At these estates, marriages were celebrated, heirs were born, and deaths were mourned.²⁵⁸ While the Elizabethan estate functioned in a public way, it was also a place that granted space for privacy and courtly ambitions.²⁵⁹

William Cecil particularly stands out amongst the many courtiers who engaged in building projects in Elizabethan times.²⁶⁰ Cecil exhibited an intense interest in the subject, as he collected books on it from the continent and sent servants to Italy and France to study the architecture of those countries.²⁶¹ The interest and patronage of courtiers such as Cecil supported the development of a particularly English way of building that became independent from its European counterparts.²⁶² The resulting estates were not copies of European models but very calculated buildings used by courtiers like Cecil to fashion their agendas. Such calculated use of architecture was already apparent with Cecil's first property, Burghley House, from which the name of his Lord title derived.

The Burghley House property was a family heirloom located near Stamford. Cecil inherited it from his father and later remodelled it as a family home. He first changed the house between 1556 and 1561, after his father's death, but did not refurbish and transform it completely until 20 years later.²⁶³ Although Cecil fervently acquired and constructed other manors, Burghley House was seemingly the one estate which he perceived as his family

have included about 150 people who required accommodations. GIROUARD: *Life in the English Country House*, p. 111.

²⁵⁸ ALFORD: *Burghley*, p. 145; COOPER: *Houses of the Gentry*, p. 252 and p. 266.

²⁵⁹ SUMMERSON: *Architecture in Britain*, pp. 90–92; AIRS: *The Building of Britain*, pp. 93–102.

²⁶⁰ Concerning the building patronage of Cecil and his family, see the editorial by CROFT, Pauline (Ed.): *Patronage, Culture and Power. The Early Cecils*, New Haven 2002.

²⁶¹ MERCER: *English Art 1553-1625*, p. 55; ALFORD: *Burghley*, p. 209. An analysis of the practice of recording and surveying buildings in plans is conducted in HOWARD, Maurice: *The Building of Elizabethan and Jacobean England*, New Haven 2007, pp. 165–175.

²⁶² John Shute's *The First and Chief Grounds of Architecture* (1563) was the first to address a distinctly English way of building in the native language. In 1575, John Thorpe published his translation of Jacques Androuet Du Cerceau's *Lecons de perspective positive*, an important treatise on perspective. COOPER: *Houses of the Gentry*, p. 38; HOWARD, Maurice: "The Ideal House and Healthy Life. The Origins of Architectural Theory in England", in: GUILLAUME, Jean (Ed.): *Les Traités d'architecture de la Renaissance*, Paris 1988, pp. 425–433, p. 425. Prior to that, the only known treatises on the art of building and architecture originated from other courts in Europe. HOWARD, Maurice: "The Treatise and Its Alternatives. Theory and Practice in Sixteenth-Century England", in: HECK, Michèle-Caroline, Frédérique LEMERLE and Yves PAUWELS (Ed.): *Théorie des arts et création artistique dans l'Europe du Nord du XVIe au début du XVIIIe siècle*, Lille 2002, pp. 141–153, p. 141. For example, William Thomas published the book *Principles and Rules of the Italian Grammar* in 1550, which references the language of Italian classical architecture. HOWARD: "Self-Fashioning and the Classical Moment", p. 214. Treatises such as du Cerceau's *Architectura* (1559) and Palladio's *I quattro libri dell'architettura* (1570) were also known by others in the elite circles. SUMMERSON, John: *Architecture in Britain 1530 to 1830*, New Haven, London 1993, p. 54.

²⁶³ Mark Girouard has elaborated on the chronology and dating of Cecil's work at Burghley House. GIROUARD, Mark: "Elizabethan Architecture and the Gothic Tradition", in: *Architectural History* 6 (1963), pp. 23–39, pp. 23–27.

home. He called it his “principal house” and used the second remodelling in the 1570s to transfer this sentiment to the building’s design.²⁶⁴

The new building represented Cecil’s rising power as well as his self-understanding as a scholar and diplomat. He had the badge of the Garter, the most exclusive club in England, displayed on the outside of the house and on the staircase together with the names of his fellow knights.²⁶⁵ Carved busts of emperors decorated the courtyard and garden along with medallion reliefs of the Trojan hero Aeneas, who functioned as a personal reference to Cecil’s Welsh ancestry.²⁶⁶ This arrangement was set to impress visitors and frame its owner as a learned scholar and powerful English statesman in addition to representing his dynasty.²⁶⁷ Thus, while Burghley House was a family home, it was also designed with the courtly audience in mind, as they would read and understand this decorative language.

A similar interplay between personal and public functionalities can be seen in Cecil’s most prominent estate, Theobalds, which was originally a small manor house between Stamford and London. Cecil acquired it in 1564, one year after the birth of his second son, Robert, with the intention of bequeathing it to him. Its location was favourable, and Cecil began plans to remodel and increase the size of the house.²⁶⁸ While his family and political influence grew, the house grew as well, and its intended function soon changed from an heirloom to a palace for hosting the queen and impressing the court. The work on Theobalds took over a decade, but it was praised as the most impressive house in the country after its completion in 1585.²⁶⁹ It must have been one of, if not the most, expensive projects for Cecil. From 1564 to 1575, the house incurred costs of about 1,000 pounds annually.²⁷⁰ Theobalds was of a size suitable for the queen, who visited in 1564 as well as every year

²⁶⁴ ALFORD: *Burghley*, p. 228–229. Jill Huselby has described the open-plan environment at Burghley as “ideally suited to the ‘see and be seen’ culture of the court”. HUSSELBY: “*The Politics of Pleasure*”, p. 39; ALFORD: *Burghley*, p. 229.

²⁶⁵ HUSSELBY: “*The Politics of Pleasure*”, p. 38; ALFORD: *Burghley*, p. 197.

²⁶⁶ *IBID.*, p. 299.

²⁶⁷ Jill Huselby has argued that Burghley House was a representation of William Cecil’s “national, local and personal interest. It embodied his dynastic ambition, projecting the self-fashioned and eponymous alter ego of an extremely image-conscious man.” HUSSELBY: “*The Politics of Pleasure*”, p. 23.

²⁶⁸ The location is thoroughly described in SUMMERSON, John: “*The Building of Theobalds*”, in: *Archaeologia* 97 (1954), pp. 107–26, pp. 108–110; ALFORD: *Burghley*, p. 143.

²⁶⁹ ALFORD: *Burghley*, p. 253. His biographer and secretary Michael Hicks wrote about his building projects as follows: “He built three houses, one on London, for necessity, another at Burghley of competency for the mansion of his barony, and another at Waltham, for is younger son, which at the first, he meant but for a little pile, as I heard him say. But after he came to entertain the queen so often here he was enforced to enlarge it [...]” ANONYMOUS: *Life of William Cecil*, p. 93. For a chronology of the work see COLE, Emily: “*Theobalds, Hertfordshire. The Plan and Interiors of an Elizabethan Country House*”, in: *Architectural History* 60 (2017), pp. 71–116, pp. 79–82; AIRS: “*Pomp or Glory?*”, pp. 3–4.

²⁷⁰ ALFORD: *Burghley*, p. 209.

from 1571 to 1573 and held an honorary banquet for Cecil there after his death in 1598.²⁷¹ At the same time, for Cecil and his family, Theobalds served as a retreat away from the court. This purpose was primarily expressed in the interior decorations, which featured heraldic designs appealing to the education of his children and his own passion for genealogy.²⁷²

Another house, Cecil House, is thought to have supported Cecil's position at the court even more than Theobalds did. Cecil House was named after Cecil himself and located in Westminster on the Strand. Cecil built the house in 1560, when he started to gain increasing importance in the court and found a need for accommodation closer to the centre.²⁷³ The house's location was strategically chosen, as the Strand was the geographical connection between the court and the parliament — the two great circles of Cecil's office and power.²⁷⁴ Cecil held a banquet for the queen at Cecil House in 1561 and established it as a meeting point for intellectuals and learned men from his time at Cambridge.²⁷⁵ The Anglo-Saxonist and cartographer Laurence Nowell (1530–1570) stayed at the house and tutored his ward, the Earl of Oxford, and other guests included Roger Ascham, John Hart, and Arthur Golding.²⁷⁶ In terms of its architectural appearance, Cecil House must have been of admirable symmetry and size. By 1590, it had three storeys, two courts, and a carefully planned garden complex, which served as a place of relaxation for Cecil as well as a site

²⁷¹ The garden at Theobalds alone was twice the size of the royal garden at Hampton Court. *IBID.*, p. 210. A full architectural description and a reproduction of the surviving plans are given in *AIRS: "Pomp or Glory?"*, pp. 3–8.

²⁷² ALFORD: *Burghley*, pp. 208–210. Cecil's passion for genealogy and the Theobalds interior are thoroughly discussed in Chapter 6.

²⁷³ When Cecil was elevated to Lord Burghley in 1572, the name of this house also became Burghley House. However, that name is not used here to avoid confusing it with Cecil's other house of the same name. Before Cecil House was bought and changed according to the needs of its owner after 1560, the Cecil family had mainly stayed at a Wimbledon accommodation given to Cecil in 1549 by his patron, the Duke of Somerset. This place later became the property of Cecil's first son, Thomas, and Cecil instead concentrated on establishing Cecil House as his London residence. Between 1566 and 1568 alone, he spent about 500 pounds on Cecil House. *IBID.*, p. 143; SUMMERSON: *Architecture in Britain*, p. 70.

²⁷⁴ HUSSELBY/HENDERSON: "*Cecil House in the Strand*", pp. 159–161.

²⁷⁵ ALFORD: *Burghley*, p. 113.

²⁷⁶ BRACKMANN, Rebecca: *The Elizabethan Invention of Anglo-Saxon England. Laurence Nowell, William Lambarde and the Study of Old English*, Cambridge 2012, p. 12, pp. 14–15.

for nurturing his botanical interests.²⁷⁷ While it was mainly a house where Cecil worked, it was still a place for his family to live and for him to impress visitors.²⁷⁸

Cecil's calculated architectural endeavour to establish a centre of his power in London seems to have been successful, as the queen visited Cecil House on several occasions, and the Privy Council met and dined there. At the same time, Cecil used the house to display his family connections and transform private festivities into public affairs, as he did with the marriages of his sister, daughter, and granddaughter to high-profile courtiers.²⁷⁹ Cecil House was also the house in which Cecil died in 1598.²⁸⁰

While the total amount of money that Cecil spent on his houses was enormous, it was a conscious investment in his status and self-fashioning as a courtier of the queen.²⁸¹ Indeed, the queen was a regular guest at his estate, which often positioned it as the centre of the moving court. This role underlined and supported Cecil's importance and influence, and he used the houses to build his network and reputation.²⁸² His friend from university, Roger Ascham, based his *The Scholemaster* on a discussion that took place at a dinner Cecil hosted at one of his properties.²⁸³ Thomas Hoby, the translator of Castiglione's *Cortegiano*, also stayed at Burghley House in 1558, which he mentions in his *Booke of the Travaile and Life of Me Thomas Hoby*.²⁸⁴

²⁷⁷ HENDERSON, Paula: "A Shared Passion. The Cecils and their Gardens", in: CROFT, Pauline (Ed.): *Patronage, Culture and Power. The Early Cecils*, New Haven 2002, pp. 99–120, p. 99. The Elizabethan garden is further explored in WOODHOUSE, Elisabeth: "Spirit of the Elizabethan Garden", in: *Garden History* 27/1 (1999), pp. 10–13; HENDERSON, Paula: *The Tudor House and Garden. Architecture and Landscape in the Sixteenth and Early Seventeenth Centuries*, New Haven, London 2005, p. 202. An introduction to that subject is presented in STRONG, Roy: *The Renaissance Garden in England*, London 1998, pp. 10–22.

²⁷⁸ The distribution of the rooms in the building is described in ALFORD: *Burghley*, pp. 140–142.

²⁷⁹ *IBID.*, p. 113, p. 177. Another important event, the visit of the French embassy led by the Dauphin in 1581, was also partly celebrated at Cecil House, where a state dinner was held. HUSSELBY/HENDERSON: "Cecil House in the Strand", pp. 184–185.

²⁸⁰ Of his many houses, Burghley is the only one that survives. After Robert Cecil sold Theobalds to James I in 1606, it functioned as a royal palace until its demolition in 1650. The staircase of Theobalds, which led up to the Great Chamber, still exists. It passed through several collections before finally being installed at Herstmonceux Castle in Sussex. SUMMERSON: "The Building of Theobalds", p. 122; AIRS: "Pomp or Glory?", p. 6; SUTTON: *Materializing Space*, pp. 129–165. The history of Theobalds after Cecil's death is described in SUMMERSON: *Architecture in Britain*, pp. 67–69. When William Cecil's son Thomas inherited Cecil House, it was renamed Exeter House in reference to the new owner's title. In 1627, a fire destroyed part of the house, and the remainder of the house was demolished in 1676. The main source of information on the form and plan of the house is a plan featuring Cecil's own annotation that was fortunately discovered in Burghley House in 1999. This plan describes Cecil House between circa 1562 and 1567. HUSSELBY/HENDERSON: "Cecil House in the Strand", pp. 162–170, pp. 188–189.

²⁸¹ ALFORD: *Burghley*, p. 228.

²⁸² The functions of Cecil's houses did not end with representational and entertainment purposes. Cecil's houses likely served a similar purpose as Robert Dudley's Leicester House, which Elizabeth Goldring has proven was an active "hotspot" for Leicester's network and patronage. GOLDRING: *Robert Dudley*, p. 227.

²⁸³ ASCHAM: *The Scholemaster*, p. v–vi.

²⁸⁴ CASTIGLIONE: *The Courtier*, p. 98, pp. 164–165.

William Cecil is known to have used the estate's gardens on several occasions to stage entertainment for the queen. These events conveyed a dynastical message: they were all carefully written to convince the queen to approve Cecil's retirement, as they portrayed his son Robert as prepared and suitable to take over his father's duties and positions.²⁸⁵ Cecil's second son, Robert, was born in 1563 and chosen by his father to follow in his footsteps at the court.²⁸⁶ When his father died in 1598, Robert took over his stately affairs, and he secured the favour of King James I after he succeeded to the throne. Robert had already anticipated the accession of the Scottish heir to the throne around 1600, and he thus prepared himself to claim a favourable position under the new monarch.²⁸⁷

Modern research has described Robert as a "minister favourite" in his role as a courtier.²⁸⁸ This status was determined by the office held by a courtier as much as by his visible role in the state apparatus.²⁸⁹ In Robert's case, the beginning of his career was linked to his establishment of a personal relationship with the queen and his engagement in the courtly game of nicknames and symbols.²⁹⁰ Additionally, he gained a reputation as a patron and an art collector.²⁹¹ Robert also followed in his father's footsteps as a builder of estates, though only to a certain extent.²⁹² Many researchers have written about these properties and

²⁸⁵ An example of this entertainment from 1591 is *Debate between the Gardener and Molecatcher*. SUTTON, James: "The Retiring Patron. William Cecil and the Cultivation of Retirement, 1590-1598", in: CROFT, Pauline (Ed.): *Patronage, Culture and Power. The Early Cecils*, New Haven 2002, pp. 159-180, p. 171.

²⁸⁶ CROFT, Pauline: "Can a Bureaucrat Be a Favourite? Robert Cecil and the Strategies of Power", in: ELLIOTT, J.H. and L. W. B. BROCKLISS (Ed.): *The World of the Favourite*, New Haven, London 1999, pp. 82-95, p. 81. Letters from William Cecil to his son Robert have been published by ACRES, William (Ed.): *The Letters of Lord Burghley, William Cecil, to His Son Sir Robert Cecil, 1593-1598*, Cambridge (NY), Melbourne, Madrid 2017. On Thomas see KNIGHT, Caroline: "The Cecils at Wimbledon", in: CROFT, Pauline (Ed.): *Patronage, Culture and Power. The Early Cecils*, New Haven 2002, pp. 47-66.

²⁸⁷ CROFT, Pauline: "Robert Cecil and the Early Jacobean Court", in: PECK, Linda Levy (Ed.): *The Mental World of the Jacobean Court*, Cambridge 1991, pp. 134-147, p. 134.

²⁸⁸ BROCKLISS, L. W. B.: "Concluding the Remarks. The Anatomy of the Minister-Favourite", in: ELLIOTT, J.H. and L. W. B. BROCKLISS (Ed.): *The World of the Favourite*, New Haven, London 1999, pp. 279-309, p. 280. The European context of these minister favourites is detailed in THOMPSON, I. A. A.: "The Institutional Background to the Rise of the Minister-Favourite", in: ELLIOTT, J.H. and L. W. B. BROCKLISS (Ed.): *World Favourite*, New Haven, London 1999, pp. 13-25.

²⁸⁹ BROCKLISS: "Concluding the Remarks", pp. 281-282.

²⁹⁰ DUNCAN-JONES, Katherine: "'Preserved Dainties'. Late Elizabethan Poems by Sir Robert Cecil and the Earl of Clanricarde", in: *The Bodleian Library Record 14* (1992), pp. 136-144, p. 139. Like others, Robert used the established symbolism around Elizabeth and addressed her as God's "celestiall Creature, who pleasethe out of Angellyke grace [...]". CROFT: "Can a Bureaucrat Be a Favourite?", pp. 82-83.

²⁹¹ BRACKEN, Susan: "Robert Cecil as Art Collector", in: CROFT, Pauline (Ed.): *Patronage, Culture and Power. The Early Cecils*, New Haven 2002, pp. 121-138, p. 123. WILKS, Timothy: "Art Collecting at the English Court from the Death of Henry, Prince of Wales to the Death of Anne of Denmark", in: *Journal of the History of Collections 9/1*, pp. 31-48, p. 31.

²⁹² A good overview of Robert Cecil's lesser known London building projects, especially Salisbury House, is given in GUERCI, Manolo: "Salisbury House in London, 1599-1649. The Strand Palace of Sir Robert Cecil", in: *Architectural History 52* (2009), pp. 31-78. In addition, Lawrence Stone has written about the financial aspect of Robert Cecil's house purchases, STONE, Lawrence: *Family and Fortune. Studies in Aristocratic Finance in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, Oxford 1937, pp. 36-37.

illustrated Robert's patronage and collections.²⁹³ Overall, these analyses show that Robert must have understood how the circle around him worked and comprehended the general role of paintings and works of art within it. Indeed, he collected art to use as profitably as possible in different areas of his life. During the Elizabethan and early Jacobean times, an impressive art collection and reputable patronage were essential to cultivate an aristocratic image.²⁹⁴

²⁹³ GAPPER, Claire, John NEWMAN and Annabel RICKETTS: "Hatfield. *A House for a Lord Treasurer*", in: CROFT, Pauline (Ed.): *Patronage, Culture and Power. The Early Cecils*, New Haven 2002, pp. 67–98. His collection of Emblem Books has been commented on by DALY, Peter: *Andrea Alciato in England. Aspects of the Reception of Alciato's Emblems in England*, New York 2013, pp. 96–97.

²⁹⁴ The general evolution of taste in art and collecting in late 16th- and early 17th-centuries Britain is described in BRACKEN, Susan: "Collectors in England. *Evolutions in Taste 1580-1630*", in: COOPER, Tarnya et al. (Ed.): *Painting in Britain 1500-1630. Production, Influences and Patronage*, Oxford 2015, pp. 384–391.

3. Making of a Chancellor: Hatton's Public Image, Patronage, and Paintings

Christopher Hatton was born in 1540 into a Northamptonshire family whose lineage extended back to the Holdenbys, a name also used for their main estate in Northamptonshire.²⁹⁵ The family was reportedly Catholic, but it is not certain how much of that faith Hatton himself practised during his lifetime.²⁹⁶ Although Hatton's father and brothers died when he was very young, his relatives managed to provide him with a suitable education and a visit to Oxford University in 1555.²⁹⁷ As a result, he was able to study law in 1560 at the Inner Temple, a "finishing school for many of the Elizabethan elite [...]", and he became further acquainted with important people who had access to the court.²⁹⁸ A frequent claim is that Hatton entered the court circle by catching the queen's eye while dancing at a festivity at the Inner Temple in early 1561.²⁹⁹

Hatton's first appearance in the State Papers was on June 30, 1564, where he was named a "Gentleman Pensioner".³⁰⁰ The Gentleman Pensioners were a group of men who were responsible for the queen's personal safety and accompanied her as her guards.³⁰¹ Hatton seemingly earned this military rank by demonstrating his skills in fencing and jousting. Records indicate that he jousted in front of the queen in 1565 and 1571, and his achievements even earned him the prize of a gold bell and chain from the queen.³⁰² While these jousting events should be understood as a form of court entertainment, they also offered an opportunity for young courtiers to present their abilities in bearing arms. In

²⁹⁵ On the family connection to the Holdenbys, see BROOKS: *Sir Christopher Hatton*, pp. 22–27, pp. 385–387.

²⁹⁶ DEACON: *The Courtier & The Queen*, pp. 12–13. The Hattons had family connections to Edward Saunders, a Catholic courtier who is also said to have supported Christopher Hatton's entry to the Inner Temple. BROOKS: *Sir Christopher Hatton*, p. 30. For more on his position in church matters, see IBID., pp. 197–219; VINES: *Neither Fire nor Steel*, p. 48.

²⁹⁷ VINES: *Neither Fire nor Steel*, p. 11.

²⁹⁸ DEACON: *The Courtier & The Queen*, p. 14. For more on the Inner Temple and its connection to the Elizabethan education of dancing, see BRISSENDEN: *Shakespeare and the Dance*, p. 6. Malcolm Deacon has further reconstructed Hatton's connection to Catherine Parr, Henry VIII's last wife, who supported his early career. DEACON: *The Courtier & The Queen*, p. 12, p. 41.

²⁹⁹ BROOKS: *Sir Christopher Hatton*, p. 37; VINES: *Neither Fire nor Steel*, p. 12.

³⁰⁰ BROOKS: *Sir Christopher Hatton*, p. 40.

³⁰¹ The Gentleman Pensioners were generally young men chosen from the class of the gentry. More about this group is written in VINES: *Neither Fire nor Steel*, pp. 13–14.

³⁰² BROOKS: *Sir Christopher Hatton*, pp. 51–53.

Hatton's case, he seems to have succeeded, as he was granted several military offices during his career.³⁰³

In 1572, Hatton was even elevated to Captain of the Queen's Guard, and he held this post until 1577, when he became Vice Chamberlain. This office was integral to festivities at the court, as the incumbent was responsible for planning the annual ceremonies and pageants, including the royal summer progresses.³⁰⁴ Even before his appointment as Vice Chamberlain, Hatton had been active in the parliament as a representative of his home county, Northamptonshire, since 1571.³⁰⁵ He was elevated to Knight of the Garter in 1577 and sworn into the Privy Council the same year.³⁰⁶

Since his career was on the rise, Hatton began to build his public image for higher offices in the court. He employed agents to research his pedigree and even had one prepared to prove his gentle ancestry to the heralds of the College of Arms during their visitation in 1580.³⁰⁷ Hatton had been erecting a family estate in the place of his ancestor's main seat, Holdenby, since the 1570s, and he named his nephew William Newport as his official heir to secure the lineage of the Hattons.³⁰⁸ The peak of his career was his appointment as Lord Chancellor in 1587, which was recognised as an unusual choice.³⁰⁹ The appointment was widely discussed by his contemporaries, especially since Hatton had held very few academic or legal offices beforehand.³¹⁰ Even later researchers, such as Alice Vines, have stated that it must have been his personal connection to queen, rather than his skill set, that made him a valuable statesman in her eyes.³¹¹

³⁰³ He was appointed as Admiral of the Isle of Purbeck and served as Lieutenant of Northamptonshire during the Spanish Armada, where he mustered troops from his county. VINES: *Neither Fire nor Steel*, p. 138. His biographer Eric St. John Brooks called him "an expert in the tilt-yard".

³⁰⁴ IBID., pp. 121–122.

³⁰⁵ Hatton's time in the parliament is described in more detail in IBID., pp. 60–72.

³⁰⁶ DEACON: *The Courtier & The Queen*, p. 57.

³⁰⁷ According to Alice Vines, Hatton presented a family tree that went back to a Norman companion of William the Conqueror. VINES: *Neither Fire nor Steel*, p. 289. Eric Brooks has suggested that it was Hatton's influence as Vice Chamberlain that made it possible for him to receive special treatment from the heralds and that his ancestry was made to appear more ancient than it actually was. BROOKS: *Sir Christopher Hatton*, pp. 21–22.

³⁰⁸ IBID., p. 23, p. 81.

³⁰⁹ IBID., pp. 332–333.

³¹⁰ Regarding this appointment, Camden writes, "Sir Christopher Hatton, a man in great Favour with the queen, of a Courtier was made Lord Chancellour; which the great Lawyers of England took very great Distaste at." CAMDEN: *Late Queen of England*, p. 306.

³¹¹ VINES: *Neither Fire nor Steel*, p. 234.

Indeed, Hatton and the queen had a special relationship, but it was not exclusive.³¹² In letters to her, Hatton called himself her “sheep” and “mutton” and signed them with “Lyddes”.³¹³ In their correspondence, both used cyphers, possibly as signatures or reminders.³¹⁴ Additionally, Hatton used a special writing of the word “EveR”, with the first and last characters capitalised, whenever he wrote the word in letters to the court, thus referring to the queen as ‘Elizabeth Regina’.³¹⁵ This exchange of nicknames and personalised writing occurred between Elizabeth and other men at her court.³¹⁶ Yet, in Hatton’s case, it seems that he had a position that was particularly close to the queen and that it was known amongst her circle.³¹⁷ They regularly sent presents and tokens to each other,³¹⁸ including a “true love’s knot”³¹⁹ and the queen paid him distinctive attention when he fell ill.³²⁰ At the same time, he was regarded as the one medium for communicating her wishes to others.³²¹

Unlike most of the royal favourites, Hatton never married. It can be assumed that he kept his private love affairs relatively secret to avoid disgrace from the queen.³²² However, several authors have hinted that Hatton had an illegitimate daughter, and others have recalled the rumour that Hatton was interested in Elizabeth Cavendish.³²³ When Hatton died in 1591, he had no official issue, and his properties went to his sister’s son William Newport-Hatton, who was his heir. By that time, Hatton had accumulated enormous debts, which was not unusual for a courtier given that the lifestyle of a royal servant was very expensive.³²⁴

³¹² Researchers have widely dismissed rumours that the two were an amorous couple. Eric Brooks has identified Mary Stuart as the most prominent person to spread this accusation in an attempt to harm Elizabeth in 1574. BROOKS: *Sir Christopher Hatton*, p. 84.

³¹³ DEACON: *The Courtier & The Queen*, p. 48; BROOKS: *Sir Christopher Hatton*, p. 95, p. 190.

³¹⁴ Illustrated in IBID., p. 22, p. 25, p. 28.

³¹⁵ IBID., p. 29, p. 443.

³¹⁶ As noted, the queen called William Cecil her “spirit”. A letter from Elizabeth to Cecil addressing him by this nickname is preserved in the letter collection in WRIGHT (Ed.): *Queen Elizabeth and Her Times*, p. 201. Elizabeth also called Robert Dudley her “two eyes”. VINES: *Neither Fire nor Steel*, p. 39.

³¹⁷ When the queen had trouble with her teeth in 1578, Hatton was chosen out of all the men at the court to tell her that they had to be taken out. DEACON: *The Courtier & The Queen*, p. 59.

³¹⁸ VINES: *Neither Fire nor Steel*, p. 15; NICOLAS: *Memoirs of the Life and Times of Sir Christopher Hatton*, p. 8.

³¹⁹ VINES: *Neither Fire nor Steel*, p. 414.

³²⁰ IBID., pp. 22–29.

³²¹ NICOLAS: *Memoirs of the Life and Times of Sir Christopher Hatton*, p. 50, p. 55.

³²² For more on marriage diplomacy at the Elizabethan court, see VINES: *Neither Fire nor Steel*, pp. 89–90.

³²³ IBID., p. 41, p. 179; BROOKS: *Sir Christopher Hatton*, pp. 65–84.

³²⁴ DEACON: *The Courtier & The Queen*, pp. 192–193. For more on the subject of the salaries and finances of Elizabethan courtiers, see BROOKS: *Sir Christopher Hatton*, pp. 220–230; VINES: *Neither Fire nor Steel*, pp. 171–173.

Christopher Hatton's historical recognition evolved far later than that of William Cecil, and his biographers paint a less glorified image of him. Probably the first comment on Hatton's life was written by John Phillips in 1591, shortly after Hatton's death, and dedicated to Hatton's heir, William Newport. Phillips describes Hatton's good character and achievements and especially praises his excellent skills in tournaments.³²⁵ Later biographers often based their evaluation of Hatton on two aspects of his career: first, that he entered the court by gaining the queen's favour through his looks and dancing skills; and second, that he had a close relationship with the queen while remaining a bachelor his whole life.³²⁶ John Clapham, who wrote his *Certain Observations Concerning the Life and Reign of Queen Elizabeth* in 1603, went as far as to neglect Hatton's intellectual abilities.³²⁷ Even 21st-century researchers have used the terms "dashing young gentleman"³²⁸ "picturesque figure"³²⁹ when discussing Hatton.³³⁰ Most of them have continued to refer to Hatton's reputation as 'the dancing chancellor', which was a nickname given to him by the Victorian historian John Campbell.³³¹ However, this rather shallow and reductive reputation was apparently first established by the late Elizabethan writer Robert Naunton.³³² Naunton described Hatton's life as follows:

Sir Christopher Hatton came to the court [...] by the galliard, for he came thither as a private gentleman of the Inns of Court in a masque, and for his activity and person (which was tall and proportionable) taken into the Queen's favor. [...] A gentleman that beside the graced of his person and dancing [...] was a mere vegetable of the court that sprung at night and sunk again at his noon.³³³

³²⁵ "At turney he and barriers did excell, / some peeres in arms haue borne his battring blowes" PHILLIPS, John: *A Commemoration on the Life and Death of the Right Honourable, Sir Christopher Hatton, Knight, Late Lord Chauncellor of England*, London 1591, Sp. 2.

³²⁶ Camden only mentions Hatton sporadically in CAMDEN: *Late Queen of England*, p. 231, p. 240, p. 247, p. 279, p. 306. Campbell calls Hatton "a gay young cavalier never called to the bar, and chiefly famed for his handsome person, his taste in dress, and his skill in dancing [...]." CAMPBELL, John: *Lives of the Lord Chancellors and Keepers of the Great Seal of England. From the Earliest Times till the Reign of King George IV*, Vol. 2, London 1868, p. 257.

³²⁷ "Sir Christopher Hatton, [...], was first made known to the queen in a show or device presented before her at a festival time; [...] Touching his gifts of mind, they were neither altogether ordinary nor excellent. [...] Being much indebted to the queen and inwardly discontented in mind, he ended his life." CLAPHAM: *Elizabeth of England*, p. 91.

³²⁸ ALFORD: *Burghley*, p. 200.

³²⁹ BROOKS: *Sir Christopher Hatton*, p. 9.

³³⁰ Braun also mentions the rumour that Hatton only gained entry into the court because of his strong dancing skill. BRAUN/GUGERLI: *Macht des Tanzes*, p. 20.

³³¹ CAMPBELL: *Lives of the Lord Chancellors*, p. 281.

³³² For example, Campbell references Naunton in his entry on Hatton, thus revealing the source of his estimation. IBID., p. 260.

³³³ NAUNTON: *Fragmenta Regalia*, pp. 67–68.

The galliard, a fast French dance, is described here as Hatton's entry point into the favour of the queen, which reduces his career to his looks and dancing skills.³³⁴ The devaluation of his other qualities has been explained by modern research as the result of a personal quarrel between the author and Hatton.³³⁵ Taking such a feud into consideration, Hatton's historical reputation as "a dancing chancellor" should not be overstated but contextualised. As shown, in Elizabethan society, dancing had the particular ceremonial function of representing eternal harmony and societal order.³³⁶ Deliberately or not, it was misread as a merely superficial skill by Hatton's early biographers; yet, it can actually be understood as a well-practised, courtly, and impressive skill that Hatton intentionally presented before the queen to fashion himself as a courtier in her service.³³⁷ In favour of this interpretation, modern biographies of Hatton paint a more wholesome picture of his personality and activities, although his importance and value for the Elizabethan courtly apparatus has not yet been fully acknowledged.³³⁸

This chapter suggests that Hatton was a far more influential part of the personal system and patronage of the court than previous research has described. In view of his biography, it is worthwhile to explore how a figure such as Hatton, who had a comparatively unusual background at the court, presented himself and chose to be represented. This chapter shows that Hatton, like his contemporaries in the "age of new men"³³⁹ was keen to build himself up, mould his nobility, and present himself as part of a certain class. Of course, this affiliation entailed both explicit and implicit devotion to the queen. Like Cecil, Hatton's self-fashioning relied not just on commissioning portraits but rather on his whole network of activities in the court.

Christopher Hatton's courtly patronage and houses

Like other courtiers before him, Christopher Hatton used patronage to extend his influence in the court and to support projects of his liking. However, rather than focusing his activities

³³⁴ More information about the galliard as a dance is given in BROOKS: *Sir Christopher Hatton*, pp. 32–33.

³³⁵ Naunton was acquainted with John Perrot, who is said to have ensnared Hatton's illegitimate daughter and consequently became the courtier's enemy. IBID., p. 15.

³³⁶ See Chapter 1.

³³⁷ Ivana Rentsch has made a similar interpretation when describing the dancing skill of the Duke of Buckingham in 1623. RENTSCH: *Die Höflichkeit musikalischer Form*, p. 56. Furthermore, the infamous Earl of Oxford, who is discussed in Chapter 6, also built his reputation upon his dancing skill and reportedly won over the queen with his "personage, and his dancing and valiantness than any other." ALFORD: *Burghley*, p. 207.

³³⁸ Especially VINES: *Neither Fire nor Steel*; DEACON: *The Courtier & The Queen*.

³³⁹ BROOKS: *Sir Christopher Hatton*, p. 75.

in one specific area, he financed a wide variety of projects. Most prominently, he contributed financially to the expeditions of Francis Drake, Marton Frobisher, and Humphrey Gilbert.³⁴⁰ In his early time at the court, Hatton showed great interest in drama and was even involved in some publications himself. For instance, he is known to have co-written at least one masque, *Tancred and Gismund*, which was written and performed for the queen in 1566 and eventually published in 1591.³⁴¹

Next to his own activities, Hatton supported multiple authors during his time as a courtier. He seems to have selected these authors according to his own interest in entertainment and poetry.³⁴² The most well-known name on the list of authors who were supported by Hatton is that of Edmund Spenser (1552–1599), who mentions Hatton as a “great Lord” in one of the introductory sonnets of *Faery Queen* (1590).³⁴³ Concerning Hatton’s interest in dancing and its harmonious connection to astronomy, dedications to Hatton by two other authors are especially notable. The first was by John Case (d. 1600) in the aforementioned *Sphaera Civitatis* in 1588. Case, who was also known as Johannes Casus, was a commentator on Aristotle but also published astronomical works and books on music.³⁴⁴ *Sphaera Civitatis* was a commentary on Aristotle’s politics that featured a symbolic frontispiece depicting Elizabeth I as the ruler of the celestial spheres.³⁴⁵ A connection between Hatton and Case suggests that the courtier had an earnest interest in political and metaphysical subjects.

This assumption is strengthened by a dedication to Hatton by another renowned Elizabethan scholar and court astronomer, John Dee (1527–1609).³⁴⁶ Dee is said to have cast horoscopes for several members of the court, which possibly included Christopher

³⁴⁰ Hatton invested in Drake’s voyage and was even acknowledged by his protégé through the renaming of Drake’s ship to *Golden Hind*. This name was a reference to Hatton’s personal sign, a golden hind, which he often displayed as a crest in his coat of arms. IBID., pp. 182–196; DEACON: *The Courtier & The Queen*, pp. 108–111; VINES: *Neither Fire nor Steel*, pp. 174–177; BROOKS: *Sir Christopher Hatton*, pp. 192–193.

³⁴¹ Hatton has been identified as the writer of the fourth act. VINES: *Neither Fire nor Steel*, p. 58. The masque tells the story of the old King Tancred, who finds himself confronted by a love affair between his widowed daughter, Gismund, and one of his courtiers. It was published as a facsimile by WILMOT, Robert: *The Tragedy of Tancred and Gismund*, Vol. 60, New York 1970. Brooks has suggested that it may have been published as a memorial to the late Lord Chancellor, but this remains unclear. BROOKS: *Sir Christopher Hatton*, p. 45, p. 48; DEACON: *The Courtier & The Queen*, p. 16.

³⁴² One his earliest protégés must have been Thomas Churchyard. IBID., pp. 48–49. Another was Barnaby Rich, who provided a description of Hatton’s later-demolished house Holdenby in 1581. VINES: *Neither Fire nor Steel*, p. 49.

³⁴³ BROOKS: *Sir Christopher Hatton*, p. 115; VINES: *Neither Fire nor Steel*, p. 59.

³⁴⁴ Case’s life has been described by HUTTON: “John Case”.

³⁴⁵ JONES: *Being Elizabethan*, pp. 102–103.

³⁴⁶ More on Dee has been written by YATES, Frances: *The Occult Philosophy in the Elizabethan Age*, London, New York 2017, pp. 92–110; FRENCH, Steven: *John Dee. The World of an Elizabethan Magus*, London, New York 1972.

Hatton.³⁴⁷ In his diary, Dee mentions Hatton several times, though without much detail about the nature of their relation.³⁴⁸ Dee also reproduced Hatton's coat of arms in *Hexameron Brytannicum* (1576), the first volume of his series *General and Rare Memorial pertayning to the perfect art of Navigation*, as a reference to a patron.³⁴⁹ Hatton's support of a scholar like Dee would not be unusual for an Elizabethan courtier, but, in his case, it reveals a calculated programme of patronage which was designed to fashion Hatton as a well-connected and established man within the courtly network.

While not mentioned by his biographers, another important part of Hatton's courtly activities was his support of George North's 1575 translation of *The Philosopher of the Court*, a French satire about the typical courtier by Philibert de Vienne. Daniel Javitch has shown that Hatton supported North in the court even though the book critiqued the behaviour of statesmen in European courts.³⁵⁰ To explain why a courtier such as Hatton would patronise an anti-courtier project, Javitch has suggested that North might have misunderstood the satirical character of the French original in the first place and did not point it out to his patron.³⁵¹ Given the intellectual atmosphere of the Elizabethan court, however, this is a highly unlikely explanation. Rather, Hatton's support of North's translation probably demonstrates his familiarity with the reputation of courtiers in Europe.³⁵² Above all, the behaviour of bad courtiers made it harder for good courtiers to remain respected, so it would have been in the interest of the latter to distance themselves from those who did not fulfil the requirements of their office.

An similarly interesting protégé of Hatton is William Segar (1554–1633), an Elizabethan painter and herald.³⁵³ Since early in his career, Segar was under the patronage of Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester (1532–1588), whom he painted in several portraits and even accompanied on military campaigns in the Netherlands.³⁵⁴ In 1590, Segar published his *Book of Honour and Arms*, which displayed Hatton's coat of arms and his motto "Tandem

³⁴⁷ This idea is suggested in BROOKS: *Sir Christopher Hatton*, p. 130.

³⁴⁸ Dee recorded that he spoke to Hatton on the day that the latter was made a knight in 1577. He mentioned Hatton again in 1579. DEE, John: *The Private Diary of John Dee and the Catalogue of his library of Manuscripts*, ed. by James HALLIWELL-PHILLIPPS, New York 1968, pp. 4–5. Alford has also mentioned a connection between the two courtiers. ALFORD: *Burghley*, p. 236.

³⁴⁹ DEACON: *The Courtier & The Queen*, p. 114.

³⁵⁰ JAVITCH, Daniel: "The Philosopher of the Court. A French Satire Misunderstood", in: *Comparative Literature* 23/2 (1971), pp. 97–124, p. 109.

³⁵¹ *IBID.*, pp. 97–98.

³⁵² See Chapter 1 and PARTRIDGE: "Images of the Courtier", p. 76.

³⁵³ More on Segar and his troubles with the college of arms is written in WAGNER, Anthony: *Heralds of England. A History of the Office and College of Arms*, London 1967, pp. 199–212.

³⁵⁴ GOLDRING: *Robert Dudley*, p. 132.

Si” on the front.³⁵⁵ While no portrait of Hatton has been securely attributed to the hand of Segar, their association demonstrates Hatton’s awareness of the power and importance of courtly patronage.

Following the fashions of other courtiers, Hatton mainly demonstrated his status through expansive building projects.³⁵⁶ When he entered the court in the 1560s, he still possessed his old family manor in the same county, but he gave it to the queen in 1568. It seems that he then became deeply invested in gathering properties and spending his money on houses. These ambitions were partly motivated by the queen’s favour, and she granted him many properties, some of which were tied to distinct posts.³⁵⁷ For example, when he was named Admiral of the Isle of Purbeck in 1572, he was given Corfe Castle, a large property on the hill of the isle.³⁵⁸

Other houses served a much more personal function for Hatton, who frequently used them. Above all, his London residence at Ely Place, called either Ely House or Ely Palace, served him as a courteous lodging. The house had been built in 1290 and was originally a residence for the bishops of Ely; thus, it was not available for a courtier to buy. However, Hatton wanted the house as his London residence, probably because of its location, historical significance, and splendour. The property was close to the Royal Palace in Whitehall and was a place where important feasts were celebrated under Henry VIII.³⁵⁹ While many courtiers before him had implored the queen to grant them a lease of the place, only Hatton was successful, and he semi-acquired the property in 1577.³⁶⁰

Ely House in London was the house with the most geopolitical significance for Hatton. He entertained the queen there on several occasions and hosted dinners for fellow courtiers as

³⁵⁵ BROOKS: *Sir Christopher Hatton*, p. 51, p. 140; DEACON: *The Courtier & The Queen*, p. 115.

³⁵⁶ Since Elizabeth elevated her favourites, the border between different societal layers was rather fluid. Still, buildings played an important part in the demonstration of one’s status. AIRS: *The Building of Britain*, p. 67; SUMMERSON: *Architecture in Britain*, p. 58; COOPER: *Houses of the Gentry*, pp. 5–6; HOWARD: “*Self-Fashioning and the Classical Moment*”, pp. 198–199; SUTTON: *Materializing Space*, p. 19.

³⁵⁷ Malcolm Deacon has reconstructed a list of the properties that Hatton acquired or was given by the crown. The list names 34 properties but is indefinite, according to Deacon. DEACON: *The Courtier & The Queen*, pp. 221–222.

³⁵⁸ VINES: *Neither Fire nor Steel*, p. 53. BROOKS: *Sir Christopher Hatton*, p. 115. Still, he commissioned the professional surveyor Ralph Treswell to draw maps of his new property, which are preserved and discussed in FORREST, Mark: *Ralph Treswell’s Survey of Sir Christopher Hatton’s Lands in Purbeck, 1585-6*, Dorset 2017.

³⁵⁹ The property and its dimensions are described in IBID., pp. 79–80.

³⁶⁰ The queen’s pressure on the bishop to allow this lease is documented in a letter she sent him in 1574, which contains the warning, “You know what you were before I made you what you are now, [...] with my request I will unfrock you”. NICOLAS: *Memoirs of the Life and Times of Sir Christopher Hatton*, p. 36, p. 39; DEACON: *The Courtier & The Queen*, p. 80. For a discussion of the authenticity of this letter, see VINES: *Neither Fire nor Steel*, p. 51.

well as foreign diplomats. Even Elizabeth herself staged entertainment at Ely to celebrate the Armada victory.³⁶¹ Hatton's ceremony to become Lord Chancellor started at Ely, and he was given the Chancellorship of the University of Oxford there as well.³⁶² Hatton surely understood the importance of having a London residence; to impress his contemporaries, he chose not to build an entirely new house but instead secure one that was already important to the London elite.³⁶³

When Hatton applied for the lease of Ely Place in 1574, he was already in great debt.³⁶⁴ Still, he continued to acquire properties, such as Kirby Hall, in his home county of Northampton.³⁶⁵ The one important house that Hatton built himself was Holdenby. Since he had sold the manor to the queen in his early days at the court, he had to repurchase the property first, which he did in 1576.³⁶⁶ By the time the house was finished, it was Hatton's largest and most ambitious building project.³⁶⁷ The new Holdenby manor was destined to outshine all of Hatton's other estates as well as those of his fellow courtiers. Hatton called it his "shrine" and referenced his plan to have the queen as a guest in his halls someday.³⁶⁸ However, Elizabeth never visited, and the appearance of Holdenby rapidly changed after Hatton's death in 1591.³⁶⁹ In terms of its general design, Holdenby resembled another grand Elizabethan manor, Theobalds, and Hatton himself confessed to William Cecil that Theobalds had been a great inspiration.³⁷⁰ Like Theobalds, Holdenby strived for symmetry, and Hatton, like Cecil, sought to stage his importance, potential, and knowledge with his

³⁶¹ VINES: *Neither Fire nor Steel*, p. 242.

³⁶² BROOKS: *Sir Christopher Hatton*, p. 151; VINES: *Neither Fire nor Steel*, pp. 247–248.

³⁶³ For more on the history of Ely Place, see BROOKS: *Sir Christopher Hatton*, pp. 145–152.

³⁶⁴ NICOLAS: *Memoirs of the Life and Times of Sir Christopher Hatton*, p. 36.

³⁶⁵ DEACON: *The Courtier & The Queen*, p. 85; BROOKS: *Sir Christopher Hatton*, p. 154; DEACON: *The Courtier & The Queen*, p. 86.

³⁶⁶ He was first granted a lease of the land for 40 years. He was only given back the full property in 1576. BROOKS: *Sir Christopher Hatton*, p. 155.

³⁶⁷ GIROUARD, Mark: "Elizabethan Holdenby I", in: *Country Life* 18 (1979), pp. 1286–1289, p. 1288.

³⁶⁸ MERCER: *English Art 1553-1625*, p. 14; VINES: *Neither Fire nor Steel*, pp. 55–56. He stated in a letter to Thomas Heneage that he had not seen it in 1580, five years after the work had begun, and was waiting "until that holy saint may sit in it to whom it is dedicated." BROOKS: *Sir Christopher Hatton*, pp. 154–155; AIRS: *The Tudor and Jacobean Country House*, p. 21; GIROUARD: "Elizabethan Holdenby I", p. 1289.

³⁶⁹ By the time a first pictorial impression of the house was made in the 18th century, the house was only a fragment of its former size. According to Marc Girouard, "it sunk, without adequate record, 70 years after it was completed". *IBID.*, p. 1286. Its intended grandness can still be imagined with maps from Ralph Trewswell and the ground plans by John Thorpe. BROOKS: *Sir Christopher Hatton*, p. 162; THORPE, John: *The Book of Architecture of John Thorpe in Sir John Soane's Museum*, ed. by John SUMMERSON, Glasgow 1966, pp. 92–94.

³⁷⁰ CROFT: "Introduction", p. x; NICOLAS: *Memoirs of the Life and Times of Sir Christopher Hatton*, p. 114; SUMMERSON: *Architecture in Britain*, p. 70.

building.³⁷¹ The sheer size of Holdenby was supported by Hatton's conscious display of heraldic achievements on the entry archway as a reminder of the place's great owner and builder.³⁷²

Unfortunately, few descriptions of Holdenby's interior exist, though some details are known. The display of a dynasty and affiliation to a local nobility must have been essential to Holdenby's decoration. According to Lawrence Stone, three pyramids in Holdenby's hall were decorated with the arms of the English peerage and the gentry from Hatton's home parish, Northamptonshire.³⁷³ Furthermore, "Christopher Hatton owned five knights of the Golden Fleece and 'the frenche kinge' [Louis XIII]".³⁷⁴ Certainly, there were portraits of English monarchs; since Holdenby was the one estate specifically erected to welcome the queen, it is highly probable that her portraits were present as well.³⁷⁵

Classical mythology also seems to have inspired the interior decoration of the house. Some surviving objects from Holdenby's decorative programme show a rare religious subject in England at the time. These objects, the so-called Gideon Tapestries, are a set of 13 picture tapestries illustrating the biblical story of Gideon. The tapestries were sold to Bess of Hardwick after Hatton's death as payment for his debts and were preserved in Hardwick's collection.³⁷⁶ The tapestries were woven for Hatton in the Flemish Oudenaarde in 1578, when the construction of Holdenby was reaching its peak.³⁷⁷ Each piece depicts one scene from the story of the Israelite leader Gideon, who, with God's help, emerged victorious from a fight despite a numerical disadvantage. The borders of the scenes are decorated with mythological figures, such as Minerva, Justice, and Fame.³⁷⁸ Helen Wyld has suggested

³⁷¹ At least, Hatton succeeded in impressing Theobalds' owner when Cecil visited Holdenby. The older courtier was amazed by the estate, and he stayed the night there in 1579, presumably when Hatton was absent. Cecil wrote Hatton a letter praising the house and its grandness. SUTTON: *Materializing Space*, pp. 15–18.

³⁷² BROOKS: *Sir Christopher Hatton*, p. 160.

³⁷³ STONE: *The Crisis of the Aristocracy 1558-1641*, p. 25; GIROUARD, Mark: "Elizabethan Holdenby II", in: *Country Life* 25 (1979), pp. 1398–1401, p. 1400.

³⁷⁴ STONE: *The Crisis of the Aristocracy 1558-1641*, p. 713. However, in the document in question from the Northamptonshire Record Office, no such entry has been found yet — at least none that makes the connection to Christopher Hatton, Lord Chancellor or to Christopher Hatton, the younger descendant of whose property the inventory was made. Finch-Hatton Papers: FHDA2977: *Inventory Kirby*, Northamptonshire Record Office, 17th century.

³⁷⁵ While commenting on Robert Dudley's picture collection at Kenilworth, Elizabeth Goldring has mentioned that the calculated display of the queen's portraits next to Dudley's inspired Hatton to commission portraits of the queen for his own collection. GOLDRING: *Robert Dudley*, p. 199.

³⁷⁶ *IBID.*, p. 1402; VINES: *Neither Fire nor Steel*, pp. 55–56.

³⁷⁷ WYLD, Helen: "The Gideon Tapestries at Hardwick Hall", in: *West 86th. A Journal of Decorative Arts, Design History, and Material Culture* 19/2 (2012), pp. 231–254, p. 231. Alice Vines has stated that the tapestries were made in Brussels, which Helen Wyld has deemed inaccurate. VINES: *Neither Fire nor Steel*, p. 56.

³⁷⁸ WYLD: "The Gideon Tapestries at Hardwick Hall", pp. 232–238.

that the tapestries were intended to play a part in the iconographic programme of Holdenby.³⁷⁹ Indeed, the visualisation of the story of a wise leader and Christian soldier would have fit the image, and thus the self-fashioning, of the Renaissance courtier.³⁸⁰ They were certainly meant to highlight Hatton's ownership of them given that his personal sign, the golden hind, was sewn into the large tapestries.³⁸¹ Today, the tapestries are still displayed in Bess's Hardwick Hall under the conservational treatment of the National Trust.³⁸²

Of the many houses of Christopher Hatton, the only surviving one is Kirby, which became the main seat of the later Hatton family and their descendants, the Earls of Winchelsea.³⁸³ Corfe Castle was destroyed during the English civil war and now stands in ruins in Purbeck. Ely House remained in the Hatton family, but it was returned to the bishops in 1697 and eventually sold to the crown in the late-18th century.³⁸⁴ Nevertheless, the site of its garden in Holborn carries the name Hatton Garden to this day.³⁸⁵ Hatton's biggest and most personal estate, Holdenby, was sold to James I in 1607 and demolished after the civil war. Only two archways and the kitchen wing remain of the once-grand house that was integral to Hatton's self-fashioning.³⁸⁶ However, Hatton's network of patronage and building projects were complemented by Elizabethan portraits of him that helped build his public image.

Christopher Hatton and courtly paintings

While many pictures of Christopher Hatton were made after his death, there are only a few extant Elizabethan portraits of him. Of these, even fewer have been dated and ascribed with certainty. Most identified portraits of Hatton now reside in anonymous private collections

³⁷⁹ IBID., p. 247.

³⁸⁰ Hatton may have drawn inspiration from a friend's home, as Robert Dudley reportedly had a tapestry showing scenes of the story as well. BUXTON: *Elizabethan Taste*, p. 95. Another set of tapestries showing the story of Gideon is known from the Medici court, where Cosimo I bought another set of 13 pieces in 1561. WYLD: "*The Gideon Tapestries at Hardwick Hall*", pp. 238–240.

³⁸¹ When Bess of Hardwick purchased the tapestries for slightly over £326, she received a discount of £5 for the trouble of having the hind covered by her own arms. VINES: *Neither Fire nor Steel*, p. 56. According to Wyld, the single tapestries were 20 feet tall and between 7.5 and 29.5 feet wide, with a total length of over 230 feet. WYLD: "*The Gideon Tapestries at Hardwick Hall*", p. 232. In metres, they would be approximately 6 metres tall, between about 2.3 and 9 metres wide, and over 70 metres in total length.

³⁸² NATIONAL TRUST UK: "*Textile Collection. The Gideon Tapestries*", <https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/hardwick/features/textile-collection-the-gideon-tapestries> (accessed 28.02.22).

³⁸³ On the patronage of the family, see PINTO, David: "*The Music of the Hattons*", in: *Royal Musical Association Research Chronicle* 23 (1990), pp. 79–108.

³⁸⁴ BROOKS: *Sir Christopher Hatton*, p. 151.

³⁸⁵ BRIGGS, M.S.: "*Notes*", in: *The Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs* 28/151 (1915), pp. 35–37, p. 36.

³⁸⁶ THORPE: *The Book of Architecture*, p. 94.

or are preserved by later copies.³⁸⁷ Probably the earliest known portrait of Hatton was painted by Cornelis Ketel. Two potential versions of this portrait exist, but they are both in private collections and have therefore attracted little art historical attention.³⁸⁸ One portrait, which is traditionally believed to be Ketel's version, is in the possession of the Earls of Winchilsea, who are distant descendants of Hatton.³⁸⁹ The other version was in the collection of the Viscount Dillon at Ditchley but was sold in an auction in 1933.³⁹⁰ Brooks has suggested that the Dillon version was a copy of the portrait by Ketel which Hatton presented to his friend Sir Henry Lee (1533–1611), the owner of Ditchley at the time.³⁹¹ A third version, which may be identical to one of these two pictures, was recorded in the collection of Lord Lumley in 1591.³⁹² However, Roy Strong has claimed that Ketel was wrongly associated with these portraits, stating that “None of the known versions can be accepted by him.”³⁹³

While there is no evident source connecting the portrait of Hatton to Ketel, an entry by the Dutch author Karel van Mander mentions a relation between the two, which is probably why most researchers have connected the artist to Hatton's portrait.³⁹⁴ Van Mander shared the anecdote of a Pieter Hachten, who bought an allegorical painting from Ketel in 1573.³⁹⁵ In van Mander's chronicles, the picture is entitled *Force overcome by Wisdom and Prudence*, and Hachten presents it to Hatton as a gift.³⁹⁶ To date, no such painting has been identified by researchers, but Ellis Waterhouse has reported that this painting in the

³⁸⁷ For Hatton's portraits known to be from the Elizabethan times, Roy Strong has proposed a two-part categorisation which distinguishes between portraits made before Hatton became Chancellor and Knight of the Garter and those made after those appointments. While this temporal categorisation is logical in theory, it is not helpful in practice, as dating the portraits is difficult. Therefore, this categorisation is not used further in this study. STRONG: *Tudor & Jacobean Portraits*, p. 137.

³⁸⁸ BROOKS: *Sir Christopher Hatton*, p. 114; DEACON: *The Courtier & The Queen*, p. 116.

³⁸⁹ FLETCHER, C. R. L. and Emery WALKER: *Historical Portraits. Richard II to Henry Wriothesley 1400-1600*, Oxford 1909, p. 159. The fact that the portrait is in the possession of the family is a strong indicator that it was directly commissioned by Hatton. However, since no information about the provenance is known, no clear statement can be made.

³⁹⁰ BROOKS: *Sir Christopher Hatton*, p. 394.

³⁹¹ *IBID.*, p. 194.

³⁹² CUST, Lionel: “Notes on Pictures in the Royal Collections-XXIV. On Some Portraits by Cornelis Ketel”, in: *The Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs* 22/116 (1912), pp. 88–94, p. 93.

³⁹³ STRONG: *Tudor & Jacobean Portraits*, pp. 136–137.

³⁹⁴ VINES: *Neither Fire nor Steel*, p. 60.

³⁹⁵ Neither the overall identity of the mentioned Pieter Hachten nor his relation to Hatton is known. A possibility is that he was an Englishman living in the Netherlands and working in the service of Hatton. Nicolas mentions a Peter Dutton as a “cousin and servant” of Hatton, whose name could have been adapted in the Dutch language by van Mander. NICOLAS: *Memoirs of the Life and Times of Sir Christopher Hatton*, p. 398.

³⁹⁶ MANDER, Carel VAN: *Het Schilder-Boeck. wa er in voor eerst de leelustighe lueght den grondt der edelvry schilderconst in verscheyden deelen wort voorghe draghen*, Utrecht 1969 (1604), p. 275.

possession of Hatton ‘introduced Ketel to Court circles [...]’.³⁹⁷ Indeed, Ketel, who worked in England between 1573 and 1581, became a very successful portraitist at the court.³⁹⁸ While one can only speculate about Hatton’s actual significance to the artist’s career, two main problems arise when attempting a deeper analysis of Ketel’s supposed portrait of Hatton. First, since both known versions are in private possession, no examination of these objects has been done to clearly date or attribute them. Second, probably for the same reason, no reliable images of the portraits are available yet.

The only known illustration is a black-and-white reproduction of the Winchelsea portrait.³⁹⁹ The image shows a full-size portrait of Hatton in a fashionable costume, which has been interpreted as the robe of a Gentleman Pensioner.⁴⁰⁰ Two elements of the iconography are particularly striking. One is the miniature held in Hatton’s right hand, which hangs from a long chain around his neck. The miniature is turned towards the beholder as if inviting them to view it. The other element is the dark cloak around Hatton’s shoulders, which is richly decorated with little triangles. Tenison has described the miniature as representing a small portrait of the queen, which would be a likely reference from Hatton to Elizabeth in a courtly portrait.⁴⁰¹ The triangle symbols used by Hatton are likewise a reference to his sovereign: they signify the nickname “Lyddes” which the queen used to address Hatton, and from which Hatton developed a cypher that he used in his letters to her.⁴⁰² Both elements have a dual function in this portrait: they not only decorate Hatton and represent his status and wealth but also, by referring to the queen, contextualise the portrayed figure within the semi-personal circle of devoted courtiers around Elizabeth. While a reliable image of the potential Ketel portrait is still missing, the image was often reproduced in both painting and print.⁴⁰³ A 17th-century copy in the collection of the NPG seems to be based

³⁹⁷ WATERHOUSE, Ellis: *Painting in Britain 1530 to 1790*, Hong Kong 1994, p. 39.

³⁹⁸ For more on Ketel, see CHAPMAN, H. Perry: “Cornelis Ketel. Fingerpainter and Poet-Painter”, in: *Nederlands Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek (NKJ) / Netherlands Yearbook for History of Art* 59 (2009), pp. 248–273; GALLEY, Nicolas: “Cornelis Ketel. A Painter Without a Brush”, in: *Artibus et Historiae* 25/49 (2004), pp. 87–100; STECHOW, Wolfgang: “Cornelis Ketel. Einzelbildnisse”, in: *Zeitschrift für Bildende Kunst* 63 (1929), pp. 200–206.

³⁹⁹ TENISON, E.M.: *Elizabethan England. Being the History of this Country*, Vol. 3, Seamington Spa 1933, entry 4.3a; FLETCHER/WALKER: *Historical Portraits. Richard II to Henry Wriothesley 1400-1600*, p. 159.

⁴⁰⁰ BROOKS: *Sir Christopher Hatton*, p. 43. Tenison gives the measurements of the canvas as 6 feet 5 inches by 9 feet 6 inches (196 cm x 279 cm), which would make it larger than life-size. TENISON: *Elizabethan England*, entry 4.3a.

⁴⁰¹ IBID.

⁴⁰² DEACON: *The Courtier & The Queen*, p. 29.

⁴⁰³ For prints, see, for example, NPG D35578, NPG D25371, and NPG D25372 in the NPG collection. A miniature copy from c. 1800, which copies only Hatton’s upper body, is preserved in the National Trust Collection at Kingston Lacy Estate in Dorset (NT 1250523).

on this portrait (**Fig. 4**).⁴⁰⁴ The copy shows Hatton’s upper body dressed in the same richly decorated costume as in the Winchilsea portrait. It also displays Hatton’s arms and motto, “Tandem Si” in the top-right corner.⁴⁰⁵ The black cloak around his shoulders can be seen in more detail here. It is decorated with golden triangles as well as pearls, a symbol of purity and value often associated with the queen. Pearls became a personal sign for Elizabeth and her virginity, which was used in portraits of her as well as by her courtiers in their own portraits.⁴⁰⁶ This impression is reinforced by this 17th-century portrait, where Hatton holds a cameo of the queen in his right hand, as if presenting it to the spectator. The copy, which depicts Hatton as a fashionable young man who is staging his appearance and wealth alongside his loyalty to the queen, gives a possible visual of a portrait of Hatton.⁴⁰⁷



Figure 4:
Unknown artist:
Sir Christopher Hatton, oil on panel, probably 17th century, copy, 78.7 cm x 65.9 cm, NPG 2162, ©National Portrait Gallery London.

⁴⁰⁴ Unknown artist: *Sir Christopher Hatton*, oil on panel, probably 17th century, copy, 78.7 c, x 65.9 c, National Portrait Gallery London, NPG 2162.

⁴⁰⁵ As shown later, this motto was mainly used by Hatton in his later years as a courtier.

⁴⁰⁶ In countless portraits of Elizabeth and her courtiers, the pearls appear as symbols of Elizabeth’s virginity as well as her association with the Goddesses Cynthia and Diana. STRONG: *Elizabethan Image*, pp. 29–32, pp. 52–55, pp. 188–194.

⁴⁰⁷ At the court, Hatton was seemingly known for his elegant dress in office. Alice Vines has shared records of a warrant that Elizabeth herself issued to allow Hatton the delivery of “six yards of tawney medley with sufficient black fur for it.” VINES: *Neither Fire nor Steel*, p. 17. This is a remarkable amount of splendour for a courtier, especially in comparison to William Cecil’s plain dress.

Hatton's conscious presentation of his affiliation to the queen can also be seen in his military apparel within the Elizabethan ceremonial apparatus.⁴⁰⁸ Courtiers would present themselves in shining armour not only to show off their fighting skills but also as an opportunity to display "both princely magnificence and virtuoso craftsmanship".⁴⁰⁹ Through their use of armorial designs, courtiers were able to display and convey messages and affiliations of their liking. One source which illustrates Hatton's visual efforts to impress the queen during military ceremonies is a manuscript in the collection of the Victoria and Albert Museum. This source, which was previously called the *Jacobe Manuscript* but is now known as the *Almain Armourers' Album*, has received very little attention from art historical research so far.⁴¹⁰ The manuscript is a collection of several drawings of suits of armour and was created between 1557 and 1587, probably by the German Jacob Halder (fl. 1576–1608), who was Master Armourer at the Greenwich Armoury under Elizabeth.⁴¹¹ Because of the exceptional level of detail in all of the illustrations, the album is a reliable source for historical research.⁴¹²

⁴⁰⁸ His biographer Eric St. John Brooks called him "an expert in the tilt-yard". BROOKS: *Sir Christopher Hatton*, p. 29.

⁴⁰⁹ GOLDRING: *Robert Dudley*, pp. 3–4.

⁴¹⁰ VICTORIA AND ALBERT MUSEUM: "*The Almain Armourers' Album*", <https://www.vam.ac.uk/articles/almain-armourers-album> (accessed 06.06.2022).

⁴¹¹ BROOKS: *Sir Christopher Hatton*, p. 54.

⁴¹² In the representations of the armour, the album's illustrations follow a pattern: one page shows the suit as it would have been worn by the courtier, while the opposite page presents the individual parts of that suit.

The inscriptions in the album indicate that 3 of the 29 drawings were made for Hatton.⁴¹³ Only one has been preserved until today and is currently displayed in the Royal Collection Trust at Windsor Castle.⁴¹⁴ The illustration shows dark armour decorated with symmetrical golden bows and detailed looped strings (**Fig. 5**).⁴¹⁵ As its centrepiece, the suit has a figure of Mercury on its breastplate. This figure is accompanied by the date 1585 and two capital E's together with a crown, which is the monograph of Queen Elizabeth.⁴¹⁶ Hatton's second suit in the album makes further references to his sovereign with strings of knots and Tudor roses on white (**Fig. 6**).⁴¹⁷ In comparison to the first two, the third suit in the album is rather plain, with just a white colour and narrow golden bands as decoration (**Fig. 7**).⁴¹⁸



Figure 5: Jacob Halder: *The Almain Armourers' Album*, 1557-1587, fol. 60–61, ©Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

⁴¹³ Two suits of Robert Dudley are also recorded as well as suits of other Elizabethan courtiers. Robert Dudley's suits are discussed in GOLDRING: *Robert Dudley*, pp. 110–113.

⁴¹⁴ ROYAL COLLECTION TRUST: "Armour Garniture of Sir Christopher Hatton for the Field, Tourney, Tilt and Barriers, 1585", <https://www.rct.uk/collection/72835/armour-garniture-of-sir-christopher-hatton-for-the-field-tourney-tilt-and-barriers> (accessed 06.06.2022).

⁴¹⁵ Deacon has described this suit as "russet in colour". DEACON: *The Courtier & The Queen*, p. 20. However, the Royal Collection Trust notes that it must have been a bluish colour when it was made. ROYAL COLLECTION TRUST: "Armour Garniture of Sir Christopher Hatton for the Field." Brooks has identified this suit as Hatton's first armour. BROOKS: *Sir Christopher Hatton*, p. 45.

⁴¹⁶ Marianne Koos has pointed out that these details were also used in armour for George Clifford, 3rd Earl of Cumberland, which is illustrated in the album and in the Metropolitan Museum of Art. KOOS, Marianne: "Körper in Hüllen. Die Rüstung als Maske Maskerade und zweite Haut in der Englischen Kultur des späten 16. Jahrhunderts", in: *21: Inquiries Into Art, History, And The Visual 4* (2021), pp. 35–86, pp. 48–49.

⁴¹⁷ Marianne Koos has identified these central symbols of the design as lover's knots. IBID., p. 59.

⁴¹⁸ For a description of the suits, see also DEACON: *The Courtier & The Queen*, pp. 20–21.



Figure 6: Jacob Halder: *The Almain Armourers' Album*, 1557-1587, fol. 68-69, ©Victoria and Albert Museum. London.

The golden loops, which are the most prominent design element on this armour, could signify the connection between the wearer of the suit, as an outer shell for the inner body, and his lady — in this case, the queen.⁴¹⁹

As one of the few researchers to examine the suits, Marianne Koos has analysed the album's illustrations with regard to the function of the suits as ornamented performative artefacts, as opposed to purely protective gear.⁴²⁰ From Koos's perspective, the pieces of armour worked as concealing masks and instruments which were heroically superimposed on the individuals who wore them.⁴²¹ While the armour conceals the wearer's face and body for protection, it is also adorned with multiple decorations, signs, and semantic embellishments. The Greenwich armour, according to Koos, is an outstanding example of this superimposition in the context of 16th-century Europe.⁴²² Hatton's pieces, in view of his close relationship with the queen, serve as prime examples for Koos to demonstrate how the decorations on the armour were used by Hatton to stage himself as a devoted servant to his sovereign.⁴²³

⁴¹⁹ KOOS: "Körper in Hüllen", p. 63.

⁴²⁰ Koos has deliberately used the term "Artefakte" when discussing the armour in the album. *IBID.*, p. 40.

⁴²¹ Koos's specific terminology is the "heroische Überformung". *IBID.*, p. 39.

⁴²² *IBID.*, pp. 42–45.

⁴²³ *IBID.*, pp. 59–63. Additionally, the story of one of these suits demonstrates how well-connected Hatton was in the elite network of the Elizabethan court. The first suit, which displayed the figure of Mercury on the

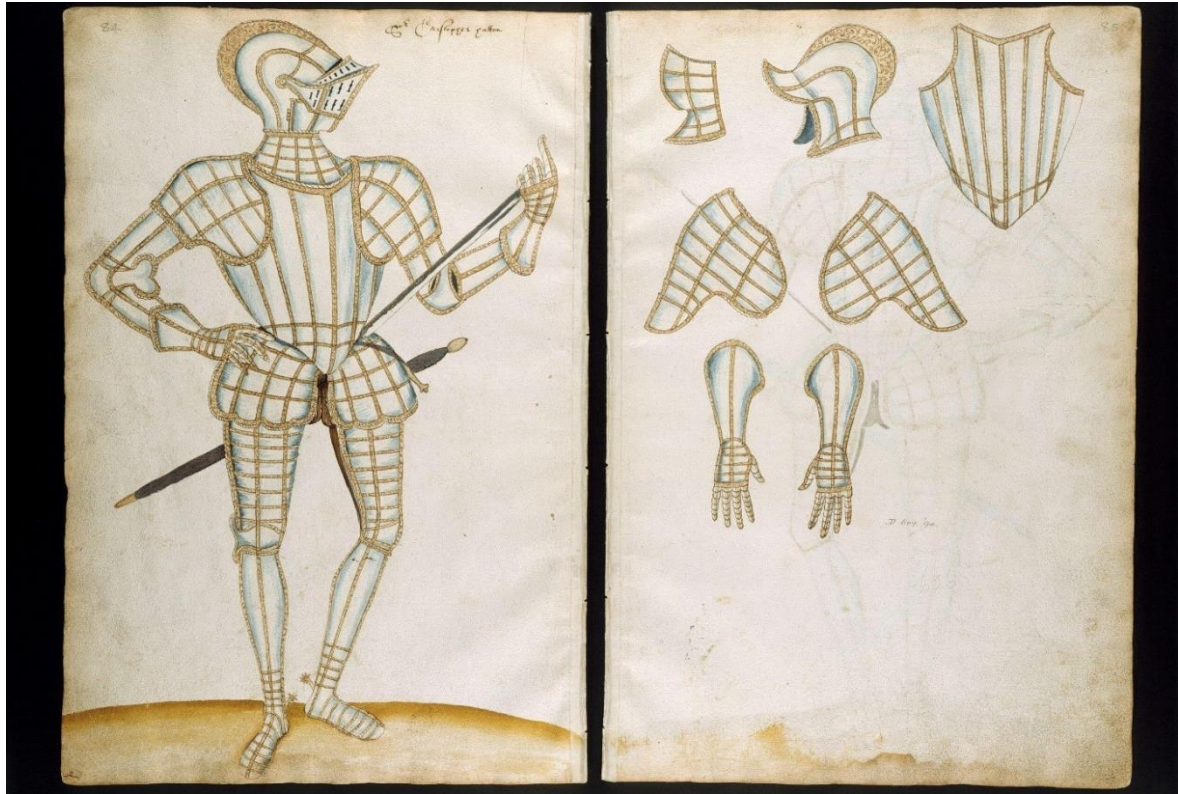


Figure 7: Jacob Halder: *The Almain Armourers' Album*, 1557-1587, fol. 84-85, ©Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

A starkly different kind of representation of Hatton is given in a very textual portrait from 1588, which is now in the NPG (**Fig. 8**).⁴²⁴ This portrait features countless inscriptions and must have been created for the occasion of Hatton's appointment as chancellor of the University of Oxford.⁴²⁵ The chancellorship was an honour granted to Hatton in 1588 after the death of Robert Dudley, the former chancellor of the university.⁴²⁶ According to Eric Brooks, this portrait is labelled on the back as coming from Corfe Castle, one of Hatton's properties.⁴²⁷ It is not known if or when the portrait of Hatton as Chancellor of Oxford was located in Corfe Castle or who commissioned it. It may have been Hatton himself, or, as

breast ended up in the possession of Robert Dudley. DEACON: *The Courtier & The Queen*, p. 20. GOLDRING: *Robert Dudley*, p. 149. ADAMS, Simon: "'Because I am of that Countrye & Mynde to Plant Myself There'. Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester and the West Midlands", in: *Midland History* 20/1 (1995), pp. 21-74, p. 339.
⁴²⁴ It was purchased by the NPG in 1908 from Messrs. Leggat Bros. STRONG: *Tudor & Jacobean portraits*, p. 135.

⁴²⁵ Unknown: *Sir Christopher Hatton as Chancellor of the University of Oxford*, c. 1588, oil on panel, 78.7 cm x 63.5 cm, National Portrait Gallery London, NPG 1518.

⁴²⁶ The ceremony is described in VINES: *Neither Fire nor Steel*, pp. 247-248.

⁴²⁷ BROOKS: *Sir Christopher Hatton*, p. 395. Brooks notes on the same page that it was reproduced in Ward's edition of *A Hendreth Sundrie Flowers*, a poem collection ascribed to George Gascoigne, which has also been connected to Hatton by scholars of his life.

Roy Strong has suggested, it could have been presented to Hatton by the university, as one inscription says “reioyce we Oxford students all”.⁴²⁸



Figure 8: Unknown: *Sir Christopher Hatton as Chancellor of the University of Oxford*, c. 1588, oil on panel, 78.7 cm x 63.5 cm, NPG 1518, ©National Portrait Gallery London.

The unusually abundant attention to this portrait amongst art historians and researchers of Hatton is due to its most special quality: the enormous integration of text and heraldic signs on the panel. Eric Mercer has called it “an extreme example“ where “coats-of-arms [were] placed above the sitter' s shoulders or around the edge of the picture.”⁴²⁹ Tarnya Cooper has written that it “is designed to act as a memorial board of the sitter's rising fortunes, and its value in terms of display was to herald the union of a venerable institution and a worthy and able man [...]”.⁴³⁰ Indeed, Hatton is dressed in a dark robe with a ruff and situated in the middle of the panel. Several fine strings of a golden chain hang from his neck down to his hand, which holds a trinket displaying the motto of the Garter, “Honi soit qui mal y

⁴²⁸ STRONG: *Tudor & Jacobean Portraits*, p. 135.

⁴²⁹ MERCER, Eric: *English Art 1553-1625*, Oxford 1962, p. 172.

⁴³⁰ COOPER: *Citizen Portrait*, p. 33.

pense” framing an image of St. George and the Dragon.⁴³¹ This sign was known as ‘the lesser George’, the less important sign of the Order of the Garter.⁴³² The Garter appears again in Hatton’s coat of arms in the top-left corner, which shows his personal three golden barbs on blue, the azure a chevron between three barbs in gold (or).⁴³³

Above and under the coat of arms, inscriptions are added in golden paint.⁴³⁴ While the verses written in English are clearly meant to be understood by 16th-century beholders, the headers are written in Latin, which adds a level of scholarship and exclusivity to the depiction. The same pattern of a Latin header, a heraldic sign in the middle, and English verses at the bottom can be seen in other parts of the painting: under the lesser sign of George in the lower-left corner,⁴³⁵ around the holden hind, by Hatton’s cognisance in the lower-centre part of the painting,⁴³⁶ around the sign of the ox in the top-right corner,⁴³⁷ and in the bottom-right corner around the arms of the University of Oxford, a book surrounded by three crowns on a blue shield.⁴³⁸

⁴³¹ This now-common saying, “evil be to him who evil thinks” stems from the origin tale of the Order. The legend states that the Order emerged after an incident at the court of Edward III in 1348, when the king’s mistress lost her garter from her leg while dancing. The king, in an act of chivalry, stood by her and said those words to the staring crowd. More information on the Order of the Garter is given in WADDINGTON: *“Elizabeth I and the Order of the Garter”*, p. 97.

⁴³² STRONG: *Tudor & Jacobean Portraits*, p. 135.

⁴³³ For more on Hatton’s arms, see BROOKS: *Sir Christopher Hatton*, p. 81.

⁴³⁴ “The fruite of toyle, which rarest witts/ Doe reape for studies payne/ Makes men for courte and office fight/ dewe to obtayne./ The Oxe the toyle, the shefe the fruits/ his threefolde Virtues showes/ Whose nature, art, and industrie,/ whose treble graces flowes.” Above is written “Ter fructuous reip”, but the condition of the portrait does not allow for deciphering this further. For more on the inscriptions, see STRONG: *Tudor & Jacobean Portraits*, p. 134. Since many of the inscriptions refer to either parts of the Bible or another source, future attempts at deciphering could consider the context of these verses.

⁴³⁵ Header: “Et conculcabis leonem et.” Verses: “Saint George. For Christe his faith was slayne,/ In heuen a gloriouse wight/ Who once the dreadfull Dragon slue/ ,by dint of deadly fight./ S [Sr] Christopher, who Hatton high/ Saint Georges worthy knight,/ Lord Chancelor of this famouse realme:/ Whose iustice shines so bright,/ That he his noble patterne here;/ In like fore to pursue/ The feende that roring lion fell./ And Dragon dothe subdue/ [Ioh.8.] For if feende fathers lyes, and wrongs:/ Then feende does downe amaine/ When eqintie suppressent wrong:/ And men their right obtayne.”

⁴³⁶ Header: “Longa vita cum Valetudine bona.” Verses: “This noble beaste, by signe dothe showe/ A lyfe that here endurethe long:/ And healthe, that sicknese doth not knowe:/ Of nature swifte of body strong./ Long lyfe, good healthe with honors fight;/ To shyne in eury coaste by fame./ I wishe vnto that worthy wight,/ Who for his badge doth me proclame / Splendoris tui.” Here, the usual pattern is broken, as another Latin inscription is added to the bottom.

⁴³⁷ Header: “Omnis frugum abundantia.” Gen.4, Verses: “The plowinge oxe doth corne display/ And water plentie notes agayne/ Stande Oxe in foorde, in water stay:/ Portende to Oxforde store of grayne./ The men of Athens yore agoe,/ Their coyne with stampe of oxe did frame./ Which thinge did please Vespasian soe/ As made him imitate the same./ Of waters also we doe calle:/ A flowinge speache which best excels./ The things likewise we abounde with all/ Beare names of fountaynes, springs, and wells.”

⁴³⁸ Header: “Quis est dignus aperire librum./ et solvere signacula eius Apec.5.” Verses: “Adorne with triple crown/ Thy triple crowne, and boke displayde/ With claspes in number seun:/ For artes and for professed skill/ Resoundes thy name to heun/ From the a[s] from the lodge of lore/ And kay of every tounge./ No les than from the Troian horse/ Moste noble peeres haue sprong/ Come riche, come pore, come all good wits,/ Vnto the Musaes marte/ Reioyce we Oxforde students all/ For honor fosters arte.”

Cooper is probably correct in suggesting that this portrait is a commemoration of Hatton's achievements which led to his appointment as chancellor of the university.⁴³⁹ The portrait illustrates the stage of Christopher Hatton's career at the end of the 1580s. His plain and modest dress, together with the chosen emblematic language of the iconography, which combines texts and heraldic signs, represents a different kind of portrait compared to the earlier Winchelsea portrait. Here, the focus is not on Hatton and the symbolic attributes of his dress or the concealed praises of the queen; instead, it is a very intellectualised iconography which represents Hatton as a scholar rather than a flamboyant member of the Queen's Guard. It addresses a different type of ideal courtier — one that is closer to the style of representation seen in William Cecil's portraits. In the Oxford portrait, Hatton is depicted as older and more established in the political and representational functions of the state. When he was given the chancellorship of the university, he had already been Lord Chancellor for one year. That position was one of the highest in the government and, as noted, was not accepted at the court without criticism of Hatton's academic suitability. As his role in the court changed, his public image did as well.⁴⁴⁰

While it is not clear if Hatton commissioned these portraits of himself, it is more evident in the case of a portrait of Elizabeth in which Hatton is also depicted. The so-called *Sieve Portrait* was painted by the Flemish artist Quentin Metsys the Younger, who signed the

⁴³⁹ COOPER: *Citizen Portrait*, p. 33.

⁴⁴⁰ Two other portraits represent the plainer, minister image of Hatton. Both are miniatures which have been ascribed to the renowned Elizabethan miniaturist Nicholas Hilliard. The first miniature, which is in the collection of the NPG, shows Hatton in his function as Lord Chancellor. Nicholas Hilliard: *Sir Christopher Hatton*, c. 1588, watercolour and bodycolour on vellum, 4.7 cm x 3.5 cm (oval), National Portrait Gallery London, NPG 5549. From a material standpoint, this miniature is very interesting because it is painted on vellum that is glued to a playing card, seemingly as a support. The playing card becomes visible when the miniature is turned around, revealing a single red heart. NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY: "*Sir Christopher Hatton by Nicholas Hilliard*", <https://www.npg.org.uk/collections/search/portrait/mw07467/Sir-Christopher-Hatton> (accessed 08.06.2022). Hilliard's art of portrait miniatures and the phenomenon of portraits painted on playing cards has been analysed by LEONHARD, Karin: "*Painted Gems. The Color Worlds of Portrait Miniature Painting in Sixteenth and Seventeenth-Century Britain*", in: BAKER, Tawrin et al. (Ed.): *Early Modern Color Worlds*, Leiden 2015, pp. 140–169; LEONHARD, Karin: "*Game of Thrones: Early Modern Playing Cards and Portrait Miniature Painting*", in: *British Art Studies 17* (2020), <https://doi.org/10.17658/issn.2058-5462/issue-17/kleonhard> (accessed 16.08.2023). Another miniature showing Hatton as Lord Chancellor is now in the Victoria and Albert Museum. Nicholas Hilliard: *Sir Christopher Hatton*, 1588-1591, watercolour on vellum, 8.5 cm x 5.5 cm, Victoria and Albert Museum. This miniature is stuck to a playing card of the four of clubs. VICTORIA AND ALBERT MUSEUM: "*Sir Christopher Hatton*", <https://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O17839/sir-christopher-hatton-portrait-miniature-nicholas-hilliard/> (accessed 20.09.2022). Both miniatures are discussed in FARADAY, Christina Juliet: "*Sir Christopher Hatton (1540-91)*", in: MACLEOD, Catharine (Ed.): *Elizabethan Treasures. Miniatures by Hilliard and Oliver*, Exhibition Catalogue, National Portrait Gallery London, 21 February to 19 May 2019, London 2019, pp. 80–81. For more on Hilliard, see HULSE: *The Rule of Art. Literature and Painting in the Renaissance*, pp. 115–131. Unfortunately, this entry does not address the fact that both are painted on playing cards.

painting and dated it 1583.⁴⁴¹ The portrait has been securely linked to Hatton as its commissioner, as indicated by a particular element of the iconography on the canvas. The portrait shows the queen dressed in black and white with a necklace and a brooch of pearls.⁴⁴² Both the colours and the pearls are personal symbols of the queen that were also used by her courtiers.⁴⁴³ In the background of the painting, several men in colourful courtly robes can be seen in a crowded hallway flanked by pillars. The bearded man in the middle of the crowd, who wears a prominent ruff and is the only one gazing at the beholder, has been identified as Christopher Hatton.⁴⁴⁴ This identification is based on the small golden hind, Hatton's cognisance, visible on the man's cloak. The integration of Hatton's personal sign in this portrait is a strong indicator that Hatton, as a patron, had himself depicted in the inner-portrait court of his sovereign. However, a secure provenance of this painting does not exist.⁴⁴⁵

Apart from this interesting personal note, the portrait is filled with a plethora of symbols and arcane inscriptions. The most obvious is the dark pillar in the left part of the background, on which several roundels show the story of Dido and Aeneas. The latter, a Trojan hero, was said to have founded the Roman Empire; thus, he functions as a model of an upright and dutiful ruler next to Elizabeth.⁴⁴⁶ The "imperial column", which represents the queen's chastity and constancy as a sovereign in this painting, was commonly used as a pictorial device in Europe in connection with monarchs.⁴⁴⁷ Beneath the column is an inscription, "Stanco riposo e riposato affano" (Weary I rest and having rested still I am weary), which is a quote taken from Petrarch's *Triumph of Chastity*.⁴⁴⁸

⁴⁴¹ Quentin Metsys the Younger: *The Sieve Portrait of Queen Elizabeth I*, 1583, oil on wood, 124.5 cm x 91.5 cm, Pinacoteca Nazionale di Siena. It is illustrated in the Pinacoteca's website:

<https://www.pinacotecanazionale.siena.it/portfolio/ritratto-di-elisabetta-i/> (accessed 02.12.2023).

⁴⁴² To date, this element has only been discussed by KIMBRIEL, Christine Slottved and Henrietta McBurney RYAN: "A Newly Discovered Variant at Eton College of the Queen Elizabeth I Sieve Portrait", in: *The Burlington Magazine* 156/1339 (2014), pp. 640–649, p. 642.

⁴⁴³ White, as the colour of purity, reflected Elizabeth's virginity, while black was chosen as a contrast to further highlight the white. These colours are discussed in more detail in MCCracken: "Dress Colour at the Court of Elizabeth I", pp. 515–533.

⁴⁴⁴ STRONG: *Gloriana*, p. 101; GOLDRING: *Robert Dudley*, pp. 114–115.

⁴⁴⁵ It was found in 1895 in the attic of the Palazzo Reale in Siena, where it was given to the museum. STRONG: *Elizabethan Image*, p. 47.

⁴⁴⁶ HEARN, Karen and Tabitha BARBER: "Elizabeth I. The Sieve Portrait", in: HEARN, Karen (Ed.): *Dynasties. Painting in Tudor and Jacobean England, 1530-1630*, Exhibition Catalogue, Tate Gallery, 12 October 1995 to 7 January 1996, Peterborough 1995, pp. 85–86, p. 85; STRONG: *Gloriana*, p. 107.

⁴⁴⁷ *IBID.*, p. 102.

⁴⁴⁸ STRONG: *Gloriana*, p. 105.

On the right-hand side, a globe is seen behind the queen, which represents her and her country's imperial aspiration. A motto inscribed on the globe says "Tutto vedo e molto manca" (I see everything, but much is missing), which references Elizabeth's elevated function as a monarch as well as her ambitions for the English country.⁴⁴⁹ Since Christopher Hatton patronised several explorers, this is a likely connection that presents the globe as a symbol of the queen's empire as well as a personal symbol of Hatton's patronage.⁴⁵⁰

The sieve, as the most prominent attribute of the portrait, offers multiple lines of interpretation.⁴⁵¹ Considering Elisabeth's public image as the 'virgin queen', it can be read as a symbol of purity and chastity. Its allegorical significance derives from Petrarch's story of the Roman Vestal Virgin Tuccia, who, to prove her purity, carried water in a sieve without spilling a drop.⁴⁵² At the same time, the sieve was also used as a political symbol in 16th-century England. As an instrument for sowing, it would divide the good seeds from the bad chaff, which is another allegory for Elizabeth's rule of the empire.⁴⁵³ On the rim of the sieve, another inscription is legible: "A terra il ben, il mal dimora in sella" (The good falls to the ground, while the bad remains in the saddle). Kimbriel and Ryan have suggested that the inscription, in combination with the sieve, could be seen as a personal message of warning to the queen about false loyalty.⁴⁵⁴ In that case, as a patron, Hatton would have been simultaneously expressing his affiliation with the 'good', trustworthy courtiers.

The allegorical subject of queen Elizabeth I with a sieve as an attribute was not a singular invention of Metsys. Multiple other versions of the same motive were painted before and after Hatton's painting.⁴⁵⁵ Thus, his choice to commission an established allegorical form of portraiture demonstrates his awareness of the discourse around Elizabeth's public image. Nevertheless, he had exclusive elements added to the scene to make it more appealing to

⁴⁴⁹ KIMBRIEL/RYAN: "A Newly Discovered Variant", p. 644.

⁴⁵⁰ STRONG: *Gloriana*, pp. 102–103.

⁴⁵¹ Hazard has said that "the very ambiguity of the *Sieve Portrait* demonstrates the interdependence of word and picture in Elizabethan portraiture [...]." HAZARD, Mary E.: "The Case for 'Case' in Reading Elizabethan Portraits", in: *Mosaic* 23/2 (1990), pp. 61–88, p. 75.

⁴⁵² STRONG: *Elizabethan Image*, p. 46.

⁴⁵³ POPE-HENNESSY, John: *The Portrait in the Renaissance*, Princeton 1989, p. 254. The sieve is even used in that context in Geoffrey Whitney's *A Choice of Emblems* with the motto "Sic discerne" (Judge this way). WHITNEY: *A Choice of Emblems*, p. 68; HEARN/BARBER: "Elizabeth I. The Sieve Portrait", p. 85.

⁴⁵⁴ KIMBRIEL/RYAN: "A Newly Discovered Variant", p. 644; LEISHER, John Franklin: *Geoffrey Whitney's 'A Choice of Emblems' and Its Relation to the Emblematic Vogue in Tudor England*, New York 1987, p. 58.

⁴⁵⁵ George Gower: *The Plimpton Sieve Portrait of the Queen Elizabeth I*, 1579, oil on wood, 104.4 cm x 76.2 cm, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington. Strong has spoken of three other versions and suggested that all but the one by Metsys were painted by Gower. STRONG: *The Elizabethan Image. Painting in England 1540-1620*, p. 47. Another version was found at Eton College and treated at the Hamilton Kerr Institute. KIMBRIEL/RYAN: "A Newly Discovered Variant". The authors also list more versions of the sieve portrait, including those in private possession.

courtly beholders. The background, in which Hatton himself is visible, is especially crucial for creating an interaction with the audience. In many ways, it represents a view into the courtly circle, as it allows beholders to look behind the queen and observe the courtiers working in the background to sustain the empire. A courtier-beholder would have known to connect the architectural archway framing the courtiers and Hatton with the foreground and the queen. The grand pillar, as a symbol of Elizabeth's stable power, is repeated in the background, where less richly decorated but functional pillars can be seen in the archway. Their position connects them to the courtiers standing in front of them. The composition offers an analogy between the pillars and the courtiers, who stand in line just like the pillars. The iconography of the background suggests that Elizabeth's courtiers are the pillars of her reign, the base of her power, and the support for her imperial system. The complex iconography can be understood as a carefully planned pictorial programme developed with references to the queen, English politics, and Hatton's position in that cosmos. Hatton chose not only to represent his queen in a complex and highly intellectualised way but also to include himself in the panel. Thus, in a figurative sense, he fashioned himself as a well-read, ideal courtier standing in the background and advising his sovereign.⁴⁵⁶

The *Sieve Portrait* commissioned by Hatton, as well as his other portraits analysed here, targeted beholders from the inner courtly circle. He therefore aimed to use these paintings and his patronage to portray himself as the perfect courtier close to the queen. In this way, his courtly paintings function in the context of the courtesy discourse of the Elizabethan times, and they display his offices as well as his limitless support of his sovereign.

⁴⁵⁶ Regarding the Siena *Sieve Portrait*, Doris Adler has further framed the portrait's symbolism in the context of the marriage negotiations between Elizabeth and the French Duke of Anjou in 1581. The negotiations were unsuccessful, which strengthened the image of Elizabeth as the everlasting virgin. ADLER, Doris: "*The Riddle of the Sieve*", in: *Renaissance Papers* (1978), pp. 1–10.

Preliminary Conclusion

The first part of this study has provided a theoretical background on the courtier and his ideal role in the European early modern state as well as the Elizabethan court in general. It has shown that the courtier had to gain skills and knowledge of intellectual and physical abilities in various fields. The examples of Castiglione's *The Courtier*, Ascham's *The Schoolmaster*, and Elyot's *The Governour* illustrate the broad spectrum of a courtier's duties and his function in the service of the monarch. While all three present an image of the courtier as a multi-talented politician, such ideal reflected the theoretical discourse of courtliness rather than a real model taken from practice. Nevertheless, these descriptions underpin this study's understanding of courtly self-fashioning as an interplay of presentation and observation. Next to knowledge and training of these qualities, their display in the courtly cosmos was another expectation of the ideal courtier. Dance in particular fulfilled an essential ceremonial function as a cosmic representation of the Elizabethan hierarchy and harmonious order. A courtier could use his skill in dancing to enter the courtly stage and fashion himself as a part of this cosmos.

This image has been further explained by the introduction of William Cecil and Christopher Hatton, whose roles as courtiers have been described in the context of the courtesy discourse. The men represent two different models; although they both used the courtier ideal as a reference system, they did so in distinct ways. Cecil fashioned himself as the ideal minister, family man, and head of a dynasty. In an almost contrary way, Hatton's role as a courtier was primarily associated with his extraordinary dancing skill, which represented a calculated use of the courtesy discourse for the main purpose of devoting himself to the queen and fashioning himself as her servant.

Different portraits of both courtiers have been analysed. In the courtesy books, such paintings fulfilled various didactic functions as objects of practical learning, but they were also decorative. The specific function of paintings, and especially portraits, is exemplified by the portraits of Cecil and Hatton which have been read in the context of courtly self-fashioning. This reading is the first step to understanding how the discourse of the courtier was applied to create a courtly painting, an art form that prompted a specifically demanding interaction with the audience.

The next chapters present the painting *Riddle devoted to William Cecil* as the first case study. This analysis explores more deeply how this Elizabethan painting interacted with the

courtly discourse. Furthermore, an art historical context is detailed for an object that has not been previously analysed in detail.

Part II: A Riddle devoted to William Cecil

The *Riddle devoted to William Cecil*, or the *Cecil Riddle*, is a rare narrative painting from Elizabethan times that presents a still-unsolved puzzle (**Fig. 9**).⁴⁵⁷ To date, neither the authorship nor the commissioning context of this piece is known.⁴⁵⁸ The painting was first documented in an inventory of the Hyde family, Earls of Clarendon, in 1750, where it was recorded as hanging in the back parlour of their Cornbury estate.⁴⁵⁹ The painting remained in the family until it was auctioned by Sotheby's in 2010 and entered into private possession. The auction house assumed that the object had initially belonged to William Cecil and was acquired by Edward Hyde, First Earl of Clarendon (1609–1674), or one of his descendants.⁴⁶⁰ The belief that Cecil originally possessed the *Cecil Riddle* is based on a now-illegible inscription on a small panel in the upper-middle part of the composition, beneath Cecil's coat of arms: "This Ryddle is dyvotyd to the / Right honourable Syr Wylliam / Cecyl, Knyght, Principal Secretary to Her Ma.t.ie" (**Fig. 10**).⁴⁶¹ This reference to Cecil as "Sir William Cecil" is the reason for dating the portrait to before Cecil's elevation to Baron Burghley in 1571.⁴⁶² This dating seems accurate since Cecil was only Principal Secretary until he was appointed Lord Treasurer in 1572, after which he would not have been addressed by his former office. Additionally, in this picture, his coat of arms does not display the garter around it, which would have been the case once Cecil became a member of the Order of the Garter in 1572.⁴⁶³

⁴⁵⁷ Unknown: *A Riddle devoted to Sir William Cecil*, c. 1565-1570, oil on panel, 40.5 cm x 61 cm, Hatfield House.

⁴⁵⁸ So far, the painting has been ascribed solely to an anonymous Dutch artist working in England. HEARN, Karen: "British School. *A Riddle c. 1565-70*", in: HEARN, Karen (Ed.): *Dynasties. Painting in Tudor and Jacobean England, 1530-1630*, Exhibition Catalogue, Tate Gallery, 12 October 1995 to 7 January 1996, Peterborough 1995, pp. 98–99, p. 98. See SOTHEBY'S: "Anglo-Netherlandish School circa 1565-70, Lot 14", in: *Old Master & British Paintings Evening Sale* (08.12.2010), <https://www.sothebys.com/en/auctions/ecatalogue/2010/old-master-british-paintings-evening-sale-110036/lot.14.html> (accessed 20.07.2022). The topic of authorship is also discussed in WARNER, Lyndan: "Kinship Riddles", in: *Genealogy* 6/43 (2022), pp. 1–30, p. 20.

⁴⁵⁹ GIBSON, Robin: *Catalogue of Portraits in the Collection of the Earl of Clarendon*, London 1977, p. 131.

⁴⁶⁰ SOTHEBYS: "Anglo-Netherlandish School circa 1565-70, Lot 14".

⁴⁶¹ This inscription was transmitted by Theresa Lewis and Robin Gibson, who produced almost identical transcripts of it. LEWIS, Lady Theresa: *Lives of the Friends and Contemporaries of Chancellor Clarendon*, Vol. 3, London 1852, p. 286; GIBSON: *Catalogue of Portraits*, p. 131.

⁴⁶² HEARN: "British School. *A Riddle c. 1565-70*", p. 98.

⁴⁶³ Cecil's coat of arms as Lord Burghley is presented and illustrated in WAGNER, Anthony: *Historic Heraldry of Britain. An Illustrated Series of British Historical Arms, with Notes, Glossary, and an Introduction to Heraldry*, Chichester 1972, p. 67. In the *Cecil Riddle*, a blue circle around the coat of arms seems to have held a motto, but the writing is no longer legible. Lyndan Warner has deciphered the characters AVDAX. WARNER: "Kinship Riddles", p. 11.



Figure 9: Unknown: *A Riddle devoted to Sir William Cecil*, c. 1565-1570, oil on panel, 40.5 cm x 61 cm, ©Hatfield House.

The *Cecil Riddle* has hardly been researched, presumably because of its complexity and the sparsity of background information about it, and it has not yet gained attention in the broader context of Elizabethan art history. The painting was first mentioned and described in 1852 by Lady Theresa Lewis as a painting in the Earl of Clarendon's collection.⁴⁶⁴ Over a century later, in 1977, Robin Gibson listed it again in possession of the Hyde family and connected it more specifically to William Cecil.⁴⁶⁵ In 1995, Karen Hearn dedicated an entry to it in her book *Dynasties to the Cecil Riddle*, which discusses the painting in detail and assembles the past research.⁴⁶⁶ While this publication is a popular source for research on the Elizabethan era, the *Cecil Riddle* remained relatively unknown until it was auctioned in

⁴⁶⁴ LEWIS: *Lives of the Friends*, p. 286.

⁴⁶⁵ GIBSON: *Catalogue of Portraits*, p. 131.

⁴⁶⁶ HEARN: "British School. *A Riddle c. 1565-70*", pp. 98–99.

2010. At that time, it attracted the attention of Pieter Donche, who had previously been publishing works on Dutch genealogical riddle paintings.⁴⁶⁷ Donche connected his knowledge of the Dutch tradition with this piece, which provided a basis for all subsequent contextualisations of the *Cecil Riddle*.⁴⁶⁸

However, no extensive art historical analysis of the painting has been conducted yet, partly because the painting could not be located. No high-resolution image of the object has been obtained either, and it has never been photographed or displayed without its frame. Therefore, it is almost impossible to talk about the iconography in the corners with certainty. Any analysis of this painting must necessarily follow a deductive method and will risk being incomplete, imprecise, and speculative. The location of the picture was only determined very recently by Lyndan Warner, who published a historical analysis of the painting's relationship riddle in 2022.⁴⁶⁹ Warner determined that the *Cecil Riddle* was acquired by the descendants of the Cecil family and added to their collection in Hatfield House, Hertfordshire.

Based on the findings of these former publications, this part aims to provide a detailed art-historical examination of the painting and its quality as an Elizabethan painting. In this regard, it embeds the painting in the Elizabethan discourse around paintings and genealogy, which was of great importance to courtiers. As an object, the painting displays three distinct

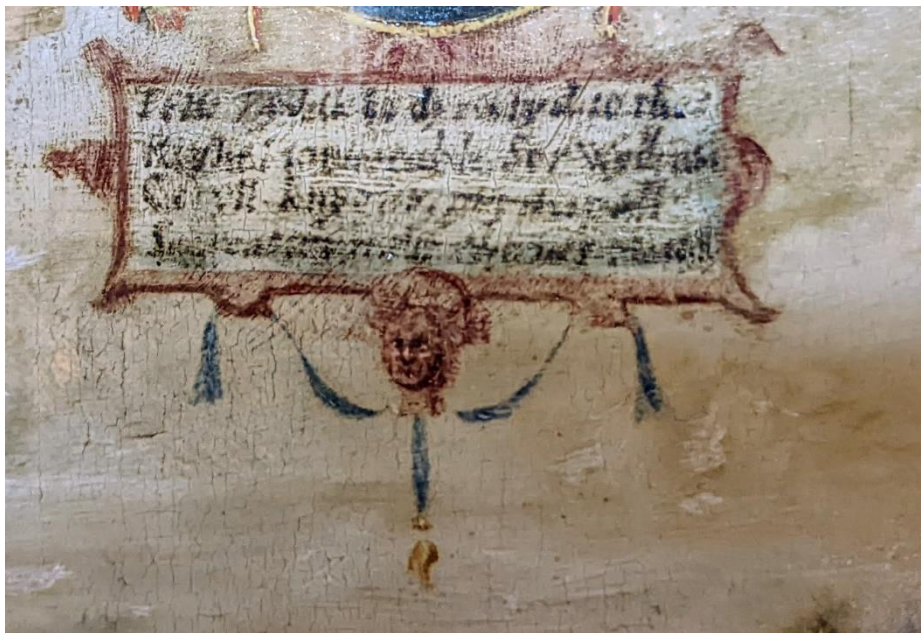


Figure 10:
Cecil Riddle,
detail,
dedication to
William Cecil,
©Hatfield
House.

⁴⁶⁷ DONCHE, Pieter: “Een genealogisch raadsel uit 1504”, in: *Vlaamse Stam* 35 (1999), pp. 271–274; DONCHE, Pieter: “Een genealogisch raadsel uit 1619”, in: *Vlaamse Stam* 42 (2006), pp. 444–450.

⁴⁶⁸ DONCHE, Pieter: “Verwantschapsraadsels op Schilderijen”, in: *Vlaamse Stam* 47 (2011), pp. 234–242.

⁴⁶⁹ WARNER: “Kinship Riddles”.

aspects of the courtly Elizabethan life. First, the popularity of riddles and connective thinking engaged individuals in the act of discussion rather than demanding one apparent answer. With reference to previous research, this part of the book describes the continental context of the genealogical riddle depicted in the *Cecil Riddle* to illustrate its use as a popular picture pattern. Second, the particular English version of this riddle is analysed. Elizabethan noble families often represented complex and intertwined connections of political alliances and adoptions, which is echoed in the *Cecil Riddle*. Furthermore, Cecil had dynastical aspirations himself, which could be why he was given such an object. Here, the question of who commissioned the painting and gifted it to Cecil is addressed for the first time. The investigation especially considers one essential picture element which has hardly been addressed in previous research: the framework painted on the panel. Third, and finally, the riddle is intertwined with the English riddle culture and the circulation of paintings as the basis for understanding this riddle as an Elizabethan courtly painting.⁴⁷⁰

⁴⁷⁰ The findings of this part are also the product of fruitful conversations with Karen Hearn, Malcolm Jones, and Lyndan Warner, who were kind enough to share their knowledge on this topic.

4. “Showe Me by Reason how that May be”: One Riddle, Many Pictures

The *Cecil Riddle* is a heavily textual image that features three text plates on the panel. These texts reference and elaborate on the interactions amongst the numerous figures depicted in the painting. These texts, together with the iconography, create the picture’s narrative (**Fig. 11**). In the centre of the painting, there is a young woman dressed in a noble gown. An older man lays on her lap with his eyes closed. His posture is relaxed; his head rests on his left shoulder, and his body is curled up as if he is asleep. His age is visually highlighted by his white beard and the white hair under his black cap. Both the woman and the old man wear very noble clothes that are represented with a remarkable amount of detail, which demonstrates the quality of the image. On the lady’s dress, individual buttons and delicate embroidery on the sleeves can be seen, and a long chain hangs around her neck. Both of these central figures wear ruffs, which style them in an aristocratic fashion.

Unlike the man, the lady is shown in a highly active and engaging pose. Her left arm is placed around the sleeping old man to comfort him, but her right arm is bent in a dynamic gesture of raising her index finger to point towards the left-hand side of the painting. Her face is turned in the same direction, which guides the beholder’s gaze to the figure of a young man standing to the left. Dressed in red and black with a white ruff, the young man has his back turned towards the viewer, but his profile is still visible. His right hand is stretched out in front of him, and his index finger is also raised, which creates an interaction with the young lady in the middle. With his brown hair and fashionable beard, he is portrayed as a courtly young man. A slim sword curves around his hip and is visible next to his left leg. He gazes upwards at a text panel that is visually mounted on a tree, which the lady points towards as well. The inscription on this panel represents the question with which the young man addresses the woman: “My faire Lady, I pray yove tell Me / What And whens, be yonder thre / That cometh ovt of the castell, in svch degree / And of ther dyscent, And Natyvity”. Thus, the panel initiates a conversation within the picture that forms the narrative for viewers to follow.

The elevated earthy ground under these three figures — the young man, the lady, and the old man — is visually set apart from the rest of the scenery. The background of the painting consists of a landscape scene, which is set at a lower elevation than the area with the men and woman. The landscape includes mountains, a river, and a hint of a town next to the woman’s face. The castle mentioned in the inscription sits in the background, which confirms that the text refers to the actual pictorial content. This relatively large and medieval-looking piece of architecture dominates the background on the right-hand side of the painting. The front entrance is open, offering a narrow look into the inside court. On a narrow path leading from the door to the centre of the image, three men walk next to each other, apparently leaving the castle. They are all wearing dark coats and hats with feathers, but the base colours of their clothes are noticeably different: the man in the middle is dressed in red, the man on the left wears yellow, and the man on the right wears white. The man dressed in white seems to be the youngest of the three, as he has no facial hair.



Figure 11: *Cecil Riddle*, painting without the frame, ©Hatfield House.

Though they do not seem to be conversing with each other, the three men are compositionally connected by their similar poses and marching step. Their connection to each other — as well as their “dyscent and nativity”, as it is called in the question text — is addressed in a second text panel positioned under the sleeping old man. This text

responds to the first inscription. As a pictorial element, this wooden panel is painted with great care. Unlike the smaller first panel, it is almost sculpturally designed, with a detail of a crack on the left side. The text represents the woman’s response to the young man’s inquiry:

Syr. The one ys My brother, of My fathers syede the Trewthe, you to show / The other by My Mothers syede. Ys My brother also / The thyred ys my own sonne lawfully begat / And all be sonnes to My husband That sleepes here on my Lappe / Without hurt of lynnege in any degree / Showe Me by Reason how that May be’.

In the last sentence, the “ryddle” is presented as an ambiguous invitation. It answers the young man’s question to the lady regarding the ancestry of the three men in the background; however, rather than providing clarity, this answer is even more puzzling. The deliberately confusing statement from the lady can be understood as an invitation for the beholder to think about and discuss how these complex family relations “May be”, meaning how they could have emerged. Here, the task is to find a solution that accounts for the information given by the lady in the inscription. How can the two men be both her half-brothers and her husband’s sons while her own son is also the son of her husband, all “without hurt of lynnege in any degree”?

This description of the *Cecil Riddle* reveals the painting’s character as a logical challenge and genealogical puzzle which urges beholders to figure out the exact family relations amongst the depicted figures. It is immediately clear that this object was made for a specific audience who would be able to solve the puzzle. However, to illustrate how the painting functions as a “riddle” and clarify its relation to the beholder, the next session defines a riddle and explains how a riddle unfolds in this object.

What is a riddle?

Numerous definitions of a riddle — and discussions of what it should be — have emerged in many different periods. Proposing a charmingly minimalist definition, Archer Taylor has stated that a riddle is ultimately a verbal puzzle on any subject which is always expressed to demand a solution.⁴⁷¹ While this explanation is accurate enough in its brevity, another critical element of a riddle is its deliberate use of obscurity to encode or conceal its message.⁴⁷² Even when presented orally, a riddle must have a form that does not reveal its

⁴⁷¹ TAYLOR, Archer: “*The Riddle*”, in: *California Folklore Quarterly* 2/2 (1943), pp. 129–147, p. 129. Referring to Taylor, this study does not differentiate between the terms “riddle”, “enigma”, and “puzzle”.

⁴⁷² More on obscurity is written in SCHILTZ: *Music and Riddle Culture in the Renaissance*, pp. 40–64. For a linguistic view of a riddle, see DIENHART, John: “*A Linguistic Look at Riddles*”, in: NØRGAARD, Nina (Ed.):

solution in the first step.⁴⁷³ At its core, a riddle is composed of a question, whether explicit or implicit, and it always asks for an answer. Hence, it has a necessarily interactive form, which can require a specific methodology to reach the right solution but also involve guessing.⁴⁷⁴

This connotation is apparent from the Greek term for a riddle, “gryphos”, which also refers to a fishing net. The Latin language uses the words “aenigma” and “problema” to discuss riddles.⁴⁷⁵ With their transition from orality into writing, riddles have emerged in unregulated forms, such as folk riddles, as well as in literary riddles in verse consciously composed by “literary artists”.⁴⁷⁶ The latter include popular riddles from Classical Antiquity, such as the riddle posed to Oedipus by the Sphinx.⁴⁷⁷ However, riddles are not limited to texts but have also evolved in the form of pictures or text-picture hybrids. For example, a rebus presents a series of signs or pictures which should be converted into words to create a meaningful message.⁴⁷⁸

In the early modern era, printed riddle books started to circulate various forms of riddles. The oldest booklet is said to be *Straßburger Rästelbuch*, a collection of German riddles from about 1505.⁴⁷⁹ An important name in the European riddle tradition is Symphosius, who supposedly wrote one of the oldest riddle collections.⁴⁸⁰ These textual riddles used specific devices, such as analogies, paradoxes, and metaphors, to conceal the message, thus creating a puzzle.⁴⁸¹ Logic, knowledge of languages, and rhetoric were crucial to solving

The Language of Riddles, Humor and Literature. Six Essays by John M. Dienhart, Odense 2010, pp. 13–47. A thorough theoretical approach is presented in MARANDA, Elli Köngäs: “Theory and Practice of Riddle Analysis”, in: *The Journal of American Folklore* 84/331 (1971), pp. 51–61, pp. 51–55.

⁴⁷³ Though interesting, orality as a topic is not discussed further in this study. It is addressed in more detail in JARITZ, Gerhard: “Images and the Power of the Spoken Word”, in: JARITZ, Gerhard and Michael RICHTER (Ed.): *Oral History of the Middle Ages. The Spoken Word in Context*, Krems, Budapest 2001, pp. 277–289.

⁴⁷⁴ KAIVOLA-BREGENHØJ, Annikki: “Riddles and Their Use”, in: HASAN-ROKEM, Galit and David SHULMAN (Ed.): *Untying Knot Riddles Enigmatic Modes*, New York, Oxford 1996, pp. 10–36, p. 33. The riddle’s theory and function have been further explained by SEBO, Erin Madeleine: *In Enigmate. The History of a Riddle, 400–1500*, Chicago 2018, pp. 20–37. See also COOK, Eleanor: *Enigmas and Riddles in Literature*, Cambridge 2006; JOLLES, André: *Einfache Formen. Legende, Sage, Mythe, Rätsel, Spruch, Kasus, Memorabile, Märchen, Witz*, Tübingen 1982, pp. 129–136.

⁴⁷⁵ HAIN, Mathilde: *Rätsel*, Stuttgart 1966, p. 1.

⁴⁷⁶ TAYLOR: “The Riddle”, p. 148; TAYLOR, Archer: *The Literary Riddle Before 1600*, Berkeley 1976, pp. 4–12.

⁴⁷⁷ COOK: *Enigmas and Riddles in Literature*, pp. 7–8.

⁴⁷⁸ HAIN: *Rätsel*, p. 52.

⁴⁷⁹ More about the riddle booklets as well as the *Straßburger Rästelbüchlein* is written in BISMARCK, Heike: *Rätselbücher. Entstehung und Entwicklung eines frühneuzeitlichen Buchtyps im deutschsprachigen Raum*, Tübingen 2007.

⁴⁸⁰ Cf. LEARY, T.J.: *Symphosius The Aenigmata. An Introduction, Text and Commentary*, London, New York 2014.

⁴⁸¹ Cf. LUZ, Christine: “What Has It Got in Its Pockets? Or, What Makes a Riddle a Riddle?”, in: KWAPISZ, Jan, David PETRAIN and Mikolaj SZYMÁNSKI (Ed.): *The Muse at Play. Riddles and Wordplay in Greek and*

these riddles. To successfully solve a riddle, an individual had to be learned enough to understand literary tropes and symbols and to apply prior knowledge to the presented problem. Because of its demanding character, a riddle was a suitable diversion for the courtly elite. Indeed, as Chapter 8 shows, riddles were an essential part of the culture of entertainment and communication in courts around Europe.⁴⁸²

The genealogical puzzle in the *Cecil Riddle* also represents another type of riddle: the dialogue riddle.⁴⁸³ Here, the enigma is presented in a dialogue for the listeners or readers to follow and interpret. Probably stemming from the scholastic fondness for using dialogue to present information, as seen in Thomas Moore’s *Utopia* and the work of ancient writers, a puzzle presented in a dialogue adds another interactive layer to the riddle.⁴⁸⁴ As noted, a riddle fundamentally involves a question-and-answer structure. When posed in a dialogue, it requires that a figure is either asking questions or being asked questions in turn. In either case, the riddle refers to the beholders, listeners, or readers, which always imparts a self-referential aspect that can strengthen the narrative of the riddle. In the case of the *Cecil Riddle*, the dialogue between the young man and the woman serves the dual function of introducing the problem to beholders and addressing them directly. The lady’s request to “Showe Me by Reason how that May be” is grammatically designed to address both the young man and the audience, who then become part of the conversation. On one hand, the young man represents the role of the beholder in asking about the men in the background; on the other hand, the viewer becomes active in finding a solution. Nevertheless, successfully deciphering this text-image interaction demands a distinct understanding of images present in the 16th century.

When applied to the *Cecil Riddle*, this theory of riddles reveals how the proposed problem unfolds through a combination of text and image. The pictorial riddle cannot be understood without the information given in the text, and the textual riddle relies on the image to illustrate what it expresses. Furthermore, the distinct design of the text plates as wooden

Latin Poetry, Berlin, Boston 2013, pp. 83–99; HOLDEFER, Charles: “Reading the Enigma. The Play Within the Play”, in: BIKIALO, Stéphane and Jacques DÜRRENMATT (Ed.): *L’Enigme*, Poitiers 2003, pp. 41–50.

⁴⁸² BAUMAN, Richard: “‘I’ll Give You Three Guesses’. The Dynamics of Genre in the Riddle Tale”, in: HASAN-ROKEM, Galit and David SHULMAN (Ed.): *Untying Knot Riddles Enigmatic Modes*, New York, Oxford 1996, pp. 62–80, pp. 62–74.

⁴⁸³ For a form of riddle that addresses family relations, Tupper has suggested the term “relationship-riddle”. TUPPER, Frederick: “The Comparative Study of Riddles”, in: *Modern Language Notes* 18/1 (1903), pp. 1–8, p. 3. To enhance the genealogical aspect of these puzzles, this study instead uses the terms “family riddle” and “genealogical riddle” synonymously.

⁴⁸⁴ TAYLOR: “The Riddle”, p. 155.

panels marks them as integral parts of the picture rather than independent additions to it.⁴⁸⁵ The picture itself displays the figures in the image, while the text both explains their relation and recreates an interpeccoral orality. Within this riddle painting, each text panel is carefully positioned to correspond to the person whose spoken words it represents. Consequently, a textual dialogue evolves on the panels which provides key information for comprehending the enigma. Altogether, the three text panels charge the depicted figures with emblematic secrecy. The dedication to William Cecil offers context and a title for the painting, and the two larger text panels explain the painting while ultimately leaving a mystery for beholders to decrypt.

The pictorial elements also provide information to beholders beyond what the text addresses. First, the iconography of the different figures makes it clear that the age difference is vital to the relation between them. Distinct attributes, such as the whiteness of the old man’s hair and the beardless face of the youngest of the three men in the background, are used to carefully identify the respective figures. Second, the aforementioned colours of the three men’s clothes are not mentioned in the text but are very distinctive in the painting. The clothes of the couple in the centre are also painted with great care and show minute details, including chains, ruffs, and embroidery. This aspect is already a hint to beholders to pay attention to how the figures are dressed, as the clothes signal the social status of the lady and the older gentlemen on the panel. In connection to the text and the riddle, the clothes also help viewers differentiate between the figures and describe them in a discussion. While these pictorial details can be considered a first indication of how the picture was used and received, the role of the painting as a genealogical riddle must be further clarified.

Other versions of the same subject: A popular image tradition

The devotion of the *Cecil Riddle* to William Cecil implies that it was a personal commission for Cecil, who was Principal Secretary at the time. However, previous researchers have shown that the depicted riddle was not a puzzle uniquely made for Cecil, and the *Cecil Riddle* was not even the only painting on this subject in England. In fact, at least four other English versions exist, although they vary in quality and iconography. One of them is now in the collection at Knole House in Kent and has been dated to the 1620s — later than the

⁴⁸⁵ In defining a riddle, Erin Sebo has elaborated on the importance of the text to the riddle. SEBO: *In Enigmaté*, p. 20.

Cecil Riddle — based on the fashion of the depicted figures.⁴⁸⁶ Another English version is currently held in the collection of the Fogg Art Museum in Cambridge, Massachusetts and has been dated to around the 1570s, a similar dating as the *Cecil Riddle*.⁴⁸⁷ However, certain compositional elements of this version differ, as discussed further in the next chapter. A third English riddle painting gained prominence when a man named Guy Elwes wrote a letter to the magazine *Country Life* to challenge the readers to solve the riddle. According to Elwes, the painting had belonged to John Conyers, who built the estate Copped Hall.⁴⁸⁸ While a photograph of the painting was added to the entry, the low quality and resolution preclude any assumptions about the dating or potential iconographical similarities. Lyndan Warner has claimed that this version of the riddle was painted later than the Kent version, probably around 1630.⁴⁸⁹ Warner has also found a fourth English riddle mentioned in a gentleman’s magazine in 1789 as a “curious picture at Epping Inn”.⁴⁹⁰ A magazine reader submitted a description of the painting which suggests it was made in the early Stuart era: “The lady is in a Vandyke dress, bosom bare, hair hanging in curls on each side, necklace a single row of pearls.”⁴⁹¹ The existence of four paintings on the same subject implies that this particular genealogical riddle enjoyed significant popularity in the English 16th and 17th centuries. It also encourages speculation that more versions were made and may still exist in private collections. This conjecture seems even more valid when considering the European continent.

The first researcher to connect the *Cecil Riddle* with a European picture tradition was Peter Donche. Donche began publishing works on Dutch genealogical riddles and riddle paintings in 1999, and he connected this research to the *Cecil Riddle* once it was put up for

⁴⁸⁶ Unknown: *A Riddle*, c. 1620s, oil on canvas, Knole House.

⁴⁸⁷ Unknown: *The Allegorie of a Faire Lady*, c. 1570-1579, oil on panel, 45.7 cm x 54.3 cm, Fogg Art Museum, Harvard.

⁴⁸⁸ GUY, Elwes: “Solve the Riddle”, in: *Country Life* 118/3055 (1955), p. 253.

⁴⁸⁹ WARNER: “Kinship Riddles”, pp. 24–25.

⁴⁹⁰ *IBID.*, p. 25. Theresa Lewis mentioned that in her time, which was 1852, “A picture on the same subject was formerly at an inn at Epping Place.” LEWIS: *Lives of the Friends*, p. 286. She recalled, “The tradition there was that the strange relationship described in the riddle had occurred in the house of Copt Hall, situated in that neighbourhood.” As Karen Hearn has aptly stated, “Copt Hall” seems to refer to Copped Hall, the family estate of the courtier Thomas Heneage from 1564 until his death in 1595. HEARN: “*British School. A Riddle c. 1565-70*”, p. 99. Heneage came from a family of diplomats who were on the rise during the reign of Elizabeth’s father. Thomas Heneage himself secured several positions under Elizabeth and was an important spokesperson for the queen. HICKS, Michael: “*Heneage, Sir Thomas (b. in or before 1532, d. 1595), Courtier*”, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Vol. 23, Oxford 2004. He was well connected with other courtiers, especially Christopher Hatton, and documentation of correspondence between him and Cecil also proves their connection. It could thus be that Heneage’s descendants owned a version of the *Cecil Riddle* and displayed it at their estate.

⁴⁹¹ WARNER: “Kinship Riddles”, p. 25.

auction in 2010. Donche has presented an earlier and later background for the family riddle, mainly concentrating on the Netherlands. In an article from 2006, he examines a Dutch version of the riddle, which he calls “Raadsle” painted by Cornelis Ketel and dated to 1576.⁴⁹² This painting is preserved in the collection of the Valkhof Museum in Nijmegen, which likewise attributes it to the Amsterdam painter.⁴⁹³ The artwork shows a familiar-looking composition of a young woman with an old man lying in her lap in the middle of a sparse, dark interior. Three pairs of men of varying ages stand behind the couple. Each pair of men wear the same clothes. The pair on the far left are dressed in dark purple and seem to be the oldest of the men in the background, as they have beards and receding hairlines. The pair in the middle of the painting are dressed in red and also have beards, but they appear to be younger than the men in purple. The last pair consist of two teenagers, who appear younger with their beardless faces and unorderly clothes. They stand on the right-hand side of the composition, dressed in yellow. All of the pairs are engaged in conversation with each other. One man from each pair is either holding or pointing to a panel with an inscription, and the young woman leans on a text panel positioned on a small piece of furniture in the middle of the room.⁴⁹⁴

Compared to the *Cecil Riddle*, this version contains distinct differences in iconography. First, Ketel’s painting has six men in the background instead of three. Furthermore, the scenery as a whole is significantly different, with the figures placed in a dark interior. Nevertheless, the pair of the old man and the young lady, the presence of colour-coded younger men, and the integration of text into the image are all elements that recall the *Cecil Riddle*. Another similarity is that the text panels are used to further describe the scene and convey information to the audience. In this version, however, the text panels do not open up a dialogue, as there is no figure to ask questions. Instead, they present statements by the figures to whom they correspond, and they directly address beholders without representing a conversation within the picture. In Ketel’s painting, the frames of the panels are marked

⁴⁹² DONCHE: “*Een genealogisch raadsel uit 1619*”, pp. 447–448.

⁴⁹³ Cornelis Ketel: *A Riddle*, 1576, oil on wood, 78.5 cm x 107.5 cm, Museum Het Valkhof. It is illustrated in WARNER: “*Kinship Riddles*”, p. 6; DONCHE: “*Een genealogisch raadsel uit 1619*”, p. 449.

⁴⁹⁴ This painting by Ketel has been copied at least twice: once in 1577 and once in the early 1600s. ROES, Sebastiaan: “‘*The Riddle of Nijmegen*’ (*Het Raadsel von Nijmegen*), *Complicated Marriages, Stepfamilies and Early Modern Dutch Law*”, in: WARNER, Lyndan (Ed.): *Stepfamilies in Europe, 1400-1800*, London, New York 2018, pp. 108–124, p. 114; WARNER: “*Kinship Riddles*”, p. 6.

by letters from A to E to indicate their order, possibly to avoid confusion due to the higher number of text panels.⁴⁹⁵

By connecting this Dutch riddle by Ketel and the *Cecil Riddle*, Donche was the first to show that the riddle was not a singularly English invention but could also be found on the European continent. Even before combining his knowledge of these two pictures, Donche had presented a source that thoroughly reconstructs the genealogical riddle’s origins. In an article from 1999, he shows that the riddle could already be found as a text on the first page of a legal document from 1504.⁴⁹⁶ This text presents the riddle in verses describing a scene of several knights dressed in particular colours in a medieval setting:

A hard question so that one would understand and also learn to calculate the succession of heirs in their inheritance.

A young man came to a castle and by the drawbridge he found standing three knights clothed in white. He went on to the bailey. There he found three knights clothed in black. On he went to the hall, where he found three knights clothed in red. And from there he went on to the dining room. There he found sitting a fair damsel who had an old man laying in her lap.

Then the young man asked her who the knights were clothed in white that he had found standing by the drawbridge. She replied thus: ‘Lord, those are my three uncles on my father’s side.’ He further asked her who the three knights were clothed in black that he had found in the bailey. She said: ‘Those are my three uncles on my mother’s side.’ He asked her also who the three knights were clothed in red that he had found in the hall. She spoke and said: ‘Those are all three my children. And this old man that lays here in my lap is father to the nine of them, all born in lawful wedlock without any shame to our name.’ The young man wondered about the case, asked her how or in what manner it has become so.

She replied and justified it thus: ‘That the old man who laid there in her lap in prior times had wed a widow who of her first husband had one son. And by this widow this old man had within wedlock the afore mentioned three knights clothed in white. And this widow passed away [and hereafter the old man joined in wedlock another widow] who of her first husband had a daughter, and by her this old man had the afore mentioned three knights in black. And this widow passed away. Then the widow’s son by her first husband, and the last widow’s daughter by her first husband joined one

⁴⁹⁵ A transcript of the inscriptions is given in the appendix. Unfortunately, there are no high-resolution images of Ketel’s riddle to allow for an accurate transcript of the inscriptions. The quality of most images in other publications is too low to allow the image to be cropped so that parts of the texts are not visible. At the time of writing, the museum had not answered requests to see the painting or order images of it. The transcript presented in this study was possible to include thanks to Lyndan Warner, who kindly shared her own transcript to support this research.

⁴⁹⁶ DONCHE: “*Een genealogisch raadsel uit 1504*”, p. 271. Donche has suggested that the origins of the riddle are even older and have to be seen in close connection with the Latin contiguity book *Lectura super eboribus consanguinitatis et affinitatis* by Johannes Andrea, which was published in Leuven in 1480. DONCHE: “*Een genealogisch raadsel uit 1619*”, p. 450. This is also proposed in WARNER: “*Kinship Riddles*”, pp. 4–5.

another in wedlock, and had together a daughter, that is me. And then this old man who had had two widows, wed me.

And I am his third wife, and by me he had the afore mentioned three knights clothed in red, and these are my children. Thus I may rightfully say that the afore mentioned three knights clothed in white are my uncles on my father’s side, for they were my father’s brothers. [Here, the scribe makes a small mistake: he surely forgot to copy the sentence, wherein ‘it may be rightfully said’ that the three knights clothed in black are her maternal uncles, because they are her mother’s brothers.] And the other three are my children clothed in red, and this old man is father to them all, as you hear, all born in lawful wedlock without any shame to our name, as I said to you before.’

The afore mentioned young man had to know that this was true. He thanked the damsel who had so properly recounted and went on his way.⁴⁹⁷

This text is the earliest known transmission of the riddle. While it involves a far more extensive repertoire of sons — nine instead of six or three — the connection between the text and the paintings is indisputable. Either this source or an even earlier version, possibly from an oral tradition, must have been the origin of the riddle paintings. As the riddle was developed into iconography, the number of sons changed, and some adjustments were made in each new iteration; nevertheless, the puzzle itself remained the same.⁴⁹⁸

The first sentence of this text identifies the cause and didactic approach of the riddle: “to calculate the succession of heirs in their inheritance”. Following this claim, the painting’s purpose can be considered didactic and educational. By observing the image and reading the text, beholders are challenged to decipher the presented genealogy and train themselves in understanding and reconstructing family relations. However, unlike the paintings, the text gives the solution to the riddle, which can be applied to the Dutch version by Ketel as well. The old man married the daughter of his two first wives’ children from former marriages. Because the woman is not related to the old man by blood, their marriage is considered “lawful wedlock”.⁴⁹⁹ The couple then created their own male offspring, and the man already had sons from his two previous marriages. This sequence of events explains the strange relation of the uncles being stepsons of the lady at the same time.⁵⁰⁰ While this

⁴⁹⁷ Donche presented a Dutch transcript of the document, which is presented here in an English translation. The Dutch transcript is given in the appendix. DONCHE: “*Een genealogisch raadsel uit 1504*”, pp. 273–274. I am indebted to Bea T. for her help with the translation.

⁴⁹⁸ There is a need for more research on English verse, its impact on the development of literature, and its incorporation into painting. One relevant article to consult is JONES, Malcolm: “*Such pretty things would soon be gone.*” *The Neglected Genres of Popular Verse 1480-1650*”, in: HATTAWAY, Michael (Ed.): *A New Companion to English Renaissance Literature and Culture*, New Jersey 2010, pp. 359–381.

⁴⁹⁹ DONCHE: “*Een genealogisch raadsel uit 1504*”, pp. 273–274.

⁵⁰⁰ The religious and legal context of this family connection has been commented on by WARNER: “*Kinship Riddles*”, pp. 7–8.

Dutch legal document from 1504 offers a basis for understanding the riddle’s approach, the tradition of the riddle is certainly even older than this document and circulated in other European countries as well. The wide distribution of the riddle becomes even more apparent from versions of the riddle which evolved after the 16th century.

The genealogical riddle after the 16th century

One of the most well-studied versions of the riddle, which also shaped the legacy of the Dutch version, was made in 1619.⁵⁰¹ That year, the city of Nijmegen commissioned a painting of the riddle from the painter Pauwels van Schoten. Peter Donche and Sebastiaan Roes have thoroughly discussed this relatively late and compositionally altered version of the *Raadsel*.⁵⁰² The latter has described it as “[carrying] the complexity of stepfamily relationship to the extreme”.⁵⁰³ Compared to the *Cecil Riddle*, this version features a larger personage on the panel, including three pairs of sons, but there is no young man to ask the question. Thus, van Schoten’s riddle can be connected with Ketel’s painting, but it shows dramatic compositional changes, probably to fit with the fashions of the 17th century.⁵⁰⁴

In van Schoten’s version, the woman and the old man are seated in a sparse interior on the far-left side of the painting instead of in the centre of the composition. A large window reveals the view of a large town square, which provides a light source in the otherwise dark room. Donche has suggested that the window was added to the scene as a reference to the commissioning context of the painting, as it was displayed in the community hall of Nijmegen, and it depicts the city’s town square.⁵⁰⁵ To the right, the three pairs of sons stand in a line. In each pair, the two men look almost identical in their appearance and dress. The first, bearded pair are the oldest, as the other pairs are beardless. The first pair are dressed in blue and red clothing, and both wear large helmets. The second pair of men seem to be young adults who are not old enough to sport facial hair. They wear green and yellow clothing and heavy helmets as well. The youngest and smallest pair are on the right-hand side of the painting and are obviously still boys. They are dressed in white with black collars, and the left one carries a stick in his hand, as if to use for play. The use of colours

⁵⁰¹ Pauwels Jansz. Van Schoten: *Het Raadsel van Nijmegen*, 1619, oil on canvas, 121 cm x 211 cm, Museum Het Valkhof, Nijmegen. It is illustrated in ROES: “*The Riddle of Nijmegen*”, p. 110.

⁵⁰² DONCHE: “*Een genealogisch raadsel uit 1619*”.

⁵⁰³ ROES: “*The Riddle of Nijmegen*”, p. 109.

⁵⁰⁴ DONCHE: “*Een genealogisch raadsel uit 1619*”, p. 448.

⁵⁰⁵ IBID.

in this painting refers back to the textual riddle from 1504, though with a slightly different allocation of colours to the group of sons.⁵⁰⁶

The colour coordination of the pairs is mentioned in the text plates above their heads. As in the previous cases, the colours create a structure between the sons and communicate their allegiances. Because of the placement of the woman and the old man on the left-hand side of the composition, the texts on the panels can be read in a natural sequence from left to right, and no ordering elements are needed on the plates. In this riddle, just as in Ketel’s painting, the woman is the first to address the viewers and express her curious family relation, and the sons’ texts give further information.⁵⁰⁷

According to Donche, this version of the riddle, *Het Raadsel van Nijmegen*, led to substantial local popularity of the subject. He has mentioned that visitors to Nijmegen were famously sent to St. Stevens in the northwest region of the city to read and contemplate an inscription of the riddle on a copper plate mounted on the church walls.⁵⁰⁸ In addition, in 1765 and 1777, the publisher Isaac van Campen frequently published the solution to the puzzle together with an illustration of it.⁵⁰⁹ Apart from having pairs of sons instead of groups of three, the solution to van Schoten’s riddle is identical to the one presented in the text from 1504, with the old man marrying the daughter of his former wives’ children.⁵¹⁰

In addition to the Dutch *Het Raadsel van Nijmegen* from the 17th century, a French print of the puzzling family riddle dating to around 1645 has been found by Malcolm Jones (**Fig. 12**).⁵¹¹ This circular print, which Jones has ascribed to Abraham Bosse, depicts three pairs

⁵⁰⁶ The allocations of red and white are reversed in this painting. In the text from 1504, the red ones are the youngest; in this painting, they are the oldest.

⁵⁰⁷ The appendix contains the Dutch text and an English translation of the inscriptions taken from ROES: “*The Riddle of Nijmegen*”, pp. 109–110.

⁵⁰⁸ DONCHE: “*Een genealogisch raadsel uit 1619*”, p. 449.

⁵⁰⁹ The production and circulation of prints is further described in LEMMENS, G.: “*Het Raadsel van Nijmegen, één van vele*”, in: LEMMENS, G. (Ed.): *Het Stadhuis Van Nijmegen*, Nijmegen 1982, pp. 163–167, p. 163. I am thankful to Malcolm Jones, who collected and shared further images of prints and magazine entries in which the riddle was printed. JONES, Malcolm: Personal correspondence, 16.02.2022.

⁵¹⁰ “The old man first [...] married a widow, who was already the mother (1 in the graphic) of a son (4), later he becomes father of the young woman). After her death the old man married another widow, who was already the mother (2) of a daughter ((5), the mother of the young woman). [Or the other way around, namely that the first widow had a daughter and the second one a son.] With the first widow, the old man had two sons (the men in red). With the second widow he had two additional sons (the men in green). In the meantime, the son (4) of the first widow and the daughter (5) of the second widow grew up and they married. They had a daughter (3). Years passed. Their daughter (3) became a young woman and married the old man, who had been widowed after the death of his second wife [the young woman’s grandmother]. This is the way things probably happened.” ROES: “*The Riddle of Nijmegen*”, pp. 112–113.

⁵¹¹ JONES, Malcolm: Personal correspondence, 18.02.2022. I am indebted to Malcolm Jones for sharing his findings with me. The print was briefly been mentioned in a catalogue of the print collection department at the Bibliothèque nationale, but no other work discussing it has been found so far. HENNIN, Michel: *Inventaire*

of people: two women, two old men, and two young men.⁵¹² The circle is divided into thirds by floral pillars, and “Les Dames” (the Ladies), “Les Gentilshommes” (the Gentlemen), and “Les Vieillards” (the Old Men), as named by the inscriptions above their heads, occupy their own respective spaces. The women are dressed identically and holding on to each other, with two young children standing in front of them. The old men also appear identical and are dressed in heavy ruffs and coats, with their beards underlining their age. The young gentlemen are the most flamboyantly dressed of the personages, wearing long wigs and layered clothing. In every scene, a rural landscape with a small shadow of a city is in the background. In this version, the riddle is again presented in a dialogue. The young men address the women by asking their relation to the older men. The women respond that the men are their fathers, their mothers’ husbands, their own husbands now, and the fathers of their children.⁵¹³

The French riddle is very similar to the English version in terms of introducing the topic of a complex genealogy to beholders by having a figure, or two figures, raise the question on the beholders’ behalf. However, it includes far fewer figures. There are no half-brothers or uncles in this version, and ‘only’ one enigma has to be solved: how can the old men be both the fathers and the husbands of the women? Notably, the French puzzle does not have a line specifying that “no hurt of lineage in any degree” is involved in the relation. The last line of the French riddle is very interesting because it addresses beholders directly and expresses the universality and age of the riddle: “This riddle is quite ancient / and if one of you can explain it / he deserves to be awarded a place among the fine minds.”⁵¹⁴

de la collection d’estampes relatives à l’histoire de France. L’éguée en 1863 à la Bibliothèque nationale par M. Michel Hennin, ed. by Georges DUPLESSIS, Paris 1877, p. 445.

⁵¹² Abraham Bosse (attr.): *Les Vieillards. Les Dames. Les Gentilshommes*, engraving, c. 1645, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Nr. 3475.

⁵¹³ A transcript and translation of this French version of the riddle is given in the appendix.

⁵¹⁴ “Cette Enigme est assez Antique / Et si quelqu’un de vous l’explique / Il merite d’avoir un prix / Entre les delicats Esprits.”

Figure 12:
Abraham Bosse
(attr.): *Les
Vieillards. Les
Dames. Les
Gentilshommes*,
engraving, c.
1645, Nr. 3475,
©Bibliothèque
nationale de
France.



However seriously these lines should be taken, the French print, next to the Nijmegen riddle and the English riddles, evidences the familiarity and likely substantial popularity of the subject across early modern Europe. The French print promises appreciation and approval by contemporaries as the “prix” (prize) for solving the puzzle, as the clever beholder will take their place amongst great minds. Still, compared to the *Cecil Riddle* and the Dutch versions, the French puzzle seems more related to the latter, which makes the English version stand out. One could speculate that the prototypical riddle, wherever it may have evolved, was distributed nationally and shared across borders, with other countries then translating it into their native languages and adapting it to their specific audiences. When this transmission occurred is impossible to say, but the adaptation of the riddle to print must have accelerated its distribution and facilitated it across national borders. In the 17th and 18th centuries, G. Lemmens presented several prints in various European collections, which suggests that the riddle circulated in that form.⁵¹⁵

⁵¹⁵ LEMMENS: “*Het Raadsel van Nijmegen, één van vele*”. For more on the print as a medium of distribution and circulation in the Netherlands, see WELZEL, Barbara: “*Niederlaendische Kupferstiche des 15.*

In the 18th century, the genealogical riddle was changed even more. It seems to have been adapted in Scotland, as Donche has found it in a collection called *Popular Tales of the West Highlands*.⁵¹⁶ This book presents a “Puzzle” which is ascribed to Kenneth M’Lennan.⁵¹⁷ The narration of this riddle begins at a man’s funeral, where another man is “put out at the door” because he did not contribute a song or tale to the mourning. While waiting outside, he sees nine gentlemen dressed in red, nine dressed in green, and nine dressed in blue. When a woman and a man on a horse pass by, the woman approaches the waiting man and explains her family relations to him: the first group are her paternal brothers, the second are her maternal brothers, and the third are her sons; all of them are the sons of her husband, who is the man on the horse. She leaves the waiting man with the words, “Go thou in, and I myself will not beheve but that a puzzle is on them till day.”⁵¹⁸

This Scottish version features the highest number of figures, with three groups of nine men resulting in 27 sons in total.⁵¹⁹ The colour-coding of the sons differentiates this version from the *Cecil Riddle*, which does not address colours at all in its text. In terms of its form, the Scottish version seems to be closely related to the English riddle in the *Cecil Riddle*. In both instances, the men are brothers to the young lady but are not her uncles, as in the Dutch version. Additionally, the story is set outside of an estate, which echoes the scenery of the *Cecil Riddle*. These similarities between the two British puzzles suggest a particularly ‘English’ form of the genealogical riddle. However similar to the others, this version does show a distinct approach to the intertwined family relations and deserves a closer look.

Jahrhunderts”, in: FRANKE, Birgit (ed.): *Die Kunst der burgundischen Niederlande. Eine Einführung*, Berlin 1997, pp. 211–228, pp. 211–221.

⁵¹⁶ DONCHE: “*Verwantschapsraadsels op Schilderijen*”, p. 242.

⁵¹⁷ CAMPBELL, John: *Popular Tales of the West Highlands*, Vol. 2, Edinburgh 1860, p. 25.

⁵¹⁸ *IBID.*, p. 26.

⁵¹⁹ It is possible that the number of the relatives — three in the English version, six in the Dutch painting, nine in the Dutch legal text, a double pair in the French version, and now 29 in the Scottish adaptation — has its own meaning in each respective culture. The Scottish riddle presents all of the family members arriving by horse instead of by foot.

5. “Lynnege in any degree”: A European Riddle in England

As shown in the previous chapter, several English versions of the genealogical riddle have been found by Karen Hearn and Lyndan Warner, and it is likely that many more exist in private collections. Besides the *Cecil Riddle* at Hatfield, the locations of only two other versions are definitively known: Knole House in Kent has the 17th-century painting, while the Harvard Art Museum in Massachusetts has the 16th-century version.⁵²⁰ Since all three paintings present the riddle in the English language and follow similar approaches to composition, it is worth examining them side-by-side to understand the particular ‘Englished’ riddle as a painting.

When viewed next to each other, the Knole painting and the *Cecil Riddle* are very similar in appearance and iconography (**Fig. 13**). Although the Knole painting was created one century after the *Cecil Riddle*, and therefore features a different style of clothing on the figures, it has many striking compositional details that resemble those in the *Cecil Riddle*. For instance, in both paintings, the lady and the old man are situated in the centre of the painting, with a tree in the background and the young male questioner on the left-hand side. In both versions, the young man and the lady interact by raising their hands at each other. However, in the Knole version, the questioner’s back is not turned to the beholder. Since he is seen from the front, he is not as connected to the text plate above his head as in the *Cecil Riddle*. Still, the viewer can easily discern the connection between his figure and the text above him. Moreover, because he is visible from the front, his communication with the lady is even more apparent than in the *Cecil Riddle*, which might have been one reason for depicting him in this position. Other than this difference, the two paintings have unmistakably similar foregrounds, which are both set apart from the background on an elevated level of the landscape. The most striking parallel is the prominent positioning of the text plates on the tree and below the married couple, which further highlights the connection between the iconography of the two versions.

The background compositions show equally similar designs. In these two English paintings, a castle is seen on the right side with three younger men walking out of it. In both images, the youngest, beardless son walks on the left in white clothing. In the Knole painting, the two older brothers wear red and yellow; in the *Cecil Riddle*, the order of these colours is

⁵²⁰ Additionally, these are the only two other versions of the *Cecil Riddle* of which high-resolution images could be made or have already been provided by the owners.

reversed. Interestingly, in both paintings, the man dressed in yellow appears to be interacting the most with his brothers, as he slightly turns his head to the right. However, there is less of a sense of unity amongst the men in the Knole version, as the man in yellow is positioned in the middle of the group and therefore turns his head away from the man to his left.

With regard to the inscriptions, the Knole version shows a different orthography and slightly different expressions than the *Cecil Riddle*.⁵²¹ For example, the lady is addressed as “Madam” instead of “My faire Lady”. Still, since most parts of the texts are congruent, their differences can be explained by the gap in their production dates. The same applies to the styles in which the text plates are designed. The Knole version has framed, two-dimensional plates, while the *Cecil Riddle* seems to attempt three-dimensionality in its rustic panels.⁵²² Overall, these two versions are similar enough to speculate that an English iconography, or a prototype of the riddle, existed and circulated in the country.

Nevertheless, as the third English painting shows, this English iconography was not always so closely followed. Some of the similarities between the Knole painting and the *Cecil Riddle* are visible in the Harvard riddle as well, but the latter is obviously a different, lower-quality interpretation of the subject (**Fig. 14**).⁵²³ The Harvard version has the main compositional characteristics of the other two paintings: the lady and the old man are in the centre, the questioner is on the left, and the whole foreground is elevated. Furthermore, the lady and the questioner raise their hands to signal communication between them, and the three men exit the castle on the right-hand side of the background. However, the background is executed very differently in the Harvard painting, which results in a much flatter and broader impression compared to the backgrounds of the other two paintings. In addition, the whole scene is presented to the beholder from a more distant view, and there is no tree framing the foreground. The overall scenery is more detailed but in a confusing way, and especially the background of the mountains and the middle scene of the grass and

⁵²¹ The text plate in the tree says, “Madam, I pray you this one thing, me Shew / What yong three be, if you them Know / Coming from the Castle in such degree, / What is their Descent and Nativity.”

The text under the lady says, “Sir, The one by the Father’s side is my Brother / And so is the next in right of my Mother, / The third is my own Son lawfully Begotten / And all Sons to my Husband sleeping in my Lap / Without hurt of Lineage in any Degree / Shew me the Reason How this may Be.”

⁵²² On a purely phenomenological level, it would be interesting to follow the observation that the *Cecil Riddle* painted on a wooden panel has the text plates painted as tangible pieces of wood, while the version at Knole House, which is painted on canvas, has frame text plates that look more like framed canvasses themselves.

⁵²³ With a format of 45.7 cm x 54.3 cm, it is of comparable size to the 40.5 cm x 61 cm *Cecil Riddle*, though in a vertical format instead of a horizontal one. Warner has called this Harvard painting a more “naïve” version of the riddle. WARNER: “*Kinship Riddles*”, p. 20.

trees reveal the inferior quality of this painting in comparison with the Knole version and the *Cecil Riddle*.



Figure 13: Unknown: *A Riddle*, c. 1620s, oil on canvas, ©Knole House.



Figure 14: Unidentified Artist: *The Allegorie of a Faire Ladye*, c. 1570-1579, oil on panel, 45.7 cm x 54.3 cm, ©Harvard Art Museums/Fogg Museum, Gift of Robert Rantoul Endicott, Photo President and Fellows of Harvard College, 1959.143.

Besides the quality, the most noticeable difference between the Harvard picture and the others is in the display of the inscriptions. By and large, the text resembles those in the other versions, with only minor alterations.⁵²⁴ Yet, in the Harvard painting, the inscriptions

⁵²⁴ The questioner's text reads, "My faire ladie I praie you tell me, what ant of whence be yonder thre / That cum out of y[e] castell in such degree, an[t] of there decente [an]t nativete."

are not integrated directly into the pictorial events, as in the other cases. Instead, they are integrated into an architectural framework around the scene. In contrast to the scenery with the figures, this pictorial framing gives the impression of being carefully designed, and it contains many pictorial elements next to the text plates. The framing almost feels more important than the scene, as the frame takes up a large amount of space on the panel, and the depiction itself is therefore smaller. The upper part of the framework represents a roof with the head of a lion at the top. Beneath the lion, two putti carry the first text plate on long strings of cloth to the left and right, as if suspending it in the air. Under this roof area, the frame displays human-pillar hybrids — columns with the upper body of a man and a woman, respectively — on the left and right sides.⁵²⁵ Each figure wears a broad brown hat on which flowers and grass grow, and the head of a beast, probably also a lion, covers their stomach and is connected to a red piece of cloth that wraps around their body. Interestingly, when inspected more closely, a similar-looking beast’s head is visible on the lady’s belt in the centre of the scene, just above the old man’s head (**Fig. 15**). Since the beast’s head appears many times in the picture, it possibly holds symbolic meaning and may represent a heraldic sign.⁵²⁶

At the bottom, the pictorial framework is completed by a large white block on which the man and woman pillars stand. The second, larger text plate is presented in front of this block and painted in the style of a scroll with two handles on each side, possibly as a reference to the ancient tradition of the riddle, which is mentioned in the French version.



Figure 15: Unidentified Artist: *The Allegorie of a Faire Lady*, detail of the Faire Lady and her belt, c. 1570-1579, oil on panel, ©Harvard Art Museums/Fogg Museum, Gift of Robert Rantoul Endicott, Photo President and Fellows of Harvard College, 1959.143.

The lady’s text says, “Sir the one is my brother by my fathers syde, the truth you to knowe / The other by my mother’s syde, be my brother also / The thyrde is my own sonne, lawfullye begot / And all be Sonnes to my husbände, that sleapeth one my lappe, / Without hurte of lynage, in anye degree, / Shewe me by reason, howe this thynge maye be.” Part of the text is not legible on the panel, possibly due to fading of the lighter colour. The inscriptions have been transcribed in accordance with the transcription given in DONCHE: “*Verwantschapsraadsels op Schilderijen*”, p. 241.

⁵²⁵ The two figures in the frame could be identified as Adam and Eve, the roots of human genealogy, which would fit within the wider context of the riddle.

⁵²⁶ This point remains open for now but is addressed in more detail in the next chapter.

The similarities amongst the three English versions, and especially the Knole version and the *Cecil Riddle*, imply a strong connection between their iconographies. However, they do not necessarily mean that the Knole version copied the *Cecil Riddle* or that the Harvard painting relied on it directly. Rather, the existence of other versions next to these three in England suggests that a picture prototype of this riddle was used in England as a template for painting it. When or by whom such a prototype was developed is impossible to determine, but the prototype probably circulated in prints and inspired the production of this riddle as a painting in England.⁵²⁷

The distinct English iconography employed to varying degrees in the three English paintings can be connected to the presentation of the riddle in the 1504 Dutch legal document. In this text, the curious family event takes place at a medieval castle and is witnessed by a young man, who eventually converses with the lady about her relatives.⁵²⁸

The young questioner encounters the several groups of men while marching through the castle complex. He starts at the drawbridge, proceeds to the bailey, and then enters the castle, where he finds the married couple. Since this text is the oldest known version of the riddle, it can be suspected that the English versions display a cropped variant of this narrative in their iconography. The English pictures place the figures in a landscape in front of a castle, as described at the beginning of the text from 1504. In contrast, the Dutch versions, Ketel’s riddle and *Het Raadsel van Nijmegen*, place the peak of the story in an interior, as written at the end of the text. Because the paintings present only one moment from the story, different strategies were used to depict it in the two countries.⁵²⁹

Hence, the text from 1504 helps to understand the iconography of the English riddle and how it differs from the other European versions.⁵³⁰ One peculiarity of the English version is the shorter list of figures, which, with just three sons in total, is the leanest of all versions shown here, except for the French riddle. The number of sons was most likely reduced to make the riddle more approachable, though it could have also been due to cultural differences, such as in family sizes, between England and the Netherlands. The English picture prototype discussed here was probably developed after the text description itself or another translated variant of the text. However, the family relations between the woman

⁵²⁷ I am thankful to Malcolm Jones for supporting and discussing this hypothesis with me. JONES, Malcolm: Personal correspondence, 18.02.22.

⁵²⁸ See Chapter 4.

⁵²⁹ In future research, it would be interesting to introduce the French version into this discussion, as it seems to have an even more individual way of displaying the riddle.

⁵³⁰ This has also been suggested by WARNER: “*Kinship Riddles*”, p. 19.

and the older two of the three men are notably different between the two riddles. In the Dutch version, the woman calls the men her uncles — one maternal and one paternal — whereas the lady in the English painting introduces the men as her two half-brothers. Since the rest of the riddle does not seem to have changed drastically, and the connection between the English iconography and the Dutch legal text has proven to be strong, this change in family relations is a surprising and significant alteration that affects the logic and functioning of the riddle. In a family network, a brother is not equivalent to an uncle, especially in a generational context. Thus, in this changed state, it is impossible to apply the Dutch solution to the English riddle, which seems to instead demand a different answer to the lady’s question.

Solving the riddle: Between clarity and ambiguity

The first known published solution to the English riddle stems from Lady Theresa Lewis, who described the *Cecil Riddle* in the collection of the Earls of Clarendon in 1852.⁵³¹ Her answer to the genealogical problem was widely adapted and reprinted in later publications on the riddle.⁵³² Like the Dutch riddle’s solution, her answer assumes that the old man had a sequence of several marriages in his life: “The lady’s two half-brothers must have married the daughters of her husband by a former marriage, which made them sons (i.e. sons-in-law) to her husband and brothers to the son of their sister.”⁵³³ In this solution, the connection between the old man and the two bearded men exiting the castle is not founded on actual blood relations (**Fig. 16**).

As an ‘in-law answer’, Lewis’ solution does not assume a literal interpretation of the lady’s request for a strong connection “without hurt of lynnege in any degree”. Peter Donche has criticised this solution, branding it “weinig elegant” (not very elegant), and presented an attempt at a solution that creates a direct blood connection between the older two sons and the old man.⁵³⁴ In Donche’s final solution, the lady’s father had already had a son with his first wife before he married her mother, and he eventually had her as his second child. After his passing, her mother married the old man and had a son with him, the second half-brother

⁵³¹ LEWIS: *Lives of the Friends*, p. 286. Warner has presented a comedic solution to the riddle in verse, which is supposed to stem from the 18th century but could not be checked in the context of this study. WARNER: “*Kinship Riddles*”, p. 25.

⁵³² GIBSON: *Catalogue of Portraits*, p. 131; HEARN: “*British School. A Riddle c. 1565-70*”, pp. 98–99. This solution was also presented by Sotheby’s when auctioning the painting. SOTHEBYS: “*Anglo-Netherlandish School circa 1565-70, Lot 14*”.

⁵³³ LEWIS: *Lives of the Friends*, p. 286.

⁵³⁴ DONCHE: “*Verwantschapsraadsels op Schilderijen*”, pp. 237–238.

to the lady, as well as a daughter. The mother then died, and the old man married the lady, who was previously his stepdaughter and not his offspring by blood. Together, they had another son. Meanwhile, the old man’s daughter married the lady’s brother from her father’s side, thus making him the old man’s son-in-law (Fig. 17).⁵³⁵ Donche has admitted that, at the end of his attempt, he could still not come up with a scenario in which all three sons are directly connected to the old man; in all cases, at least one son remained an in-law. As a result, Donche has theorised that there is a flaw in the riddle: when the artist translated the Dutch text into English, he made the mistake of calling the men “brothers” instead of “uncles”.⁵³⁶

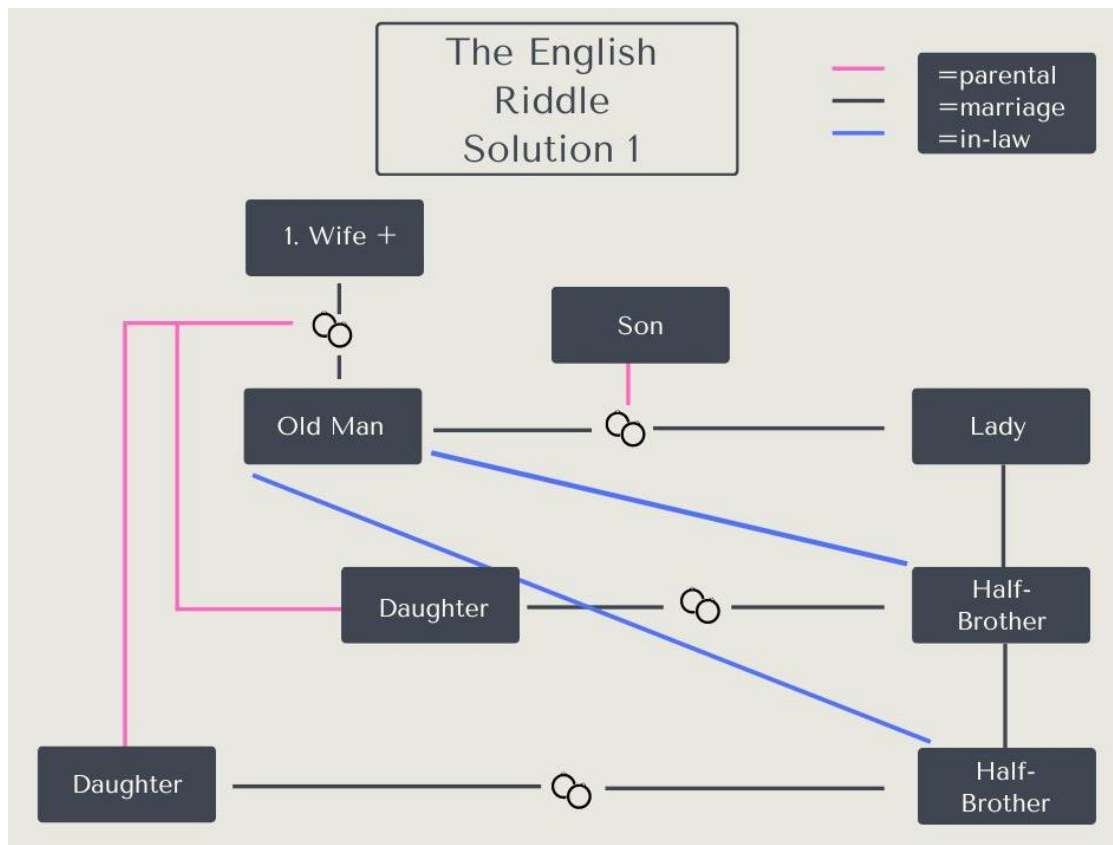


Figure 16: First possible solution for the *Cecil Riddle*, illustrated after the solution given in: Lewis, *Lives of the Friends and Contemporaries of Chancellor Clarendon*, 1852, p. 286.

⁵³⁵ IBID., p. 238.

⁵³⁶ IBID., pp. 239–240.

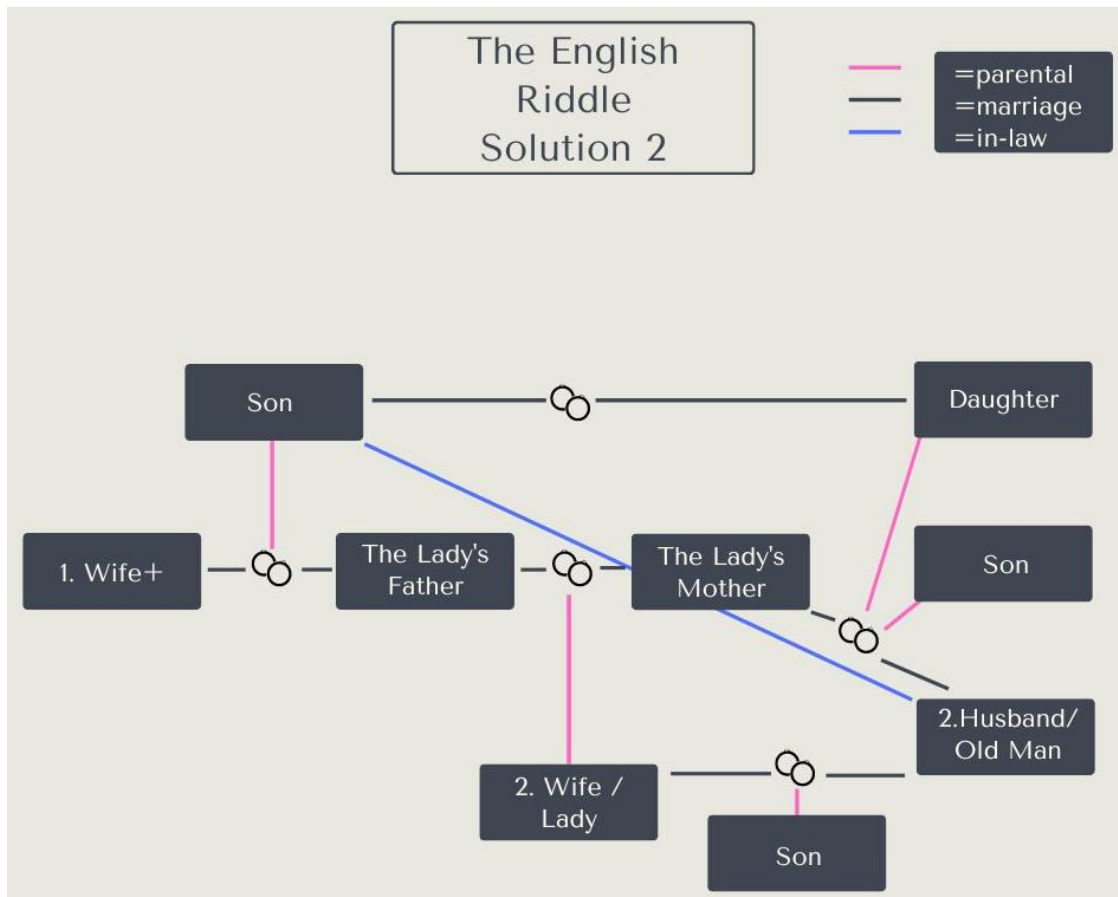


Figure 17: Second possible solution for the *Cecil Riddle*, illustrated after the solution given in: Donche, *Verwantschapsraadsels op Schilderijen*, 2011, p. 238.

A flaw in the translation is possible, but it could also be that the riddle was changed for a reason. Given that the French print is part of this European riddle collection and also entails a slightly different family connection, it makes sense to question Donche’s hypothesis. In the French version, the relationship between the figures in the picture is different again, with no brothers or uncles present. Instead, the women state that the older men were their mothers’ husbands and are now their own husbands as well as the fathers of their children.⁵³⁷ Without delving into too much detail about the French form of the riddle and its solution, this version demonstrates that the riddle existed in various forms in European countries. Hence, instead of the suspected translation mistake, it is more probable that the genealogical riddle was slightly changed from country to country and culture to culture to adapt it to respective understandings of family genealogy. Essentially, Donche’s claim overlooks how these changes could have resulted from differences in inheritance laws between these countries.

⁵³⁷ A solution to this French riddle is presented in the appendix.

Regarding *Het Raadsel van Nijmegen* riddle, the larger issue of matrimonial and inheritance law has been addressed by Sebastiaan Roes, who has consulted different systems of law in the early modern Netherlands.⁵³⁸ For the *Cecil Riddle*, Lyndan Warner’s recently published article explores the question of consanguinity laws in Protestant England. As Warner has shown, a solution presented for *Het Raadsel van Nijmegen* which involves a man marrying his step-children’s daughter would have violated the prohibition of Leviticus, which was applied to England’s jurisprudence in the 16th century.⁵³⁹ Thus, a solution such as the one in the Dutch text from 1504 would not have been realistic for an English audience within the laws of their country. Warner has rightfully concluded that a riddle devoted to William Cecil, a man who worked for the state and was responsible for the marriages of the royal wards, would require an answer that honoured those consanguinity laws.⁵⁴⁰

Moreover, Warner has found an early modern document entitled *Lord Treasurer Burleigh’s riddle for Consanguinity* which presents another solution to the riddle in the form of a diagram.⁵⁴¹ This folio must have been made sometime after 1572, when Cecil became Lord Treasurer and had already been elevated to Baron Burghley. The document describes the scene from the painting and presents a consanguinity tree beneath a summary of the riddle’s narrative.⁵⁴² This solution offers another approach to the unusual family connections in the English riddle and indeed solves the problem that plagued Donche: how to connect all three sons directly to the old man as their father and not their father-in-law. This third solution again takes the lady’s parents into account and assumes that they each had a daughter from another marriage in addition to the lady.⁵⁴³ Meanwhile, the old man had two sons, possibly from a first marriage, though that is not specified in the diagram.⁵⁴⁴ He then married the lady, and his sons married her sisters, which made them brothers-in-law to the lady (**Fig. 18**). While this solution solves the ‘in-law’ problem for the relation of the first two sons to the old man, it now affects their status as brothers(-in-law) to the lady: the old man’s

⁵³⁸ ROES: “*The Riddle of Nijmegen*”, p. 117.

⁵³⁹ WARNER: “*Kinship Riddles*”, p. 24.

⁵⁴⁰ IBID.

⁵⁴¹ IBID., p. 16.

⁵⁴² The description is transcribed in IBID., p. 17.

⁵⁴³ Because it is not clear if the lady was born as the second or third daughter, several micro-solutions are possible in this approach. This point is also addressed in IBID., p. 19.

⁵⁴⁴ Theoretically, it could have been two separate marriages, which would complicate matters further.

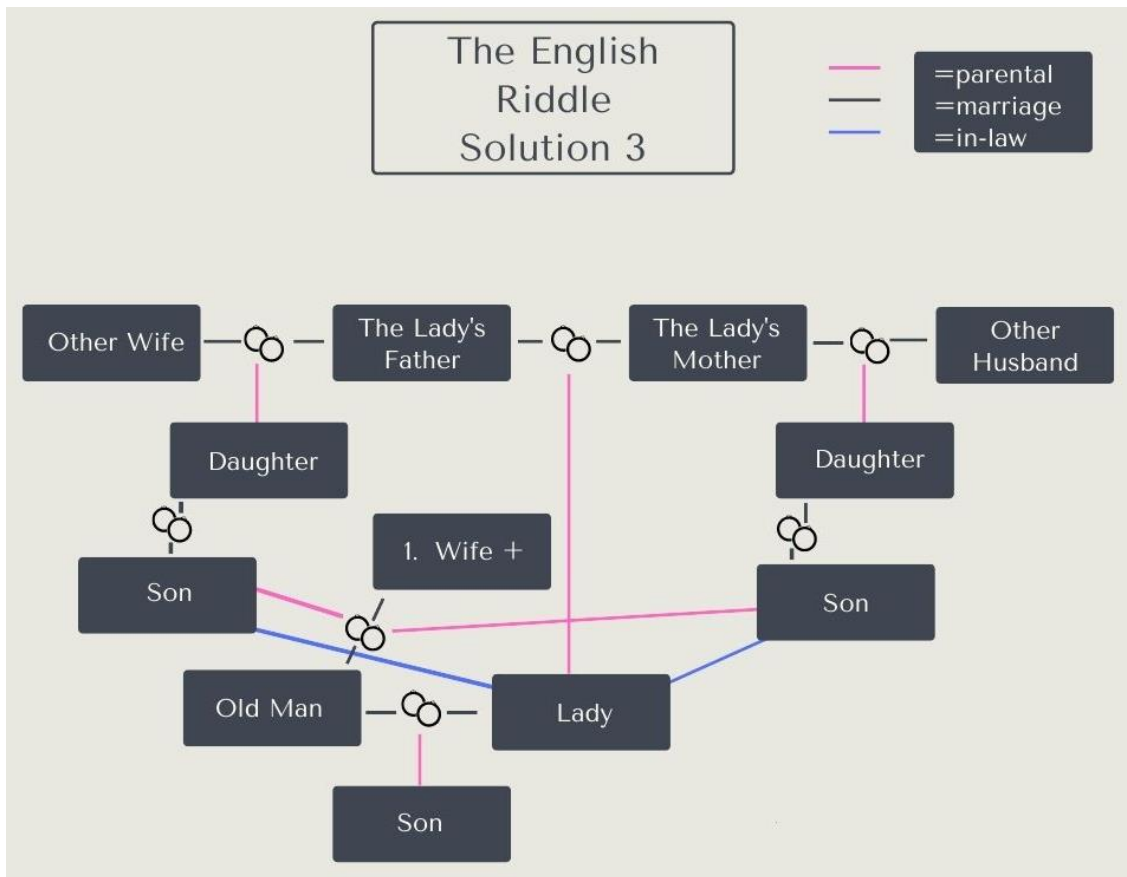


Figure 18: Third possible solution to the *Cecil Riddle*, illustrated after the solution given in: Warner, *Kinship Riddles*, 2022, p. 16.

connection to the men is a blood relation, but the lady is connected to them indirectly through their marriages to her two sisters.⁵⁴⁵

The inscriptions which present the riddle in the painting insist that beholders make three primary connections: first, it is always stated that the lady is married to the old man, and the third son is their shared child; second, the two men exiting the castle must be her half-brothers; third, all three men have to be the sons of her husband. The range of approaches to meeting these criteria shows that there is more than one way to follow these instructions. Because of the lack of more specific information in the English riddle, more than one solution is possible. In an entry on the *Cecil Riddle*, Karen Hearn notes a potential complex family connection on Cecil’s side. As evidence, she cites a label placed on the back of the Fogg version which gives the names of the six figures in the painting:

⁵⁴⁵ One could even doubt if such a solution fully meets the statement in the inscription that they are her brothers on either her father’s side or her mother’s side.

SIR THOMAS CAVE. KNT. of Stanford co Northampton. [died 1558] 1st husband (man reclining) = ELIZABETH DANVERS dau. & coheir of Sir John Danvers of Waterstock co. Oxon. [died 1572] (Lady seated) = JAMES SKEFFINGTON (son of William Skeffington of Fisherwick co. Staff by Joanna Leveson) (brother to Lady Cave's son in law); ROGER CAVE of Stanford co. Northampton [died 1586] (one of the three men) = Margaret Cecil married 1562. (sister of William, Lord Burghley, Lord Treasurer of England); Mary Cave, married to WILLIAM SKEFFINGTON of Skeffington (son of Thomas Skeffington by Mary Stanley) (one of the three men); Alice Cave, married circa 1570 JOHN. SKEFFINGTON of Fisherwick. co. Stafford [died 1604] (son of William Skeffington by Joanna Leveson) (one of the three men).⁵⁴⁶

However fitting, this relation does not entirely match the one described in the painting. Here, the second husband is the brother of the man who married one of his wife's daughters. All presented solutions — the one by Lewis, the one by Donche, and the one found by Warner — are valid by their own logic and are probably not the only answers that can be applied to this riddle.⁵⁴⁷ Each has its own advantages but also poses its own problems.

Based on these considerations, the vagueness of the riddle's instructions can be understood as intended ambiguity within the puzzle.⁵⁴⁸ The way the riddle is presented to beholders in the English version purposely involves a degree of uncertainty to accommodate multiple interpretations by the audience.⁵⁴⁹ The essential purpose of the picture is not to elicit the perfect solution to the riddle itself but to provide a possibility to test the beholder's logic skills and knowledge of the realm's laws. With its altered form and reduced cast of family members, the English riddle shifts the focus away from the complexity of the riddle to a core subject of courtesy: the significance of genealogy and necessity of building a pedigree.

At this point, it is crucial to reconsider the depicted scene as a visual code to decipher the riddle's context. While the picture and the text do not give a definite answer to the presented problem, instead leaving room for several solutions, the iconography indirectly answers the question of how genealogy is made. The panel depicts many men but only one woman; when reduced to this visual observation, beholders must sympathise with the questioner's curiosity about how the figures are connected, as it raises another important inquiry of

⁵⁴⁶ HEARN: “*British School. A Riddle c. 1565-70*”, pp. 98–99.

⁵⁴⁷ Additionally, Lyndan Warner has shown that even the one solution she has presented has many possible interpretations by readers. WARNER: “*Kinship Riddles*”, p. 19.

⁵⁴⁸ Dan Pagis has written about riddles with more than one solution, which are often very short riddles with few hints to follow. PAGIS, Dan: “*Toward a Theory of the Literary Riddle*”, in: HASAN-ROKEM, Galit and David SHULMAN (Ed.): *Untying The Knot. On Riddles and Other Enigmatic Modes*, New York, Oxford 1996, pp. 81–108, p. 95.

⁵⁴⁹ Annikki Kaivola-Bregenhøj has also stressed that a riddle always offers “semantic leeway permitting several answers”. KAIVOLA-BREGENHØJ: “*Riddles and Their Use*”, p. 33.

genealogy: Who is allowed to marry who?⁵⁵⁰ The answer given by the young lady to identify her husband is the oddest of all possible answers since it connects her, a young woman in the middle of the scene, with the oldest of the candidates around her. The implication that sexuality in a marriage produces offspring for a family dynasty is thus accompanied by the issue of suitability, as the father of the dynasty, the husband of the only woman in the picture, is the only man who is not vibrant but sleeping.⁵⁵¹

Generally speaking, the riddle intertwines layers of courtly life and challenges the beholder to approach the presented problem through its combination of text and imagery. The riddle functions on multiple levels, including logic, morality, and the significance of lineage, which overlap and are combined on the panel. In this way, the riddle could facilitate a discussion of family constructions and their importance in Elizabethan England.

A noble English family: Ancestry and pedigrees in Elizabethan England

So far, the analysis of the *Cecil Riddle* within the network of the European genealogical puzzle tradition indicates that the English version of the riddle demanded a discussion of legal and logical possibilities rather than one clear answer to the presented problem. At its core, the riddle not only concerns a curious family connection but also offers a case study to consider the connection between families, marriages, and the building of a lawful genealogy. Hence, in the text, the lady’s expression that her family is of rightful “lynnege in any degree” already reveals a keyword — “lynnege” — for contextualising the riddle within the Elizabethan courtly culture. The term “lineage” is ultimately linked to the concepts of ancestry and pedigree, which typically had to be noble to be recognised in courtly circles. During the English 16th century, the importance and value of a noble lineage was a constant topic of discussions provoked by new developments in social hierarchies.⁵⁵² For William Cecil, who came from a noble family without a title, this subject concerned him personally as an ambitious man and a governor of the state.

⁵⁵⁰ A connection between the subject of the riddle and consanguinity diagrams, which were used in early modern times to calculate degrees of kinship, has been detailed by WARNER: “*Kinship Riddles*”, pp. 1–4.

⁵⁵¹ In this sense, it would also be interesting for future research to further analyse the iconography of the English riddle and connect it with, for example, the subject of Samson and Delilah, to which it has a certain formal resemblance.

⁵⁵² As shown in Part I, courtiers such as William Cecil could be elevated in social ranking by securing titles and honours. Overall, the heterogeneity of the Elizabethan court can be described by the contrast between old established families and new men, such as Cecil and Hatton, who gained their titles and privileges through their service. STONE: *The Crisis of the Aristocracy 1558-1641*, pp. 21–26.

In the Elizabethan court, having a noble pedigree and prestigious ancestors could decide a courtier’s reputation and his possibilities to access the court. As the highest social class, the peerage had a right of personal access to the sovereign if the circumstances and their behaviour allowed it. For the second-highest social class, the gentry, the right of access was not as vast but included access to the court. The middle and lesser classes had no such right.⁵⁵³ While the concept of aristocracy was tied to the belief in a God-given difference between those of noble status and those of an ordinary nature, an individual’s education became increasingly important in opposition to his lineage.⁵⁵⁴ In 16th-century England, wider access to education was beginning to act as an equaliser that allowed even those not of noble birth to hold an office.⁵⁵⁵ The result was the rise of a “new Tudor aristocracy”, a group of newcomers from the lesser landowning class who were counted as “gentlemen” but did not have parents of noble birth.⁵⁵⁶ This new elite had to justify their positions in the court against the old nobility, the “true gentlemen”, who defended their right to hold offices based on bloodline.⁵⁵⁷ In contrast, the “new gentlemen” referred to their learnings and intellectual abilities, which they offered to use for the good of the crown.⁵⁵⁸

These seemingly conflicting ideals of the noble by birth and the noble by education were also addressed in the literature of the time. As a strong defender of education, Thomas Elyot discussed the balance between the “noblesse of birth” and the appropriation of a noble status through virtuous behaviour. In *The Governour*, Elyot frames the behavioural side as more important: “[...] and the persons were called gentilmen, more for the remembrance of their virtue and benefite, than for the discrepance of astates”.⁵⁵⁹ In addressing this discrepancy in perceptions of status, he defines two understandings of nobility. The first is

⁵⁵³ This is further described in ROWSE: *The Elizabethan Renaissance*, pp. 30–33.

⁵⁵⁴ WAGNER: “*Idleness and the Ideal of the Gentlemen*”, p. 42.

⁵⁵⁵ IBID., pp. 41–42.

⁵⁵⁶ SIEGEL, Paul: “*English Humanism and the New Tudor Aristocracy*”, in: *Journal of the History of Ideas* 13/4 (1952), pp. 450–468, p. 450. The difference between “gentleman” and “nobleman” was also addressed by Richard Mulcaster in his *Positions* (1561), where he draws a hierarchical difference between the two: the nobleman is higher than the gentleman, though they are still seen as part of the nobility. MULCASTER, Richard: *Positions. Wherin Those Primitive Circumstances Be Examined, Which Are Necessarie For The Training Vp Of Children, Either For Skill In Their Booke, Or Health In Their Bodie*, ed. by Robert Hebert QUICK, London 1888 (1561), p. 197.

⁵⁵⁷ PARTRIDGE: “*Images of the Courtier*”, p. 69. Lawrence Stone has prominently labelled this societal state a “crisis of the aristocracy”. STONE: *The Crisis of the Aristocracy 1558-1641*, pp. 21–26.

⁵⁵⁸ SIEGEL: “*English Humanism and the New Tudor Aristocracy*”, pp. 454–456.

⁵⁵⁹ ELYOT: *The Governour*, p. 127. Putting this definition in a historical context, John Major has interpreted Elyot’s praise for education as a reaction to the hostility some English nobleman had towards learning. MAJOR: *Sir Thomas Elyot*, p. 25. Especially in Elyot’s time, when Henry VIII was still on the throne, a strict political order existed with the monarch on top; however, the role of the governor, who had to be learned, was increasingly important. For more on the hierarchy described in Elyot’s book, see LEHMBERG: *Tudor Humanist*, pp. 37–39.

what he calls “the vulgare opinion of men“, where nobility “is only the prayse and surname of virtue; which the lenger it continueth in a name or lignage, the more is nobilitie extolled and meruailed at”.⁵⁶⁰ The second definition, which he describes in more detail, is an understanding of nobility that develops over time in relation to a young gentleman’s education.⁵⁶¹ Following this definition, a noble family is the group of people with the finest virtues given by a natural order who are also willing to take on the task of creating a public benefit for all people by serving the state.⁵⁶² Yet, at the same time, Elyot acknowledges that “nobility is mooste shewed” when these virtues and possessions have been maintained over a long bloodline. Thus, while ancestry and pedigree were essential components of a noble status, they were not enough on their own. Elyot immediately emphasises that, if nobility were solely given through “auncient lignage, an auncinet robe, or great possessions”, then noble men would “moche errour and folye”.⁵⁶³ Therefore, he argues that nobility and virtue are ultimately linked, and one requires the other.⁵⁶⁴

Roger Ascham addresses a similar point in *The Schoolmaster* when making a connection between nobility and wisdom. He recounts how, in his day and age, the wisest statesmen turned out to be “the meaner mens children” rather than those from the noblest families.⁵⁶⁵ He concludes that nobility without wisdom and virtue is too weak to “bear the burden of weightie affaires”.⁵⁶⁶ Still, his understanding of nobility is tied to a concept of naturally given aristocracy and hierarchy. Ascham defines nobility similarly to Elyot, stating that the great ones at the court are granted their position by God, which bestows on them what he calls the “greatest authoritie[...].”⁵⁶⁷ At the time Ascham wrote the book, the Elizabethan societal system depended on a steady, God-given hierarchy. Hence, a strong bloodline and lineage were amongst the most critical assets for an Elizabethan courtier.

While these two books already convey the importance of possessing a noble bloodline, the sharpest connection between ancestry and noble status was made by Castiglione. In the first

⁵⁶⁰ ELYOT: *The Governour*, p. 130.

⁵⁶¹ IBID., pp. 126–127.

⁵⁶² IBID., p. 127.

⁵⁶³ IBID.

⁵⁶⁴ They are linked in the context of “nobility”, “gentilnesse”, “property”, and “humanity”. In John Major’s interpretation, the courtier’s single virtue equalled “gentilnesse”, while property and heritage also applied to nobility. “Humanity” was the virtue by which a gentleman understood his position in relation to God. MAJOR: *Sir Thomas Elyot*, pp. 24–27.

⁵⁶⁵ ASCHAM: *The Scholemaster*, fol. 14r.

⁵⁶⁶ IBID.

⁵⁶⁷ “For though god hath placed yow, to be chiefe in making of lawes, to beare greatest authoritie, to command all others.” IBID., fol. 21v.

book of *The Courtier*, Castiglione discusses whether a courtier should be of high or low status. He remarks that a noble background offers a benefit for a ‘good courtier’ compared to a gentleman who is not noble by birth. He explains that nobility inherited through birth functions like a lamp lighting the way to virtuous behaviour and honour.⁵⁶⁸ Thus, for a courtier not of noble birth, it will be harder to achieve the demanded ideal. However, coming from an excellent family was no guarantee that someone would naturally have all of these virtues, as they often required “study and diligence”.⁵⁶⁹ While a courtier could not rely exclusively on his noble birth to fulfil the ideal described by the courtesy books, his family background was nonetheless a defining factor.⁵⁷⁰

Notably, the courtesy books neglect one aspect of social hierarchy and the building of a noble bloodline: the subject of dynastic marriage. For a family aspiring to climb the social ladder, establishing a favourable connection with a nobler family through marriage could elevate their status. As shown, William Cecil himself recognised the need to build a bloodline for his dynasty. He often exploited possibilities to connect his family with other noble families through marriage, and he staged these unions as family accomplishments in his houses.⁵⁷¹ For his daughter Anne, Cecil negotiated a contract to marry Philip Sidney in 1569. Sidney was from one of the oldest families in England and was the nephew of Robert Dudley.⁵⁷² Anne was 12 years old at the time, and the marriage was not intended to happen any time soon, but Cecil found it worthwhile to secure a potential connection to the Sidney family.

Interestingly, the contract between Anne Cecil and Philip Sidney was never fulfilled. Instead, in December 1571, Anne married Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford, who was from one of the oldest and most noble families of England. The *Cecil Riddle* was produced around the same time, likely in 1570. The marriage can be regarded as an excellent coup for the ambitious dynast. Instead of taking a daughter from a family that was as noble and

⁵⁶⁸ “For noblesse of birth, is as it were a cleare lampe that sheweth forth and bringeth into light, workes both good and bad, and inflameth and provoketh unto virtue, as well with the feare of slaunder, as also with the hope of praise.” CASTIGLIONE: *The Courtier*, pp. 31–32.

⁵⁶⁹ IBID., p. 33. Here, L. Gapsar Pallavacine argues, “me thinke it strange opinion that the parents of our Courtier being unnoble, his good qualities should be defaced, and those other good conditions which you have named should not be sufficient to bring him to the top of all perfection.” IBID., p. 34.

⁵⁷⁰ “[...] for so much as our intent is to fashion a Courtier without any maner default or lack in him, and heaped with all praise, me thinke it a necessary matter to make him a Gentleman, as well for many other respects, as also for the common opinion, which by and by doeth leane to noblenes.” IBID., p. 43.

⁵⁷¹ He tried to marry one of his granddaughters to one of his wards, the Earl of Southampton, who declined. Nevertheless, three daughters of his daughter Anne, Countess of Oxford, married earls. HURSTFIELD: “*Master of the Court of Wards*”, p. 105. For more information on the houses, see Chapter 2.

⁵⁷² ALFORD: *Burghley*, pp. 145–146.

established as his own, Oxford chose the daughter of a powerful but not equally noble man with a humble background. Cecil was elevated to the Earldom of Burghley in 1571 to make this marriage between the two families possible. Even more interestingly, Oxford had been in Cecil’s household as a royal ward after his father’s death in 1562, and he had grown up together with his future bride and her siblings.⁵⁷³ The marriage made the already existing connection between the families lawful, “[w]ithout hurt of lynnege in any degree”. With this marriage, Oxford became a son(-in-law) to Cecil and a brother(-in-law) to his two sons, Thomas and Robert.⁵⁷⁴

Though not as spectacular as the incident described in the painting, this biographical anecdote reflects how common the curious construction of a lineage could be in Elizabethan times. Simultaneously, it reveals how convoluted stepfamilies were not rare in early modern times. When Anne died in 1588, Oxford soon married again, as he needed a male heir and money.⁵⁷⁵ His first marriage produced three daughters, who then became the stepchildren of his second wife, Elizabeth Trentham, who bore him a son in 1593. At that time, William Cecil still held the trust of his granddaughters, which preserved his connection to de Vere. Cecil was used to such family relations since he himself had lost his first wife prior to marrying Mildred Cooke and had experienced the reality of a step-family with his parents and grandparents.⁵⁷⁶

Even in his written advice to his son Robert, Cecil stresses the importance of utilising marriage to benefit the family’s lineage. He advises Robert to have his own daughters married quickly before they can find their own husbands.⁵⁷⁷ He further instructs his son to choose his own wife wisely and use the possibilities to connect and fashion the Cecil family correctly. Already, the first recommendation of the 10 — a number inspired by the Ten Commandments — urges Robert to seek a wife who fits his needs as a statesman and dynast:

⁵⁷³ IBID., p. 146. However, it does not seem like Cecil pressured the marriage in any way. HURSTFIELD: *“Master of the Court of Wards”*, p. 105.

⁵⁷⁴ The marriage was very unhappy, to say the least. Oxford distanced himself from his wife in 1576 and denied fatherhood of his daughter Elizabeth. When Anne died in 1588 at 31 years old, her father assumed guardianship of her three daughters. ALFORD: *Burghley*, p. 304.

⁵⁷⁵ NELSON, Alan: *“Vere, Edward de, Seventeenth Earl of Oxford”*, in: *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (03.01.2008), <https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-28208> (accessed 27.08.2022).

⁵⁷⁶ WARNER: *“Kinship Riddles”*, pp. 12–15.

⁵⁷⁷ “Marry thy daughters in time, lest they marry themselves.” CECIL: *“Certain Precepts”*, p. 11.

Inquire diligently of her disposition and how her parents have been inclined in their youth. Let her not be poor how generous soever, for a man can buy nothing in the market with gentility. Neither choose a base and uncomely creature altogether for wealth, for it will cause contempt in others and loathing in thee. Make not choice of a dwarf or a fool, for from the one thou mayest beget a race of pygmies, the other may be thy daily disgrace; for it will irk thee to have her talk, for then thou shalt find to thy great grief that there is nothing more fulsome than a she-fool.⁵⁷⁸

Here, the proposition is to understand the *Cecil Riddle* as a unique interpretation of a European genealogical puzzle. Like the other English riddles, it presents a family situation that was well suited to an English audience, their knowledge of connecting families, and their real-life experiences. Nevertheless, the chronology of the versions must be addressed. It currently seems that the *Cecil Riddle* is one of the older riddle paintings since the panel has been correctly dated to before 1571. However, this does not necessarily mean that the *Cecil Riddle* served as a model for the other versions.⁵⁷⁹ Instead, it is suggested here that the tradition of the genealogical riddle in paintings emerged more or less simultaneously in multiple countries.⁵⁸⁰ On the basis of these observations, the next chapter presents an even more profound reading of the *Cecil Riddle* as a personal puzzle for William Cecil. In contrast to earlier statements about its individuality, the chapter proposes that this painting only used the riddle’s iconography as a framework to deliver another, more personal and implicit riddle, which is hidden solely in the painting and not expressed in the text. In contrast to the other English paintings, the *Cecil Riddle* has one element that conveys a personal message to its owner and a riddle deep within the courtly network.

⁵⁷⁸ IBID., pp. 9–10.

⁵⁷⁹ At least for the Nijmegen riddle, one fact is interesting to mention here. At the time Cornelis Ketel painted his riddle in 1576, he was residing and working in England. MANDER/VAN: *Het Schilder-Boeck*, p. 275. Whether there is a connection between Ketel and the *Cecil Riddle* remains uncertain, though it is just as probable that the subject circulated simultaneously through print, and Ketel had no part in introducing this subject to the British isle.

⁵⁸⁰ Of course, the movement of the riddle could and should be put in connection with the travelling of artists and intellectuals between European countries. Nevertheless, it is not the aim of this study to trace where the riddle emerged or by whom exactly it was spread. Since it can be suspected that the riddle existed in multiple versions and circulated through different media, at least from the 16th century onwards, that would be a Sisyphean task at this point, though potentially manageable for future researchers.

6. Framing the Riddle for Sir William Cecil

While parts of the cultural context and European tradition surrounding the *Cecil Riddle* have been thoroughly researched, one detail of the painting has never been discussed in detail: the painted framework which visually encloses the composition. Out of all of the versions, this kind of framing is unique to the *Cecil Riddle*. It also adds other iconographic details to the painting: four circular fields, each containing a heraldic sign, in the four corners of the frame. Today, only parts of this pictorial framework are visible since a large golden frame partly covers the painting. The painted framework has not yet been researched but is essential to analyse for further insight into the history and iconography of the *Cecil Riddle*. From a stylistic viewpoint, the frame seems to be of the auricular type, which came into fashion in 17th-century England under Charles I.⁵⁸¹ Hence, it was probably added when the picture was in the collection of the Earl of Clarendon and was not part of the painting when it was presented to William Cecil.⁵⁸²

Because the golden frame overlaps with the painted surface, the heraldic signs are partly obscured.⁵⁸³ Additionally, no known technical analysis of the painting has been conducted. There is therefore no information available about the possible overpainted areas, pentimenti, or other elements on the panel that would complicate or add value to an interpretation of the painting as an object. Nevertheless, a close inspection of the front of the picture allows for some investigation of the painted framework. Since this framework has received little attention in the already sparse research on the *Cecil Riddle*, it is still one of the most mysterious parts of the picture and thus deserves a closer, if incomplete, examination. Future research on this picture, hopefully with full access to the privately owned panel, could build on this chapter's findings and address the open questions.

The first researcher to acknowledge the painted frame was Robin Gibson, who called it an "architectural surround with four emblems".⁵⁸⁴ Gibson was also the first to identify these partly obscured signs as a pelican in the top-left corner, a knot in the bottom-left corner, a

⁵⁸¹ MITCHELL, Paul and Lynn ROBERTS: *A History of European Picture Frames*, London 1996, pp. 59–60; SIMON, Jacob: *The Art of the Picture Frame. Artists, Patrons and the Framing of Portraits in Britain*, London 1996, pp. 49–52.

⁵⁸² Unfortunately, the frame could not be examined in the course of this investigation. However, it should be noted by future research as an important part of the object's history and included in a detailed analysis.

⁵⁸³ In its current location at Hatfield House, the frame has never been removed from the painting. When it entered the collection, the frame was already screwed together from behind by metal strips, which makes it impossible to remove the frame without complications. WHALE, Sarah: Personal correspondence, 12.05.2022.

⁵⁸⁴ GIBSON: *Catalogue of Portraits*, p. 131.

beast representing a gryphon in the top-right corner, and a unicorn in the bottom-right corner. In her entry on the painting, Karen Hearn uses Gibson's identifications to refer to the signs. No other attempt to read the signs has been made.⁵⁸⁵ While these identifications offer a starting point, they seem inaccurate when one closely examines the three beasts and acknowledges them as heraldic signs. Instead of a pelican, the bird in the top-left corner rather resembles a swan gorged and chained, as a crown and a long golden chain around its neck can be distinguished (**Figs. 19 and 20**). In addition, the beast in the top-right corner appears to have paws, not wings or claws, and a snout instead of a beak. Therefore, its heraldic presentation resembles a lion statant guardant, which stands with all paws on the ground and looks at the beholder. It has a white collar around its neck but no other attributes which would make it easily identifiable (**Figs. 21 and 22**). The beast in the bottom-left corner is the most difficult to identify, but interpreting it as a unicorn ignores that it has two horns pointing backwards rather than the single, prominent horn that would be on the forehead of a unicorn. Given its distinct muzzle and the shape of its two front legs, it is most likely a heraldic antelope statant, gorged or, as it also has a golden crown around its neck and its feet on the ground (**Figs. 23 and 24**).⁵⁸⁶



Figure 19: *Cecil Riddle*: Detail of the swan, top left, ©Hatfield House.



Figure 20: Swan gorged. Picture quote: FOX-DAVIES: *The Book of Public Arms*, 1915, p. 127.

⁵⁸⁵ HEARN: "British School. *A Riddle c. 1565-70*", p. 98.

⁵⁸⁶ TOWNEND, Peter (Ed.): *Burke's Genealogical and Heraldic History of the Peerage, Baronage and Knightage*, London 1962, pp. 212–215.

All of the emblems have the same livery colours in the background of their shields: a vertically divided field of black and red, or “gules and sable” in heraldic terms. Some of the heraldic signs can be further understood by consulting English arms and heraldry books. The knot, the most distinct sign, has a particular overhead knot form that can be identified with certainty as the so-called Stafford knot, even though the golden frame overlaps with the left part of the symbol (**Figs. 25 and 26**). In his *Complete Guide to Heraldry*, Arthur Fox-Davies notes that this design is the most well-known knot in heraldry.⁵⁸⁷ It is generally referred to as the Staffordshire knot and still used today as the traditional symbol of Staffordshire.⁵⁸⁸ Additionally, it was used in the personal badge of the Earls of Staffordshire and Dukes of Buckingham, which developed from the Earls of Stafford.⁵⁸⁹ Records have located it in the badge of the Stafford family, who possessed the title of Dukes of Buckingham from at least 1475 until 1521.⁵⁹⁰ This connection with the Dukedom of Buckingham leads to the swan in the upper-left corner, which is gorged and chained with its wings expanded. The swan in this form appeared most prominently in the arms of Buckinghamshire.⁵⁹¹ The arms of this region also featured gules and sable as the vertical livery colours in the background, as seen in the heraldic fields of the *Cecil Riddle* framework as well.⁵⁹²

⁵⁸⁷ FOX-DAVIES, Arthur Charles: *A Complete Guide to Heraldry*, London 1985, p. 359.

⁵⁸⁸ In Burke's *Genealogical and Heraldic History*, the arms of Stafford are recorded with not a knot but a swan as the crest. TOWNEND (Ed.): *Burke's Genealogical and Heraldic History of the Peerage, Baronage and Knightage*, p. 1867. However, in Fox-Davies's *Book of Public Arms*, two Stafford knots are included in the arms of Staffordshire. FOX-DAVIES, Arthur Charles: *The Book of Public Arms. A Complete Encyclopaedia of All Royal, Territorial, Municipal, Corporate, Official, and Impersonal Arms*, London 1915, p. 746.

⁵⁸⁹ FOX-DAVIES: *A Complete Guide to Heraldry*, pp. 290–291, p. 359.

⁵⁹⁰ TURNER, John Christopher: *History and Science of Knots*, Singapore, New Jersey, London, Hong Kong 1996, p. 392.

⁵⁹¹ FOX-DAVIES: *The Book of Public Arms*, p. 126.

⁵⁹² FOX-DAVIES, Arthur Charles: *The Art of Heraldry. An Encyclopaedia of Armory*, London 1986, p. 331.



Figure 21: *Cecil Riddle*, detail of the lion, top right, ©Hatfield House.



Figure 22: Lion statant guardant. Picture quote: FOX-DAVIES: *The Book of Public Arms*, 1915, p. 137.



Figure 23: *Cecil Riddle*, detail of the antelope, bottom right, ©Hatfield House.



Figure 24: Heraldic antelope statant. Picture quote: FOX-DAVIES: *The Book of Public Arms*, 1915, p. 158.



Figure 25: *Cecil Riddle*, detail of the knot, bottom left, ©Hatfield House.



Figure 26: Stafford knot. Picture quote: FOX-DAVIES: *The Book of Public Arms*, 1915, p. 359.

While the bird's head is not visible, the background colours combined with the crown and the chain are convincing proof that this heraldic sign represents the Buckinghamshire swan. Like the Stafford knot, the swan was used in the arms of the Dukes of Buckingham, next to its function as the sign of the shire.⁵⁹³

Unfortunately, the lion and the antelope are much harder to connect to a distinct region or title. The lion statant guardant has mainly been found in royal crests used by legitimate and illegitimate members of the royal family.⁵⁹⁴ However, this royal lion always has a crown on its head. While the condition of the painting's framework limits speculation, the lion in the *Cecil Riddle* does not appear to be wearing a crown. The antelope is similarly known to be a royal emblem, and historical records show that the Plantagenet and Lancaster families used the antelope gorged and chained as a symbol.⁵⁹⁵ Taken together, this information about the lion and the antelope strongly indicates that they should also be read in the context of a royal family connection. Interestingly, a swan gorged and chained and an antelope gorged and chained were used together by King Henry V, which could be one

⁵⁹³ FOX-DAVIES: *A Complete Guide to Heraldry*, pp. 290–291, p. 359.

⁵⁹⁴ *IBID.*, p. 141.

⁵⁹⁵ WILLEMENT, Thomas: *Regal Heraldry. The Armorial Insignia of the Kings and Queens of England*, London 1821, pp. 33–35.

direction to follow.⁵⁹⁶ Since the signs cannot be identified beyond a doubt, their meanings will remain uncertain for as long as the frame covers half of them. Thus, the following section shifts the focus to the frame's function within the painting and how it can be addressed and contextualised in Elizabethan times.

Framing the picture: Presenting a heraldic riddle

The scant research on picture frames has acknowledged a frame as an important element contributing to the image as a whole.⁵⁹⁷ Especially when a pictorial framework, as a painted border within an image, visually imitates an actual frame, the artwork makes an interesting reference to this group of objects. A pictorial framing made to look like a tangible object points to the functions and limits of a picture frame. In such case, the iconography is broadened and completed by the border framing. Since the *Cecil Riddle* includes such a framework, this phenomenon warrants closer inspection here.

Especially in Tudor England, the exceptional popularity of portraits demanded a purposeful use of frames that would support, shape, and protect moveable pictures.⁵⁹⁸ Records of some of these frames show that they also complemented portraits by bearing information about the sitter, such as the person's age or name.⁵⁹⁹ While it remains an open question whether patrons were actively involved in this use of frames as a part of the iconography, it is still noteworthy that the function of the picture frame went beyond pure framing and protecting.⁶⁰⁰

Like picture frames, the inclusion of a painted border or pictorial framework as part of the iconography was not a rarity in the European 16th century. On the contrary, these elements were commonly used with different media, such as prints and even plates.⁶⁰¹ In book

⁵⁹⁶ IBID., p. 33.

⁵⁹⁷ For a history of the picture frame, see MITCHELL/ROBERTS: *A History of European Picture Frames*, pp. 9–12. Ortega y Gasset has even described the frame as a “window, in the same way as windows also behave as frames”. ORTEGA Y GASSET, José: “Thoughts on Art and Philosophy”, in: BJERRE, Henrik (Ed.): *Frames. State of the Art*, Copenhagen 2008, pp. 15–18, p. 17.

⁵⁹⁸ BJERRE, Henrik: “On the History of Frames”, in: BJERRE, Henrik (Ed.): *Fram. State Art*, Copenhagen 2008, pp. 21–52, pp. 22–29. On the techniques for decorating a frame, see FEDERSPIEL, Beate Knuth: “Decoration Techniques on Picture Frames”, in: BJERRE, Henrik (Ed.): *Frames. State of the Art*, Copenhagen 2008, pp. 171–200, pp. 184–197.

⁵⁹⁹ SIMON: *The Art of the Picture Frame*, pp. 49–50. The picture frame in the Tudor era is further described in MITCHELL/ROBERTS: *A History of European Picture Frames*, pp. 57–58.

⁶⁰⁰ SIMON: *The Art of the Picture Frame*, pp. 13–14. The role of the patron, with a focus on the 18th century, is further discussed in IBID., pp. 113–128.

⁶⁰¹ For a case study of the special use of pictorial borders in prints, see GRASSKAMP, Anna: “Transcultural Margins. Pictorial Framing Strategies in Sino-European Print Culture 1580-1680”, in: KACUNKO, Slavko, Ellen HARLIZIUS-KLÜCK and Hans KÖRNER (Ed.): *Framings*, Berlin 2015, pp. 421–444. Carsten-Peter Warncke has also shown that the frame, or border, played a part in the design of table plates. WARNCKE,

illumination, pictorial schemes imitating wooden frames, columns, or floral and ornamental designs were often employed to build a painted framework for the text.⁶⁰² These iconographical elements fulfilled multiple artistic functions. First, they served as decorations that enriched the visual appeal of the manuscript. As both borders and frames, they narrowed and defined the space to be framed. Second, these framing elements could provide further information about the text or picture, thus adding another, often encrypted layer of meaning to the text. This additional meaning could be related to the text or be relatively separate and develop a narrative of its own.⁶⁰³

An example illustrating this connection between a pictorial framework and an image is an engraving of a portrait of William Cecil made between approximately 1589 and 1610 (**Fig. 27**).⁶⁰⁴ It has been attributed to William Rogers, a native English engraver, although the engraving does not have a signature.⁶⁰⁵ The print shows an oval portrait of Cecil in the robe of the Garter surrounded by his personal motto, “COR VNVM VIA VNA”. The print is based on a portrait from the late 1580s, now in the NPG, which depicts Cecil in the full Garter robe.⁶⁰⁶ At the bottom of the print, a plastically shaped text plate displays Cecil’s name, offices, and titles, leaving no doubt about his identity.⁶⁰⁷ The border area around the oval portrait is filled with festoons, and each corner contains a heraldic achievement of the Cecil family.⁶⁰⁸ In this print, the border framework does not imitate an actual frame but

Carsten-Peter: “*Rand, Rahmen und Fahne. Zur darstellerischen Funktion von Begrenzungsformen in der Frühen Neuzeit*”, in: KÖRNER, Hans and Karl MÖSENER (Ed.): *Rahmen. Zwischen Innen und Außen. Beiträge zur Theorie und Geschichte*, Berlin 2010, pp. 63–71.

⁶⁰² CONRAD, Fridericke: “*Rahmen und Ränder. Funktionsbestimmung und medienflexive Techniken rahmender Elemente in der Buchmalerei um 1500*”, in: WAGNER, Daniela and Fridericke CONRAD (Ed.): *Rahmen und Frames. Dispositionen des Visuellen in der Kunst der Vormoderne*, Berlin, Boston 2018, pp. 23–40, pp. 27–36.

⁶⁰³ These functions of painted frameworks in book illuminations are described in HÜLSEN-ESCH, Andrea VON: “*Der Rahmen im Rahmen der Buchmalerei*”, in: KÖRNER, Hans and Karl MÖSENER (Ed.): *Format Rahm. Vom Mittelalt. Bis Zur Neuzeit*, Berlin 2008, pp. 9–40; MITCHELL/ROBERTS: *A History of European Picture Frames*, p. 9.

⁶⁰⁴ William Rogers (attr.): *The Righte Honorable Syr William Cecill Knighte Baron of Burghley*, engraving, 14.8 cm x 11.7 cm, British Museum, London.

⁶⁰⁵ HIND, Arthur: *Engraving in England in the Sixteenth & Seventeenth Centuries. A Descriptive Catalogue*, Vol. 1, Cambridge 1952, p. 261.

⁶⁰⁶ Unknown: *William Cecil, 1st Baron Burghley*, after 1587, oil on panel, 113 cm x 91.1 cm, National Portrait Gallery London, NPG 362. More information on the portrait is given in STRONG: *Tudor & Jacobean Portraits*, p. 29.

⁶⁰⁷ “The righte honorable Syr William Cecill Knighte, Baron Burghley, Knight of the honorable Order of the Garter, maister of Her highness Wardes and Liveries one of the Lordes of her maiesties Privie counsaile and lord High Tresorer of England”.

⁶⁰⁸ The top right lion rampant on argent and azure and left chess rook also bear the garter of the Knights of the Garter. The bottom ones are partly overshadowed by the inscription plate but still clearly identifiable as Cecil’s garb and lion. Cecil’s coat of arms is explained in detail in WAGNER: *Historic Heraldry of Britain*, p. 64.

connects the heraldic signs with the encircled portrait. As additions to his representation and status, Cecil's coats of arms give further information about him while completing the iconography in a decorative and informational way.



Figure 27: William Rogers (attr.): *The Righte Honorable Syr William Cecill Knighte Baron of Burghley*, engraving, 14.8 cm x 11.7 cm, © The Trustees of the British Museum. Shared under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0) licence.

As in the case of book illumination or prints, a framework painted directly on a painting encloses the painted scene, thus helping to define the space of action for beholders.⁶⁰⁹ Besides this function, frameworks imitating a picture frame often appear in trompe l'oeil paintings as a way to mislead the beholder and challenge the visible border of the painted

⁶⁰⁹ Especially when a painted framework is designed to imitate an actual frame, it suggests a reference to the frame's protective function. This has been suggested by HÜLSEN-ESCH/VON: "Der Rahmen im Rahmen der Buchmalerei", p. 13. A theoretical discussion of the frame in art history is given in WAGNER, Daniela and Fridericke CONRAD: "Visuelle Dispositionen. Zu Rahmen und Frames in Kunst und Kunstgeschichte", in: WAGNER, Daniela and Fridericke CONRAD (Ed.): *Rahmen und Frames. Dispositionen des Visuellen in der Kunst der Vormoderne*, Berlin, Boston 2018, pp. 1–6. For a discussion of the frame's function in the example of 19th-century art, see KEMP, Wolfgang: "Heimatrecht für Bilder. Funktionen und Formen des Rahmens im 19. Jahrhundert", in: MENDGEN, Eva (Ed.): *In Perfect Harmony. Bild + Rahmen 1850-1920*, Exhibition Catalogue, Van Gogh Museum, 31 March to 25 June 1995, Amsterdam 1995, pp. 13–25.

scene. In this sense, the framing must be both part of the painted scene and separate from it to avoid being immediately detected as a visual trick.⁶¹⁰ Apart from this particular case, a pictorial framework marks an image as a secluded area, which can help to add another level of meaning to the iconography. When the framework is visibly part of the painted panel, it especially strengthens the semantic connection between the scene and the framework as two parts of the same iconography.⁶¹¹ This link can be suspected in the Harvard version of the riddle, where the frame offers its own iconography of a man and a woman on the sides of the frame. With their distinct design as pillars with human upper bodies, these figures seem to interact in the construction of a secluded framing of the riddle scene. They also connect to the iconography through small details. Both figures wear the same beast's head as a brooch on their skimpy clothing, and the beast's head also appears in the lady's dress in the middle of the scene.⁶¹² In this case, the painted framework frames the picture as an independent design but also corresponds to it by connecting with specific iconographical details. Given the similarities between the two English riddles, the framing in the *Cecil Riddle* presumably had the same function. However, the connection between the heraldic signs on the framework and the iconography in the painting is as encrypted here as it is in the Harvard painting, and it does not reveal itself at first sight. Since the riddle is not a portrait but a complex scene, there is no clear correlation to the details of the framework.

Another example to illustrate the interaction between a painted framework and a painted scene on a deeper iconographical level is a miniature by Joris Hoefnagel called an *Allegory of the Struggle Between Avarice and Ambition*.⁶¹³ This minute object was auctioned at Sotheby's in 2015 and has been discussed in only a few entries, most prominently an

⁶¹⁰ For more on trompe l'oeil as a reflection of the painting, see SALWA, Mateusz: "Trompe-L'Oeil as Ironic Art", in: ZIRPOLO, Lilian (Ed.): "The Most Noble of the Senses". *Anamorphosis, Trompe-L'Oeil, and Other Optical Illusions in Early Modern Art*, Ramsey 2016, pp. 111–130. More about the interrelation between frames and paintings is written in SITT, Martina: "Rahmenphänomene. Über Zusammenspiel von Komposition, Bild und Sammlungspräsentation", in: KÖRNER, Hans and Karl MÖSENER (Ed.): *Rahmen zwischen Innen und Aussen. Beiträge zur Theorie und Geschichte*, Berlin 2010, pp. 9–20.

⁶¹¹ A good overview of the connections between paintings and their frames is given in KLEINMANN, Ute: *Rahmen und Gerahmtes. Das Spiel mit Darstellung und Bedeutung. Eine Untersuchung des illusionistischen Rahmenmotivs im Oeuvre Gerrit Dous*, Frankfurt am Main, New York 1996, pp. 77–78.

⁶¹² While there is not enough information to further investigate the frame of the Harvard version, this is a fruitful point of departure for further research. Lyndan Warner has suggested that this Harvard painting "has its own connection to a complex stepfamily [...]". WARNER: "Kinship Riddles", p. 20.

⁶¹³ Joris Hoefnagel: *Allegory of the Struggle Between Avarice and Ambition*, 1571, ink and gouache, heightened with gold, on vellum laid down on paper and then panel, 16.7 cm x 21.4 cm, location unknown. An image can be found on Sotheby's website: <https://www.sothebys.com/en/auctions/ecatalogue/2015/old-master-british-drawings-115040/lot.11.html> (accessed 26.11.2023).

interpretation by Thea Vignau-Wilberg.⁶¹⁴ The miniature was made in Antwerp in 1571 after Hoefnagel had returned from his multi-year stay in England. The scene in the middle of the miniature consists of a complex plethora of different figures, landscapes, and motives that all contribute to the subject identified in the title. Some details even draw connections to English locations: for example, under close inspection with a magnifier or technical aid, the building in the background appears to be a very detailed representation of Windsor Castle.⁶¹⁵

The painted frame of this miniature is equally complex and rich in detail. The upper part in the centre displays the date 1571 and a text plate with a Latin inscription quoting Vergil's *Aeneid*: "QVID NON MORTALIA PECTORA COGIS / AVRI SACRA FAMES ET HONORV DIRA CVPIDO?" (Accursed thirst for gold, what do you not compel mortals to do?).⁶¹⁶ Each of the four corners of the frame displays one stage of the four ages of men. Each small scene is completed by a short Latin inscription beneath or next to it.⁶¹⁷ The bottom part of the framework is designed on a particularly large scale and occupies a considerable portion of the pictorial space. With the cryptic inscription in the upper part, the frame charges the miniature with an emblematic quality, adding the subject of age and mortality to the moral allegory in the middle. Thus, the audience must consider the allegorical scene and the iconography of the pictorial framing to deduce the picture's message as a whole. Hoefnagel's framework acts not just as a visual border or trick but as an image of its own as well as a supporting element of the picture that with the miniature's subject.⁶¹⁸

⁶¹⁴ VIGNAU-WILBERG, Thea: *Joris und Jacob Hoefnagel. Kunst und Wissenschaft um 1600*, Berlin 2017, pp. 146–148.

⁶¹⁵ The landscape in the lower-middle part of the frame is said to represent St. Michael's Mount in Cornwall, which, together with Windsor Castle, Hoefnagel must have seen during his stay in England from 1568 to 1569. IBID., p. 146; PUYVELDE, Leo VAN: *The Flemish drawings in the collection of His Majesty the King at Windsor Castle*, London 1942, p. 16.

⁶¹⁶ The translation is quoted from the entry in Sotheby's auction catalogue. SOTHEBY'S: "*Joris Hoefnagel. An Allegory of the Struggle between Avarice and Ambition, Lot 11*", in: *Old Master & British Drawings* (08.07.2015), <https://www.sothebys.com/en/auctions/ecatalogue/2015/old-master-british-drawings-115040/lot.11.html> (accessed 28.07.22).

⁶¹⁷ It has even been suggested that the second age, which is presented as a portrait of a man, could be a portrait of Hoefnagel's friend Emanuel van Meteren. VIGNAU-WILBERG: *Joris und Jacob Hoefnagel. Kunst und Wissenschaft um 1600*, p. 148.

⁶¹⁸ According to Hearn, one painting by the Flemish artist from approximately the same date, *Fête at Bermondsey*, was in the collection of Robert Cecil in 1611. Hearn has noted a resemblance between the figures of Hoefnagel's *Fête* and the *Cecil Riddle*, though she has admitted that those of the latter are "less sophisticated". HEARN: "*British School. A Riddle c. 1565-70*", p. 98. These observations do not address the question of authorship, of course, but they help to formulate an idea of the artistic atmosphere in which the *Cecil Riddle* emerged. It is also interesting that both images reference a sort of network, whether familial or societal.

In contrast to this example by Hoefnagel, the pictorial framework of the *Cecil Riddle* strongly imitates an actual golden picture frame, but it is not fully detached from the scenery. For example, at the bottom, the outgrowth of the frame visually supports the text panel with the lady's answer to the young man's question. Here, the framing becomes part of the painted scenery. However, there are also areas where the framing is detached from the depicted scene, such as where the four heraldic fields appear in the corners. Visually, the signs are separated from the iconography since, unlike the beast's head in the Harvard version, they are not repeated within the scene. Rather than an illustration of the riddle's iconography, the frame seems to represent a second, more independent visual puzzle, which is told in the context of the riddle's subject. When the four small fields are perceived as elements of the painting and not of the frame, they offer an iconography which has to be grasped on its own before it can be transferred to the riddle. While the fields serve as framings for the riddle subject, they also provide additional information for curious beholders through the use of heraldry, which fits with the theme of genealogy and noble families.

In Elizabethan England, one manifestation of the importance of a pedigree and the conscious display of social adherence was the coat of arms. As a visualisation of nobility and honour, heraldry was a highly complex and regulated instrument of the Elizabethan state. The institution which had control over the official expertise in pedigrees and the approval of coats of arms was the College of Arms.⁶¹⁹ As the central office for heraldic matters, the college employed heralds who had the duty of checking the records and officially inspecting the pedigrees of social newcomers who claimed a coat of arms or noble pedigree.⁶²⁰ Visitation by these official heralds of the crown was an instrument for maintaining the established social categories in an era when those categories were

⁶¹⁹ Next to the College of Arms, the Painter-Stainers Company were another institution which painted heraldic devices and were especially trained to work with different objects and surfaces connected to heraldry. TITTLER, Robert: "Regional Portraiture and the Heraldic Connection in Tudor and Early Stuart England", in: *The British Art Journal* 10/1 (2009), pp. 3–10, pp. 3–4. While the company was founded in the 1300s, many centuries before Elizabeth's reign, it fulfilled an important role in the visual politic of her state. BORG, Alan: *The History of The Worshipful Company of Painters otherwise Painter-Stainers*, London 2005, pp. 28–29.

⁶²⁰ The Elizabethan historian William Camden wrote about the increase in applications for coats of arms received by the college: "In this and the succeeding ages, at every expedition such as were Gentlemen of blood, would repaire to the Earle Marshall, and by his authority take couates of Armes, which were registred always by officers of Armers in the Rolles of Armes [...]." CAMDEN, William: *Remaines Concerning Britain*, New York 1972 (1605), p. 224.

beginning to change, and new men were claiming a position in the social order.⁶²¹ For courtiers, rightfully holding a coat of arms became a visual code for their affiliation with a social group and their claim to noble ancestry. Families, regions, and colleges used coats of arms, which made them a popular language for the heraldically literate to represent a genealogy or affiliation.⁶²² Hence, in the context of a genealogical riddle painting about a dynasty and family lineage, the general use of heraldry is consistent with the subject. At the same time, in the case of the *Cecil Riddle*, the four heraldic signs are arguably not just a general addition but a personal note made to appeal to Cecil himself, to whom the riddle was devoted.

A knot, a bird, and two beats: A heraldic puzzle for William Cecil

William Cecil's enormous interest in genealogy and ancestry is well documented. He filled at least one notebook with genealogical tables and notes about his family's descent as well as their connections to other families.⁶²³ Hatfield House contains a collection of some other pedigrees drawn by Cecil, which range from broad sketches to very detailed versions done with great diagrammatical skill.⁶²⁴ Next to his own lineage, Cecil must have regularly sketched the pedigrees of noble families originating from English regions. Several notes by him have survived, including pedigrees from Buckinghamshire, Lancashire, and Nottinghamshire.⁶²⁵ Each of these pedigrees shows minute drawings in which names,

⁶²¹ WAGNER: *Heralds of England*, pp. 185–186. The College of Arms was a strictly structured and regulated institution. It is further described in ADAMS, Simon: “*The Heralds and the Elizabethan Court. Robert Dudley, Earl of Leceister, as Deputy Earl Marshal*”, in: RAMSAY, Nigel (Ed.): *Heralds and Heraldry in Shakespeare's England*, Donington 2014, pp. 1–25, pp. 7–10. With the growing amount of ‘new men’ all wanting to validate their noble lineage, the Office of Arms was one of the busiest offices of the Elizabethan era. DAY, J. F. R.: “*Primers of Honor. Heraldry, Heraldry Books, and English Renaissance Literature*”, in: *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 21/1 (1990), pp. 93–103, p. 94. Newer research has shown that some heralds were open to providing a noble pedigree to those who were able to pay for their status. IBID., p. 95. The importance and meaning of a coat of arms in Great Britain as a general subject is discussed in FOX-DAVIES: *The Art of Heraldry*, pp. 9–12.

⁶²² JONES: *Being Elizabethan*, pp. 135–136; TITTLER: “*Regional Portraiture*”, p. 5; BROOKS: *Sir Christopher Hatton*, p. 22; FOX-DAVIES: *The Art of Heraldry*, pp. 12–26.

⁶²³ AIRS: “*Pomp or Glory?*”, p. 10. Some archival examples are as follows: Cecil Papers: CP 204/87: *Pedigree of the Cecil Family from 1091, and their Connection with the Baskervilles and Milburnes*, before 1598, Hatfield House Archives; Cecil Papers: CP 204/89: *Pedigree. Connection of the Cecil and Ward families*, before 1598, Hatfield House Archives; Cecil Papers: CP 204/91: *Pedigree of Richard Sitsilt of Altyrennis, and Vaughan of Tilleglas, to Lord Burghley*, before 1598, Hatfield House Archives.

⁶²⁴ Examples include Cecil Papers: CP 204/86: *The Pedigree of the Walcots and the Cecils*, before 1598, Hatfield House Archives. Even coats of arms were integrated into the branched depictions of family connections.

⁶²⁵ Cecil Papers: CP 141/49: *Pedigree Notes by Burghley. Lancashire Pedigrees*, before 1598, Hatfield House Archives; Cecil Papers: CP 141/51: *Pedigree Notes by Burghley. Buckinghamshire Pedigrees*, before 1598, Hatfield House; Cecil Papers: CP 141/50: *Pedigree Notes by Burghley. Nottinghamshire Pedigrees*, before 1598, Hatfield House Archives. Additionally, there are notes on the pedigrees of Cheshire, Staffordshire, Derbyshire, Suffolk, Norfolk, and Cambridge in the collection of the Cecil Papers.

sometimes abbreviated, are connected through a line with a circle at the end (**Fig. 28**). These details symbolise marriage and construct the pedigree by visualising the different links amongst the respective families. Unfortunately, these pedigrees do not include any dates, which would have made it more interesting to reconstruct which families Cecil was researching. Nonetheless, they demonstrate his deep enthusiasm for familial connections and their development through marriage.

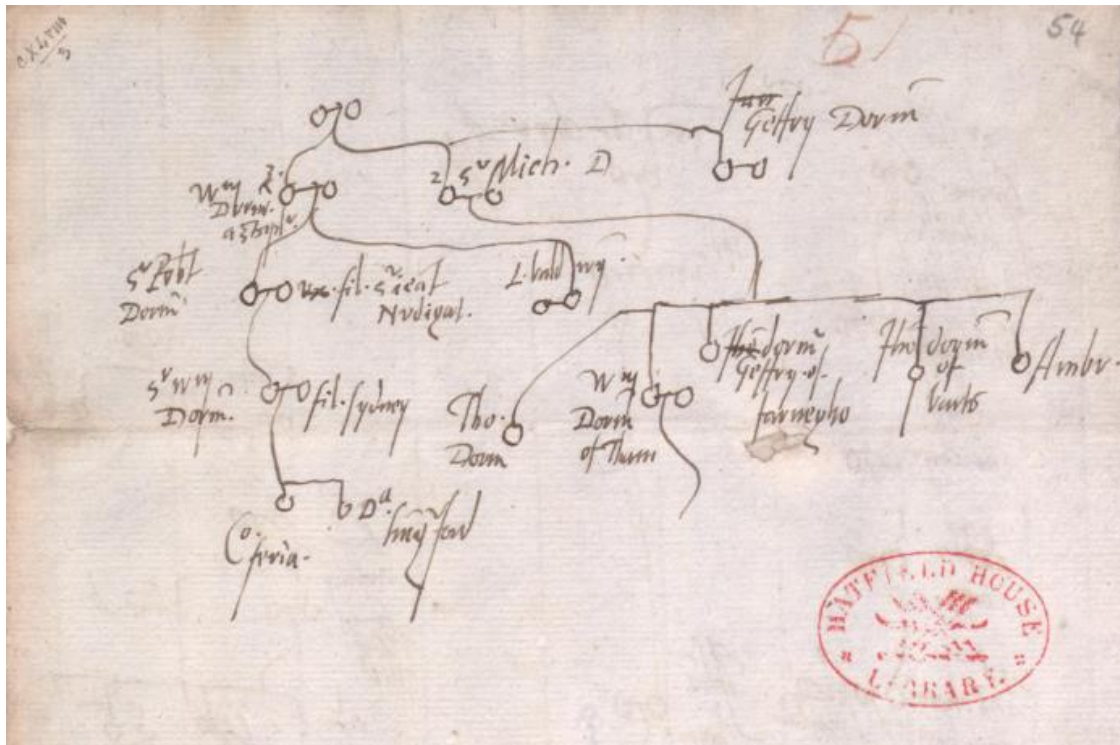


Figure 28: Cecil Papers: CP 141/51: *Pedigree Notes by Burghley, Buckinghamshire Pedigrees*, before 1598, detail of the upper half, ©Hatfield House Archives.

Cecil's genealogical interest was echoed in the interior decoration of his great family estates. For example, he had a Roman staircase installed in Burghley House, which he used to display the arms and badges of his ancestors and related families.⁶²⁶ At all of his estates, Cecil heavily used genealogy and heraldry as decorative themes to such an extent that Malcolm Airs has speculated it was a coping mechanism:

At Theobalds, Burghley took his obsession with dynastic connections to unprecedented lengths with a display in room after room of his supreme power that bordered on megalomania. This seems to have stemmed from an insecurity about his own modest social origins [...].⁶²⁷

⁶²⁶ The model for the staircase came from France. ALFORD: *Burghley*, p. 209.

⁶²⁷ AIRS: "Pomp or Glory?", p. 11.

Of Cecil's many properties, Theobalds' interior in particular was carefully designed to match the estate's outward grandness and dynastical message. In the green gallery, paintings depicted the coats of arms of English landed families hanging from trees, a representation of the English counties, with an English landscape in the background.⁶²⁸ Additionally, the great gallery was decorated with maps and painted portraits of the kings and queens of England, Roman emperors, Greek heroes, and knights of the Order of the Golden Fleece.⁶²⁹ Another gallery contained portraits of the Cecil family, which reflects Cecil's consciousness of his dynastic aspiration.⁶³⁰ Theobalds was the one house reportedly used by Cecil as a private retreat away from his London town house, Cecil House. At the same time, it was meant to be publicly perceived as a manor fit for a queen and to fashion Cecil as an overall devotional servant.⁶³¹ Descriptions of some of the rooms survive in accounts from visitors, which James Sutton has compiled for his reconstruction of the decorative programme of Theobalds' rooms. According to Sutton, the interior combined didactic, humanistic elements with indicators of Cecil's interests and genealogical power.⁶³² As shown in Chapter 2, Cecil's homes served the double function of providing housing for his family and a place to educate his children as well as fashioning him as a powerful statesman. Showcasing his genealogical knowledge to his peers through the decorative programmes of his estates supported this function in addition to reflecting a genuine interest.⁶³³

Cecil's passion for genealogical research is also apparent from his patronage projects. He was particularly interested in various forms of research on English history, including mapping and describing the realm and tracing the country's history from the Romans to the

⁶²⁸ SUTTON, James: "The Decorative Program at Elizabethan Theobalds. Educating an Heir and Promoting a Dynasty", in: *Studies in the Decorative Arts 7/1* (1999), pp. 33–64, pp. 38–39.

⁶²⁹ The great gallery, according to James Sutton, had a special function for the education and upbringing of William Cecil's son Robert: "In this space, he was indoctrinated into the career of domestic and international policy-making chosen for him by his father." SUTTON: *Materializing Space*, p. 64. Interestingly, Sutton has remarked that portraits of Elizabeth and her father were missing from the collection. IBID., p. 66.

⁶³⁰ Malcolm Airs has called this enormous display of genealogy both an expression of Cecil's interest in the subject and a result of his insecurity about his roots. AIRS: "Pomp or Glory?", pp. 10–11. A description of the heraldic décor is given in IBID., pp. 11–12. SUTTON: "The Decorative Program", pp. 43–44; COLE: "Theobalds, Hertfordshire", p. 89; ALFORD: *Burghley*, p. 210.

⁶³¹ AIRS: "Pomp or Glory?", p. 6.

⁶³² SUTTON: "The Decorative Program", p. 43, pp. 51–57. The ceiling of the Great Chamber was said to display a large astrological design with the signs of the zodiac and the stars, probably as a demonstration of celestial mapping. IBID., pp. 50–51.

⁶³³ Especially his house in London was described as a hotspot for a wide range of intellectuals and authors. DORSTEN, Jan VAN: *The Radical Arts. First Decade of an Elizabethan Renaissance*, Leiden 1970, pp. 62–63.

Norman Conquest.⁶³⁴ Cecil further supported English cartographers, such as Christopher Saxton (1540–1610), who produced a series of maps of the English country from 1574 to 1592.⁶³⁵ Cecil not only financially supported the project but also revised and annotated Saxton’s designs before the final printing.⁶³⁶ His importance as a Maecenas of historical research is evident from the dedication of William Camden’s topographical survey of England, *Britannia*, to Cecil.⁶³⁷ Camden later held a high office in the College of Arms, and it can be speculated that the two men conversed about genealogy, Cecil’s passion.⁶³⁸

In view of Cecil’s deep fascination with genealogy and family histories, it is obvious that the *Cecil Riddle* was an appropriate puzzle for a man of his interests. Even on its own, the painting’s complex riddle would have been a welcome diversion for the amateur researcher, who could indulge in the various possibilities for solving it. Furthermore, the addition of the heraldic signs in the corners created yet another puzzle for Cecil to solve. A coat of arms, which was given to a family, passed down through generations, and even developed further through marriages in a family, was a visual representation of descent and lineage — the central theme of the riddle. In this sense, the heraldic signs could be understood in the context of a register describing the family’s ancestors and their lives.⁶³⁹ Here, however, the heraldic signs might further present a very personal riddle related to Cecil’s circle at the court. The key to understanding these signs in such close relation to Cecil is the devotion to him in the inscription at the top of the picture. This inscription suggests a certain relationship between Cecil, as the dedicatee, and the presenter of the riddle and that the riddle was in fact a puzzle made for the influential courtier, who had a passion for genealogy and heraldic representation.

⁶³⁴ One of his protégés was the scholar and so-called Anglo-Saxonist Laurence Nowell. Nowell worked as a tutor for the wards in Cecil’s house and may have supported Cecil in his manuscript collection. BRACKMANN: *The Elizabethan Invention of Anglo-Saxon England*, pp. 12–13.

⁶³⁵ Western Manuscripts: Royal MS 18 D III: *The Burghley Atlas, 1574-1592*, British Library.

⁶³⁶ SUTTON: “*The Decorative Program*”, p. 40; COLE: “*Theobalds, Hertfordshire*”, pp. 89–90.

⁶³⁷ ROSENBERG: *Leicester*, pp. 100–101, note 70.

⁶³⁸ More on Camden’s life is written in HERENDEEN, W. H.: “*William Camden. Historian, Herald, and Antiquary*”, in: *Studies in Philology* 85/2 (1988), pp. 192–210. See also HEPPLER, Leslie: “‘*The Museum in the Garden*’. *Displaying Classical Antiquities in Elizabethan and Jacobean England*”, in: *Garden History* 29/2 (2001), pp. 109–120, p. 110. This does not mean that William Cecil only supported authors or scholars; he is known to have invested in the voyages of Martin Frobisher and Humphrey Gilbert as well. DEACON: *The Courtier & The Queen*, pp. 110–111. He also had a lasting economic relationship with the merchant Thomas Smythe, who imported sweet wine. COOPER: *Citizen Portrait*, p. 68.

⁶³⁹ For an exemplary analysis of a family register, see HANSMANN, Ruth: “*Die Porträts des Sächsischen Stammbuchs. Höfische Bildkonzepte im Kontext macht- und religionspolitischer Konflikte des 16. Jahrhunderts*”, in: KREMS, Eva-Bettina and Sigrid RUBY (Ed.): *Das Porträt als kulturelle Praxis*, Berlin, München 2016, pp. 75–92.

Piecing together: An attempted interpretation

The question remains of what the four heraldic signs refer to and how they should be understood in connection to the *Cecil Riddle*. It has already been established that the heraldic signs have some connection to the courtly circle. Of course, all four may refer to a person, region, or college, but they must ultimately be united on a shared point of meaning to make sense. Considering the identification of the knot as the Stafford knot and the bird as the Buckingham swan, it makes sense to search for an ordinary meaning of these two signs, which leads to the Earls of Stafford and Dukes of Buckinghamshire. As noted, both heraldic signs were used by the holders of these titles, which, luckily for this puzzle, were held by the same family since the 15th century: the Staffords.⁶⁴⁰

The Stafford family descended from a long medieval peerage and claimed that their lineage was connected to the houses of Plantagenet and Lancaster. This historically significant royal bloodline went back to Richard III.⁶⁴¹ The family were appointed Earls of Stafford in 1351 and elevated to Dukes of Buckingham in 1444.⁶⁴² Because of their long lineage, the family had established connections to the crown and worked in its service for many generations. Additionally, they owned many properties throughout the realm and were one of the most influential families in England until the 16th century. The family fell from grace and lost their titles in 1521, when Edward Stafford, Third Duke of Buckingham, was executed for treason and conspiracy against Elizabeth's father, King Henry VIII.⁶⁴³ Stafford's titles were revoked after his death and not passed on to his heir. The Earldom of Stafford and the Dukedom of Buckingham remained vacant throughout the Tudor reign and were only reassigned in the 17th century.

The absence of the titles Earl of Stafford and Duke of Buckingham makes an investigation of their impact on the Elizabethan reign more difficult, though not impossible. While the titles were not in use, the family that had once held them was still a member of the court and present in the network of William Cecil. For the purposes of this study, the most relevant member of this family is Sir Edward Stafford (1552–1605), the son of William Stafford and his second wife, Dorothy Stafford. William Stafford's first marriage was to

⁶⁴⁰ This is further discussed in FOX-DAVIES: *The Art of Heraldry*, pp. 331–332, p. 371.

⁶⁴¹ As noted, this royal house featured some of the heraldic signs shown in the *Cecil Riddle*.

⁶⁴² RAWCLIFFE, Carole: *The Staffords, Earls of Stafford and Dukes of Buckingham-1394-1521*, Cambridge 1978, pp. 7–103. See also ADAMS: "The Heralds and the Elizabethan Court", p. 4; MCFARLANE, Kenneth: *The Nobility of Later Medieval England*, London 1973, p. 143.

⁶⁴³ HARRIS, Barbara: *Edward Stafford. Third Duke of Buckingham, 1478-1521*, Stanford 1986, pp. 180–202.

Mary Boleyn, the queen's aunt, who died in 1543.⁶⁴⁴ Edward's mother Dorothy became a close companion of Queen Elizabeth and acted as her mistress of the robes.⁶⁴⁵ Interestingly, both of his parents were descendants of the infamous last Earl of Buckingham: Dorothy directly through her father and William distantly.⁶⁴⁶ As a young courtier, Edward Stafford brought to the court an interesting family heritage that included a long and scandalous history of involvement with the crown of England as well as complex family relationships. As a young man, Edward Stafford visited St. John's College in Cambridge, the same college that William Cecil had studied at years before. Very early in his career in the diplomatic service, Stafford became acquainted with Cecil, who supported him in becoming a member of the parliament and entering the court. He remained a confidant of the statesman throughout his many travels to France and Spain in service of the crown and his nearly eight-year ambassadorship to France.⁶⁴⁷ Their close relationship was highlighted by several scandals involving Stafford, who was suspected of having behaved disloyally to the crown on several occasions. He was under suspicions of having sold information to the French, acted as a traitor during the Spanish Armada, and consorted with the Scots against the queen's orders.⁶⁴⁸ In any case, Stafford enjoyed William Cecil's protection and remained in diplomatic service until his death, even though he did not hold a powerful position himself after his ambassadorial career.

The nature of Cecil and Stafford's relationship is still unclear, and little is known about how or when they became acquainted. Cecil reportedly acted as Stafford's supporter as early as 1571, when the young courtier became a member of the parliament.⁶⁴⁹ Letters from Stafford to Cecil are preserved from 1574, and he is known to have undertaken diplomatic missions for Cecil in 1573.⁶⁵⁰ Cecil has been mentioned as either Stafford's protector or his

⁶⁴⁴ LEIMON, Mitchell and Geoffrey PARKER: "Treason and Plot in Elizabethan Diplomacy. The 'Fame of Sir Edward Stafford' Reconsidered", in: *The English Historical Review* 111/444 (1996), pp. 1134–1158, p. 1135.

⁶⁴⁵ MCDERMOTT, James: "Stafford, Sir Edward (1552-1605), Diplomat", in: *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (23.09.2004), <https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-26203> (accessed 02.08.2022).

⁶⁴⁶ MCCUE, Robert: "The Ambassadorial Career of Sir Edward Stafford, Elizabethan Ambassador to France, 1583-1590", PhD Thesis, Provo: Brigham Young University 1970, pp. 5–6. A Stafford pedigree is given in HARRIS: *Edward Stafford*, pp. 233–235.

⁶⁴⁷ LEIMON/PARKER: "Treason and Plot in Elizabethan Diplomacy", p. 1134.

⁶⁴⁸ MCCUE: "The Ambassadorial Career of Sir Edward Stafford", pp. 49–101; MCDERMOTT: "Stafford, Sir Edward (1552-1605), Diplomat".

⁶⁴⁹ IBID.

⁶⁵⁰ Letters addressed to Cecil from Stafford in 1574 are mentioned in MCCUE: "The Ambassadorial Career of Sir Edward Stafford", p. 8; LEIMON/PARKER: "Treason and Plot in Elizabethan Diplomacy", pp. 1135–1136.

patron, while Stafford has been branded as “Cecil’s creature”.⁶⁵¹ Most research on this relationship has focused on Cecil’s role as Stafford’s ‘guardian angel’ during the latter’s conflicts with the crown.⁶⁵² While no exact date is known, there is good reason to think that Stafford and Cecil already knew each other around 1570, when the *Cecil Riddle* was painted. It is possible that the two had been introduced or met during Stafford’s time at Cambridge, which was Cecil’s alma mater and the university of which he had been chancellor since 1559.⁶⁵³

Given his mother’s position at the court and his family’s reputation, Stafford must have been a well-connected student who could have easily attracted the attention of a statesman such as Cecil, who might have recognised that Stafford was a young man who could use the support of an older, well-established, and successful courtier. Moreover, Cecil likely noticed Stafford’s potential due to his heritage, and he would surely have been fascinated by Stafford’s family history. Like Cecil, Stafford was very familiar with the concept of a stepfamily and with having a curious family background though the complex family relations Stafford formed himself cannot be connected to the *Cecil Riddle*, as they developed after the painting had already been completed. Stafford was first married to Roberta Chapman, who died in 1578, leaving him with a son and two daughters. His second wife, Douglas Sheffield, was no stranger to the court; she had previously been married to John Sheffield until his death and was later involved in an oddly public affair with the queen’s favourite Robert Dudley.⁶⁵⁴ Douglas Sheffield brought a son and a daughter from her first marriage in addition to an illegitimate son from her affair with Dudley. The marriage must have been a massive diplomatic coup for Stafford, who gained access to the Sheffield estate through his new wife. He could also strengthen his connections to the crown since her family had an excellent relationship with the queen.⁶⁵⁵ Hence, Stafford’s family would be an interesting case study for Cecil, as an amateur genealogist, in his early and later life. Indeed, his family’s involvement in English history alone and their engagement with the crown must have been fascinating to Cecil.⁶⁵⁶

⁶⁵¹ MCCUE: “*The Ambassadorial Career of Sir Edward Stafford*”, p. 78.

⁶⁵² NEALE, J. E.: “*The Fame of Sir Edward Stafford*”, in: *The English Historical Review* 44/174 (1929), pp. 203–219, p. 209.

⁶⁵³ ALFORD: *Burghley*, pp. 22–23.

⁶⁵⁴ MCCUE: “*The Ambassadorial Career of Sir Edward Stafford*”, p. 9.

⁶⁵⁵ Stafford’s new sister-in-law Katherine was a cousin and confidante of the queen. MCDERMOTT: “*Stafford, Sir Edward (1552-1605), Diplomat*”.

⁶⁵⁶ Interestingly, the Buckinghamshire pedigree that was preserved by Cecil’s hand does not feature the Staffords — only the families of Dormer, Terrington, Hampden, Cheyny, Pagynon, Gifford, Verney, and

Even before his career at the court, Stafford was known to have travelled on the European continent.⁶⁵⁷ He might have encountered a version of the riddle at some point, possibly in France or the Netherlands, and thought of his great supporter back home. Additionally, he could have taken advantage of the Dutch network in England at the time to order a painting for his patron. The swan and the knot in the painted framework in the *Cecil Riddle* are probably reminders of Stafford's family heritage, while the lion and the antelope on the right-hand side could refer to the Plantagenet connection of the Stafford family. However, they could also represent another family to which the Staffords had a connection at some point.⁶⁵⁸

To think of the *Cecil Riddle* as a gift evokes the subjects of diplomatic relations and the function of pictures and paintings in the Elizabethan courtly network. All over Europe, gifts and gift-giving were used as diplomatic practices to establish relations or return favours.⁶⁵⁹ In this sense, gift-giving as an economic phenomenon presupposed a network of individuals with either equal social standing or a discrepancy in rank and power. In the case of a hierarchical mismatch, gifts were often given from the less powerful party to the more influential one, often with the hope of gaining the goodwill of the superior party.⁶⁶⁰ As tokens charged with meaning and intent, gifts had a symbolic role; therefore, a gift's actual value might not be as important as its implied worth or the gesture behind it.⁶⁶¹

Brudnell. Cecil Papers: CP 141/51: *Pedigree Notes by Burghley. Buckinghamshire Pedigrees*, before 1598, Hatfield House Archives.

⁶⁵⁷ MCDERMOTT: "*Stafford, Sir Edward (1552-1605), Diplomat*"; MCCUE: "*The Ambassadorial Career of Sir Edward Stafford*", p. 7.

⁶⁵⁸ This is just one of the many possible readings of the heraldic signs. However, at the time of writing, it is the most probable.

⁶⁵⁹ Adam Clulow has called gift-giving a "feature of the European expansion in the 16th- and 17th centuries". CLULOW, Adam: "*Gifts for the Shogun. The Dutch East India Company, Global Networks and Tokugawa Japan*", in: BIEDERMANN, Zoltán, Anne GERRITSEN and Giorgio RIELLO (Ed.): *Global Gifts. The Material Culture of Diplomacy in Early Modern Eurasia*, Cambridge 2018, pp. 198–216, p. 198. A fundamental work on gifts and gift exchange in Renaissance France has been written by MAUSS, Marcel: *The Gift*, Chicago 2016. Another noteworthy study is DAVIS, Natalie Zemon: *Die schenkende Gesellschaft. Zur Kultur der französischen Renaissance*, München 2002. The medieval tradition of gift-giving in England has been analysed by KJAER, Lars: *The Medieval Gift and The Classical Tradition. Ideals and the Performance of Generosity in Medieval England, 1100-1300*, Cambridge 2019. For a perspective on Italian Renaissance gift-giving, see CLARK, Leah: "*Merchant-Banker, Diplomat, Courtier or Agent?*", in: REIST, Inge (Ed.): *When Michelangelo Was Modern. Collecting, Patronage and the Art Market in Italy 1450-1650*, London 2022, pp. 34–50.

⁶⁶⁰ DAVIS: *Die schenkende Gesellschaft*, p. 62; BEN-AMOS, Ilana: *The Culture of Giving. Informal Support and Gift-Exchange in Early Modern England*, Cambridge 2008, pp. 70–77; KUBERSKY-PIREDDA, Susanne and Salvador Salort PONS: "*Ein Hofnarr als Agent. Zum diplomatischen Geschenkwesen am Hof Philips II.*", in: HÄBERLEIN, Mark and Christof JEGGLE (Ed.): *Materielle Grundlagen der Diplomatie. Schenken, Sammeln und Verhandeln in Spätmittelalter und Früher Neuzeit*, Konstanz, München 2013, pp. 123–156.

⁶⁶¹ A good overview of this symbolic quality of gifts is given in BIEDERMANN, Zoltán, Anne GERRITSEN and Giorgio RIELLO: "*Introduction*", in: BIEDERMANN, Zoltán, Anne GERRITSEN and Giorgio RIELLO (Ed.): *Global Gifts. The Material Culture of Diplomacy in Early Modern Eurasia*, Cambridge 2018, pp. 1–33.

Of course, there were special occasions which traditionally involved giving or exchanging gifts. Particularly in England, it was customary for the court to exchange gifts on New Year's Day. Courtiers were always eager to find an exceptional and valuable gift in line with the rules of behaviour to present to the queen to gain her favour. Records of such gifts are preserved in the household accounts of the crown to this day.⁶⁶² Other typical moments of gift-giving were the birth of a child, the death of a relative or friend, or a wedding.⁶⁶³ In these situations, luxury objects were given to congratulate, commemorate, or wish happiness to the family.⁶⁶⁴ Paintings, amongst other categories of gifts, had a special place in the complex of gift exchange at European courts.⁶⁶⁵ Portraits in particular emphasised the presence of the gift-giver, and often of the monarch as well, thus delivering a personal message.

As shown, in Elizabethan England, paintings had a special significance within the courtly discourse and were associated with a courtier's education and noble status. The gift of such a complex didactic painting as the *Cecil Riddle* would meet the demands of courtesy books to challenge the courtier in more than one way. As far as it can be reconstructed, the nature of the relationship between Cecil and Stafford does affirm that there was a reason for the young courtier to gift a painting to his patron and supporter. Given Stafford's unique family background, it is very possible that he would think of this kind of painting as one that the passionate genealogist would appreciate and enjoy. Since the painting has been dated to before 1571, it is feasible that Stafford gave it to Cecil at the beginning of their relationship to gain his goodwill and establish his own status within the network of the powerful minister.

⁶⁶² NICHOLS, John: *The Progresses and Public Processions of Queen Elizabeth I. 1572-1578*, Vol. 2, ed. by Elizabeth GOLDRING, Oxford 2014, p. 226, p. 477, p. 506, p. 522; DAVIS: *Die schenkende Gesellschaft*, p. 38.

⁶⁶³ BEN-AMOS: *The Culture of Giving*, pp. 145–156; DAVIS: *Die schenkende Gesellschaft*, pp. 42–48.

⁶⁶⁴ More on the significance of luxury objects for diplomatic gift-giving is written in EWERT, Ulf and Jan HIRSCHBIEGEL: "Mehr als nur der schöne Schein. Zu einer Theorie der Funktion von Luxusgegenständen im zwischenhöfischen Gabentausch des späten Mittelalters", in: HÄBERLEIN, Mark and Christof JEGGLE (Ed.): *Materielle Grundlagen der Diplomatie. Schenken, Sammeln und Verhandeln in Spätmittelalter und Früher Neuzeit*, Konstanz, München 2013, pp. 33–58.

⁶⁶⁵ For example, portraits were deliberately used as diplomatic gifts in the relationship between Sultan Bayezid II and Francesco II Gonzaga in the 1490s. CEVIZLI, Antonia Gatward: "Portraits, Turbans and Cuirasses: Material Exchange between Mantua and the Ottomans at the End of the Fifteenth Century", in: BIEDERMANN, Zoltán, Anne GERRITSEN and Giorgio RIELLO (Ed.): *Global Gifts. The Material Culture of Diplomacy in Early Modern Eurasia*, Cambridge 2018, pp. 34–55, pp. 42–45. They also played a special role in the German court in the 18th century. See KOCH, Ute: "Gesandte für die Kunst - Die Bedeutung von Gesandten für die Brühlschen Sammlungen", in: HÄBERLEIN, Mark and Christof JEGGLE (Ed.): *Materielle Grundlagen der Diplomatie. Schenken, Sammeln und Verhandeln in Spätmittelalter und Früher Neuzeit*, Konstanz, München 2013, pp. 193–208.

A painting displaying a riddle was especially suitable as a gift within a courtly network and could have been presented on the occasion of an expected wedding. As noted, Cecil's daughter Anne married the Earl of Oxford in 1571, which helped to elevate the social status of the whole family. In relation to this, the next chapter shows how riddles held a special social function in the context of weddings and the wider Elizabethan culture.

7. Riddles as Games and Paintings as Riddles

As defined in Chapter 4, a riddle intrinsically functions as an enigma but also has an external social role. By definition, it is a puzzle and must therefore have a cryptic message; yet, its reception can ultimately be understood as a competition.⁶⁶⁶ Sometimes, this competition can entail a rivalry between two or more individuals who try to be the first to solve the riddle. In other cases, it can be a much more personal and less social event in which only one person has to decrypt the puzzle to reach their own goal. In any case, a riddle challenges its recipients to solve it and compete with both the proposed question and themselves. To properly understand the *Cecil Riddle* as an Elizabethan painting, it is necessary to further explore its cultural context and its status as a family riddle. The general cultural context of riddles informs the framework for examining perceptions of such a painting in Elizabethan society. Were there other well-known genealogical riddles which could explain its popularity? How was such a painting perceived, and where might it have been displayed?

Presenting riddles as a cultural ceremony

Apart from functioning as rhetorical enigmas on a theoretical level, riddles fulfilled an important cultural function in the realm of family rituals and education. As early as Ancient Greece, riddles were used as diversions for guests at drinking parties, who would pass around questions and be awarded prizes or penalties for their answers.⁶⁶⁷ This didactic function was at play in early modern times, when riddles were an integral part of educational books, especially for children.⁶⁶⁸ In England, riddles were used in children's education as "brain games" since the inherent verbalism of riddles helped children learn the English language and rhetoric.⁶⁶⁹ Because of their broad connection with rhetoric,

⁶⁶⁶ PAGIS: "Toward a Theory of the Literary Riddle", p. 81; TUPPER, Frederick: *The Riddles of the Exeter Book*, Darmstadt 1968, p. xxi.

⁶⁶⁷ Even Alexander the Great supposedly proposed a riddle: "What is that which did not come last year, has not come this year, and will not come next year?" FORSTER, E. S.: "Riddles and Problems from the Greek Anthology", in: *Greece & Rome 14/41* (1945), pp. 42–47, p. 43. Rebecca Benefiel has also shown how the graffiti at Pompeii demonstrates the active riddle and discussion culture of this time. BENEFIEL, Rebecca: "Magic Squares, Alphabet Jumbles, Riddles and More. The Culture of Word-Games Among the Graffiti of Pompeii", in: KWAPISZ, Jan, David PETRAIN and Mikolaj SZYMÁNSKI (Ed.): *The Muse at Play. Riddles and Wordplay in Greek and Latin Poetry*, Berlin, Boston 2013, pp. 65–82.

⁶⁶⁸ BRACKMANN: *The Elizabethan Invention of Anglo-Saxon England*, p. 5.

⁶⁶⁹ SCHILTZ: *Music and Riddle Culture in the Renaissance*, pp. 35–38.

grammar, and logic as well as the Latin tradition, riddles were ideally suited for teaching children to apply these skills in a safe and semi-practical context.⁶⁷⁰

The skills honed by riddles could later be applied to entertainment at the court, which demanded the ability to decipher and solve puzzles.⁶⁷¹ As Katelijne Schiltz has shown, riddles were used in conversational games at European courts that valued the playful and performative character of presenting riddles and trying to solve them.⁶⁷² An interesting example is described in Stefano Guazzo's *The Civile Conversation*, which was translated into English in 1586. The fourth book of this treatise describes a model civil conversation amongst six lords and four ladies at a banquet. Throughout the evening, the aristocratic crowd indulges in exchanging quotes from Petrarchan sonnets, proverbs, and riddles.⁶⁷³ In the English context, Peter Burke has reconstructed how courtesy books were similarly received in parlour games. Members of society playfully discussed and debated courtly topics that were presented in well-liked texts at the time, and they shared riddles with each other through references to or quotes from those popular texts.⁶⁷⁴

Another social use of riddles in a courtly context was as amusement in musical performances that also challenged the musicians. Riddles could appear in the form of enigmatic instructions which performers had to decipher before they could play or sing the piece.⁶⁷⁵ In this case, the successful staging of a musical act was tied to the intellectual skills of the musicians. This aspect added another layer of suspense and appreciation for the audience, who had to be familiar with the riddle piece to understand its performative value.

⁶⁷⁰ WHITMAN, F.: "Medieval Riddling. Factors Underlying its Development", in: *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen* 7/2 (1970), pp. 177–185, p. 181.

⁶⁷¹ For a case study of riddles as courtly entertainment in Spain, see REDONDO, Augustin: "Le jeu de l'énigme dans l'Espagne du XVI^e siècle et du début du XVII^e siècle. Aspect ludique et subversion", in: ARIÈS, Philippe and Jean-Claude MARGOLIN (Ed.): *Les jeux à la Renaissance*, Paris 1982, pp. 445–458. Also, for an analysis of riddles in the intellectual culture of late-medieval England, see GALLOWAY, Andrew: "The Rhetoric of Riddling in Late Medieval England. The 'Oxford' Riddles, the *Secretum Philosophorum*, and the Riddles in *Piers Plowman*", in: *Speculum* 70/1 (1995), pp. 68–105. For a general overview, see MARTIN, Daniel, Pierre SERVET and André TOURNON (Ed.): *L'énigmatique à la Renaissance. Formes, significations, esthétiques. Actes du colloque organisé par l'association Renaissance, Humanisme, Réforme*, Paris 2008.

⁶⁷² SCHILTZ: *Music and Riddle Culture in the Renaissance*, p. 39.

⁶⁷³ This has been further discussed by LARSON, Katherine: "Conversational Games and the Articulation of Desire in Shakespeare's *Love's Labour's Lost* and Mary Wroth's *Love's Victory*", in: *English Literary Renaissance* 40/2 (2010), pp. 165–190, pp. 165–166.

⁶⁷⁴ While it is not clear if Castiglione's book or any of those mentioned in Part I were also part of such a practice in the 16th century, it is necessary to note how important the rhetoric and subjects that Castiglione addressed were to the courtly society. BURKE: *The Fortunes of the Courtier*, pp. 45–47.

⁶⁷⁵ SCHILTZ: *Music and Riddle Culture in the Renaissance*, pp. 65–130.

Next to this performative use, riddles were a good way to test the intellectual abilities of individuals and assess their suitability for certain positions on social occasions. In this sense, Don Handelman has defined a riddle as a marker of transition or points of change in an individual's life when applied in a ritual.⁶⁷⁶ The most prominent example of this is probably an oracle foretelling an individual's destiny through a riddle, often at the beginning of a narrative.⁶⁷⁷ In a more practical regard, this perspective is especially apparent in the use of riddles in marriage rituals. In Greece and Eastern Europe, riddles played a central role in the ceremony of courtship and the acceptance of a groom.⁶⁷⁸

William Shakespeare also incorporated this cultural phenomenon into his plays *Pericles*, *Prince of Tyre* and *The Merchant of Venice*. The former, a drama written around 1609, focuses on a young prince, the play's namesake, who seeks to marry the daughter of King Antiochus. The king, who has an incestuous relationship with the princess, presents a riddle to each suitor who arrives to court his daughter to 'test' his suitability. When Pericles arrives to propose marriage, he finds himself in a dilemma upon realising that the riddle is a challenge to discover the king's sin.⁶⁷⁹ In *The Merchant of Venice*, written around 1600, Bassiano, a young Venetian, wants to marry Portia. However, he must first solve a riddle posed by her father. Three caskets made of different materials and with different cryptic inscriptions are shown to each suitor, who has to ascertain the hidden meaning of each inscription and choose the casket that contains Portia's picture. If he chooses wrong, he has to remain a bachelor for the rest of his life.⁶⁸⁰

The description of another riddle competition relating to marriage is preserved in the biblical story of Samson in Chapter 14 of the Book of Judges. This time, it is the groom,

⁶⁷⁶ HANDELMAN, Don: "Traps of Trans-formation. Theoretical Convergences", in: HASAN-ROKEM, Galit and David SHULMAN (Ed.): *Untying The Knot. On Riddles and Other Enigmatic Modes*, New York, Oxford 1996, pp. 37–61, p. 49.

⁶⁷⁷ FORSTER: "Riddles and Problems from the Greek Anthology", p. 43.

⁶⁷⁸ SEBO: *In Enigmate*, p. 17.

⁶⁷⁹ "I am no viper; yet I feed / On mother's flesh which did me breed. / I sought a husband, in which labour / I found that kindness in a father. / He's father, son, and husband mild; / I mother, wife, and yet his child. / How they may be, and yet in two, / As you will live resolve it you." SHAKESPEARE, William: *Pericles, Prince of Tyre*, ed. by Doreen DELVECCHIO and Anthony HAMMOND, Cambridge 1998 (1609), pp. 90–91, 1.165–172. See also TUPPER: *The Riddles of the Exeter Book*, p. 178.

⁶⁸⁰ The caskets are described in the play: "This first of gold, which this inscription bears, / 'Who chooseth me, shall gain what many men desire.' / The second silver, which this promise carries, / 'Who chooseth me, shall get as much as he deserves.' / This third dull lead, with warning all as blunt, / 'Who chooseth me, must give and hazard all he hath.'" SHAKESPEARE, William: *The Merchant of Venice*, ed. by M. M. MAHOOD, Cambridge 2018 (1600), pp. 114–115, 2.7.5–12. They are further discussed in the context of marriage riddles in SEBO: *In Enigmate*, p. 17.

Samson, who challenges his guests to solve a riddle. Only he knows the answer to the riddle because it is tied to his personal experience: “Out of the eater came something to eat, and out of the strong came something sweet.”⁶⁸¹ While the riddle’s solution is again the dramatic climax of the hero’s story, its cultural function as a diversion and a test of intelligence should be noted.⁶⁸² Here, however, the marriage riddle is ‘unfair’ since only Samson has the information needed to derive a solution. In this way, the story demonstrates how puzzles can be inconclusive for a specific audience. Above all, the riddle leaves space for discussion, which continues for seven days until the guests resort to foul play to find out the solution.⁶⁸³

Riddles could indeed support the ceremonial importance of weddings, though not necessarily as dangerously as they do in Shakespeare’s works or the Book of Judges. A riddle mirrors the social occasion of connecting two people and two families through its engagement of both the giver and receiver of the riddle. As shown in the previous chapter, a wedding also implicates the topics of legitimisation, worthiness, and hierarchy.⁶⁸⁴ By functioning as a playground for negotiating these topics, a riddle could acquire cultural importance in this stage of life.

In summary, riddles can be understood as popular diversions and assessments in social contexts. Even in the microcosm of a dinner party or a visit, discussing a riddle could evoke the ceremonial aspect of competing and demonstrating one’s own worthiness. The attendees of such a social event could fashion themselves in the intellectual traditions of riddles and the glory — or shame — that accompanies solving or discussing a riddle. Such context can be imagined for the *Cecil Riddle*. The puzzle of the *Cecil Riddle* could effectively promote discussion since, as described in Chapter 5, it provides no definite solution. Moreover, the puzzle could be presented to test a person’s knowledge of diverse legal matters, thus offering a model problem for judicial education. As an object requiring such a context of perception, the *Cecil Riddle* would have been an appropriate gift to celebrate a wedding or a marriage announcement, such as that of Cecil’s daughter and the

⁶⁸¹ Quoted in FORSTER: “*Riddles and Problems from the Greek Anthology*”, p. 42. The solution to this riddle is that Samson killed a lion and found a hive with honey inside the corpse.

⁶⁸² More on biblical riddles is written in ORCHARD, Andy (Ed.): *The Old English and Anglo-Latin Riddle Tradition*, London 2021, p. viii.

⁶⁸³ BRYANT, Mark: *Dictionary of Riddles*, London 1990, pp. 17–18.

⁶⁸⁴ COHEN, Shlomith: “*Connecting Through Riddles, or The Riddle of Connecting*”, in: HASAN-ROKEM, Galit and David SHULMAN (Ed.): *Untying The Knot. On Riddles and Other Enigmatic Modes*, New York, Oxford 1996, pp. 294–315, pp. 304–307.

Earl of Oxford.⁶⁸⁵ Additionally, as a pictorial puzzle, it had a special place and appeal in Elizabethan society.

The fondness for riddles in Elizabethan culture

The tradition of riddles on the English isle began far earlier than the 16th century. In fact, collections of Old English riddles were already in existence in the early medieval period. While such riddles were initially inspired heavily by the Latin riddle tradition, they were soon translated into the vernacular language and re-emerged in the form of ballads.⁶⁸⁶ Essentially, these riddle collections were designated books for transporting riddles to an English audience. One such collection, the *Exeter Book* riddles, has been considered a national treasure since the Middle Ages.⁶⁸⁷ Modern research has suggested that these riddles were written by an Anglo-Saxon poet in the later part of the 10th century. The collection contains an assortment of about 94 verse riddles of varying lengths on a range of topics.⁶⁸⁸ Next to these designated riddle books, riddles concerning aspects of everyday life, such as a curious family situation, were transmitted in collections of tales and other literal forms, as seen with the Scottish text version of the *Cecil Riddle*.

Under the Tudors, the English passion for riddling intensified and further manifested in the production of English riddle books. An important book of riddles in the modern English language is *Demaundes Joyous*, a translation of a French book, which was printed in 1511 and produced by Wynkyn de Worde. The book presents a series of question-style riddles followed by their solutions. It was immensely popular during the reign of King Henry VIII and was followed by other collections of riddles once Elizabeth acceded the throne.⁶⁸⁹ The popularity and variety of forms of riddles peaked during her reign in the second half of the 16th century. The extraordinary inclination for riddles and puzzles in the Elizabethan era has long been acknowledged in art history.⁶⁹⁰ As a cultural phenomenon, it must be viewed in close relation to the rise of European humanism, which placed value on the knowledge

⁶⁸⁵ This is further discussed in Chapter 5.

⁶⁸⁶ BITTERLI, Dieter: *Say What I Am Called. The Old English Riddles of the Exeter Book and the Anglo-Latin Riddle Tradition*, Toronto, Buffalo, London 2009, p. 25; SEBO: *In Enigmate*, p. 11.

⁶⁸⁷ For more on the Old English riddle tradition, see FRYE, Northrop: *Spiritus Mundi. Essays on Literature, Myth, and Society*, London 1976, pp. 139–147.

⁶⁸⁸ BRYANT: *Dictionary of Riddles*, p. 26.

⁶⁸⁹ IBID., p. 33.

⁶⁹⁰ Karen Hearn has spoken of a “slippery secret world of private allusions”. HEARN, Karen: “Introduction”, in: HEARN, Karen (Ed.): *Dynasties. Painting in Tudor and Jacobean England 1530-1630*, Exhibition Catalogue, Tate Gallery, 12 October 1995 to 7 January 1996, Peterborough 1995, pp. 9–10, p. 9. Robin Gibson has described the “fondness for puzzles and allegories” in the Elizabethan era in GIBSON: *Catalogue of Portraits*, pp. 131–132.

of multiple languages and symbols. At the court, the demand for scholars and well-read men led to the establishment of a sophisticated and intellectualised rhetoric, to which riddles were ideally suited.⁶⁹¹

Another catalyst for the cultivation of the riddle was print culture, which made it possible to publish and circulate riddles in text and images. In 16th-century England, presenting a riddling combination of text and image became very popular, especially in emblem books, which were published on the continent and recorded in the libraries of many important statesmen.⁶⁹² These books combined an allegorical image with a cryptic text to produce a particularly challenging form of a puzzle.⁶⁹³ In his 1598 translation of Giovanni Paolo Lomazzo's *A Tracte Containing the Artes of Curious Paintinge Carvinge and Buildinge*, Richard Haydocke states that the purpose of the emblems was "to stirre up mens minds to braue and worthy attempts".⁶⁹⁴ With a three-part form consisting of the title, image, and text, these puzzles required audiences to employ a certain type of visual language in combination with a specific reading of the text to develop a meaningful interpretation. Instead of giving a definite answer, an emblem would provide only a framework of matters and issues. This highly encrypted type of picture-based riddle was often used to convey ideas about morals.⁶⁹⁵ The Elizabethans collected and translated emblem books from the continent, including Andrea Alciato's *Emblematum liber* from 1531 and Cesare Ripa's *Iconologia*, a collection of emblems published from 1591 to 1593.⁶⁹⁶ Emblem books were

⁶⁹¹ SCHILTZ: *Music and Riddle Culture in the Renaissance*, pp. 30–32. This is discussed in detail in Chapter 1.

⁶⁹² MANNING, John: "Continental Emblem Books in Sixteenth-Century England. The Evidence of Sloane MS. 3794", in: *Emblematica 1* (1986), pp. 1–12.

⁶⁹³ The emblem as a hybrid of text and image is further discussed in WILBERG VIGNAU-SCHUURMANN, Theodora: *Die Emblematischen Elemente im Werke Joris Hoefnagels*, Vol. 1, Leiden 1969, p. 157. An important study of English emblem books is presented in the editorial by DALY, Peter (Ed.): *The English Emblem and the Continental Tradition*, New York 1988.

⁶⁹⁴ LOMAZZO, Giovanni Paolo: *A Tracte Containing the Artes of Curious Paintinge Carvinge and Buildinge*, transl. by Richard HAYDOCKE, Oxford: 1970 (1598), p. 3.

⁶⁹⁵ One important strand of inspiration was the renewed interest in Greek culture and the rediscovery of allegorical Greek and Roman texts. BRYANT: *Dictionary of Riddles*, p. 8; DUNDAS, Judith: "Emblems on the Art of Paintings. Pictura and Purpose", in: ADAMS, Alison and Laurence GROVE (Ed.): *Emblems and Art History. Nine Essays*, Glasgow 1996, pp. 69–96, p. 69; HENKEL, Arthur and Albrecht SCHÖNE (Ed.): *Emblemata. Handbuch zur Sinnbildkunst des XVI. und XVII. Jahrhunderts*, Stuttgart 1996.

⁶⁹⁶ ALCIATO, Andrea: *Emblematum liber*, ed. by Wolfgang HARMS and Michael SCHILLING, Hildesheim, Zürich, New York 2008 (1531); ALCIATO, Andrea: *Andreas Alciatus. Emblems in Translation*, ed. by Peter DALY, Toronto 1985; BATH, Michael: "Emblems from Alciato in Jacobean Trencher Decorations", in: *Emblematica 8/2* (1994), pp. 359–370; DALY: *Andrea Alciato in England*, pp. 95–102.

also written in the native language, with Geoffrey Whitney's *A Choice of Emblems* from 1586 as one example.⁶⁹⁷

Another very interesting type of puzzle that combined text and image was the *imprese*, which was distinct from the emblem. The term “*imprese*” — the ‘Englished’ equivalent of the Italian word *impresa*, meaning a venture or enterprise — refers to a type of puzzle which merged a pictorial element or symbol and a motto.⁶⁹⁸ In 1605, the Elizabethan historian William Camden explained that “[a]n *Imprese* (as the Italians call it) is a devise in picture with his Motte, or Word, borne by noble and learned personages, to notifie some particular conceit of their owne.”⁶⁹⁹ In contrast to the three-part emblem, the *imprese* consisted of two parts. These two forms also differed in function, according to Alan Young, in that “[the emblem] expressed some general truth, [while] the *impresa* omitted the poem and expressed, as Camden explained, a particularity.”⁷⁰⁰ The *imprese* originated in 14th-century Italy and pervaded English tournaments by the mid-16th century.⁷⁰¹ A key publication which was also read in England was Paolo Giovio's *Dialogo dell'Imprese militare et amorose* from 1555.⁷⁰² The society of knights and courtiers quickly adapted to the new tradition of using *imprese* in tournaments and miniature portraits.⁷⁰³ By the late 1580s, English authors were producing their own works about the *imprese*, and continental texts were already widely known. Henry Peacham the Elder famously incorporated some English *imprese*s into his *Minerva Britannia* in 1612.⁷⁰⁴

⁶⁹⁷ LEISHER: *Geoffrey Whitney's 'A Choice of Emblemes'*. Rosemary Freeman has written on English emblem books. FREEMAN, Rosemary: *English Emblem Books*, New York 1978; GREEN, Henry: *Shakespeare and the Emblem Writers. An Exposition of their Similarities of Thought and Expression. Preceded by a View of Emblem-Literature Down to A.D. 1616*, New York 1965.

⁶⁹⁸ DALY, Peter: “*The European Impresa. From Fifteenth-Century Aristocratic Device to Twenty-First-Century Logo*”, in: *Emblematica 13* (2003), pp. 303–332.

⁶⁹⁹ Quoted in YOUNG, Alan: “*The English Tournament Imprese*”, in: DALY, Peter (Ed.): *The English Emblem and the Continental Tradition*, New York 1988, pp. 61–82, p. 61. For a definition of an *imprese*, see also PRAZ, Mario: *Studies in Seventeenth-Century Imagery*, Rome 1975, p. 58.

⁷⁰⁰ YOUNG: “*The English Tournament Imprese*”, p. 61.

⁷⁰¹ One early example of English tournament *imprese*s is Sir Philip Sidney's *imprese* showing a harrow and the motto “*Nec habent occulta sepulchra*” (Graves have no secret), which he used at a tournament in 1577. *IBID.*, p. 67.

⁷⁰² ALBURY: *Castiglione's Allegory*, pp. 194–195.

⁷⁰³ YOUNG: “*The English Tournament Imprese*”, p. 67. See, for example, MARR, Alexander: “*An Early Impresa Miniature: Man in an Armillary Sphere (1569)*”, in: *British Art Studies 17* (2020), <https://britishartstudies.ac.uk/issues/issue-index/issue-17/an-early-impresa-miniature> (accessed 17.05.2021).

⁷⁰⁴ PEACHAM, Henry: *Minerva Britannia. Or a Garden Of Heroical Deuises, Furnished, and Adorned with Emblemes and Impresas of Sundry Natures, Newly Devised, Moralized, and Published*, ed. by John HORDEN, Yorkshire 1973 (1612).

Through the distribution and circulation of emblems and impreses, the English audience became familiar with “emblematic qualities”.⁷⁰⁵ Being confronted with a painting such as the *Cecil Riddle*, which presents a puzzle through a combination of text and image, surely challenged its courtly beholders. At the same time, its reception was embedded in an image culture which approached pictures as an interplay between the audience and the object.⁷⁰⁶ An Elizabethan courtly painting would be discussed by beholders who were accustomed to navigating the distinct language and concealed iconographies of such paintings. The case of the *Cecil Riddle* and the vast distribution of its subject in England alone illustrates the high demand for such images. The variety of other English versions reflects the immense popularity of this kind of painting, which was made to spur courtly discussion, in the Elizabethan era and beyond. The sheer number of these paintings suggests that they were not always commissioned works, as in the case of the *Cecil Riddle*, but were largely prepared as ready-made pieces sold by workshops. This form of picture emergence is still an understudied subject in research on Elizabethan art history, but it is essential to understand the perception of images such as the *Cecil Riddle*. Just like prints, panel paintings in Elizabethan times were not solely created as individual pieces made for specific commissioners. Rather, they were also copied from popular motifs and offered to interested buyers, which allowed certain subjects to circulate and exist in various households.

Images that claimed a didactic approach must have been especially well suited to such distribution. An excellent but unknown example is a memento mori picture from the Elizabethan times. At least three versions of this picture exist, but they are all in private collections.⁷⁰⁷ To date, only Malcolm Jones and Tarnya Cooper have commented on this

⁷⁰⁵ DALY, Peter: “England and the Emblem. The Cultural Context of English Emblem Books”, in: DALY, Peter (Ed.): *The English Emblem and the Continental Tradition*, New York 1988, pp. 1–60, pp. 6–7; DUNDAS: “Emblems on the Art of Paintings”, pp. 71–88. Adapting emblematic strategies in paintings was not a phenomenon only amongst the aristocracy; see TRUAX, Elizabeth: “Emblematic Pictures for the Less Privileged in Shakespeare’s England”, in: *Comparative Drama* 29/1 (1995), pp. 147–167.

⁷⁰⁶ This idea is also expressed in BÜTTNER, Nils: “Performative Rezeption. Frühneuzeitliche Bilder als Präsenzmedien”, in: EFFINGER, Maria et al. (Ed.): *Von analogen und digitalen Zugängen zur Kunst*, Heidelberg 2019, pp. 63–70, p. 264.

⁷⁰⁷ Cooper lists the five versions and elaborates on three of them: Unknown British School: *An Allegory of Life and Death*, c. 1590-1600, oil on panel, private collection of Mrs. F. Russel, Aden; Unknown British School: *Memento Mori*, c. 1590-1600, oil on panel, private collection of A. Matthews, Mogus Park, Finchfield, Dorsel; Unknown British School: *A Vanitas Morality*, c. 1590-1600, location unknown. COOPER: “Memento Mori Portraiture”, pp. 223–239. This painting, which seems to have been cut on the upper and bottom parts, was sold at Christie’s. CHRISTIE’S: “English School, 16th Century. An Allegory of Youth and Old Age, Lot 434”, in: *Old Master & British Paintings* (30.04.2015), <https://www.christies.com/lot/lot-english-school-16th-century-an-allegory-of-5887864/> (accessed 28.08.2022).

group of Elizabethan paintings.⁷⁰⁸ Since each painting clearly shows the same underlying iconography, it is legitimate to believe that they all stemmed from the same pattern. As Jones has suggested, these works were probably all based on a prototype that was transported in print.⁷⁰⁹ In each painting, a young man holding a flower or a sword on the left side stands opposite a bearded old man on the right side, who holds a skull in the other hand (Fig. 29). A winged bald figure hovering above them holds an hourglass and a crescent. Based on its attributes, this figure can be identified as Kairos, the god of opportunity and opportune moments.⁷¹⁰



Figure 29:
Unknown
British
School: *A
Vanitas
Morality*, c.
1590-1600,
location
unknown.
Picture
quote:
JONES: *The
Print in
Early
Modern
England*,
p. 270.

⁷⁰⁸ JONES, Malcolm: *The Print in Early Modern England. An Historical Oversight*, London 2010, pp. 270–271; COOPER: “*Memento Mori Portraiture*”, pp. 50–51.

⁷⁰⁹ JONES: *The Print in Early Modern England*, p. 270.

⁷¹⁰ PANOFSKY, Erwin: *Studies in Iconology. Humanistic Themes in the Art of the Renaissance*, New York 1972, pp. 71–73. Kairos’ iconography is thoroughly described in Chapter 10.

The symbolic meaning of these paintings with “a moralising function”, as Cooper has called them, is already apparent in the contrast of young and old with the blossoming flower and dead skull.⁷¹¹ In some versions, a corpse or a skeleton is laid out in a coffin at the bottom of the painting. The distinct moralising iconography is supported by several inscriptions.

Four panels of verse surround the god Kairos, each presenting a verse on the subject of ageing and the passing of time.⁷¹² Of the four panels, Malcolm Jones has identified two of the verses as deriving from the biblical Psalms.⁷¹³ A fifth panel, which is the largest, is placed between the young man and the elder in all three versions. It presents a sonnet that addresses how every human fades with age and ultimately faces their mortality.⁷¹⁴

These memento mori paintings do not function as explicit riddles in the same sense that the *Cecil Riddle* does, as they pose no question or request to answer a certain problem or solve a logic puzzle. Nevertheless, the paintings’ iconography uses an encrypted, emblematic manner of presentation that must be deciphered, and beholders must connect the texts and images, recognise the biblical references of the texts, and acknowledge the symbolism ascribed to the scene. The figure of Kairos in the upper-middle part of the picture is not only a reminder of the passage of time but also represents a moment of opportunity that has to be grasped by the forelock. The essence of the Christian message is that every human will inevitably age until their death, but they also have the chance to seize their time on earth..⁷¹⁵ This moralising message, next to the small size of the panels, has prompted Tarnya

⁷¹¹ COOPER: “*Memento Mori Portraiture*”, pp. 50–51.

⁷¹² “1. Lorde thow haste a pointed owte my lyfe / In lenghe lyke as a span / Myne age is nothyng vnto thee / So vayne a thing is Man.

2. This myrroure meete for all mankynde. / To viewe & still to beare in mynde / And do not mys.

3. Man walketh lyke a shade and dothe / In vayne hyn selffe annoy / In gettinge goods and cannot tell / who shall he same enioye.

4. For tyme brynges youthfull youths to age / And age brings Deathe our heritage, / when gods will ys.”

⁷¹³ “The first and third sets of verses derive from Psalms 39 and 103 in the Sternhold and Hopkins version (1562, etc., which thus constitutes a terminus post quem) [...]” JONES: *The Print in Early Modern England*, p. 270.

⁷¹⁴ “Consyder man howe tyme doth passe / And lykewyes knowe all fleshe is grasse / For tyrne consumes the strongest oke / So deathe at laste hall stryke the stroke / Though lustye youthe dothe bewtye beard / Yet youthe to age in tyme doth weare. / And age at length a death will brynge. / To Rytvhe, to poore, Emprours, & Kyng / Therefore still lyue as thow sholdst Dye, / Thy Soule to saue from Ieopardy / And as thow woldst be done vnto / So to th[e] neighbour always doo. / The heauenlye foyes at lenghe to see. / Lett faith in Chryste thyne Ancor bee.” This inscription and the four smaller ones above are taken from the picture.

⁷¹⁵ The subject of this painting genre is further discussed in JONES: *The Print in Early Modern England*, pp. 270–271.

Cooper to speculate that the images were sold as ready-made works and were popular gifts for young adults.⁷¹⁶

Next to their didactic function, these allegories fulfilled an entertaining yet dark function for the audience in offering different connections on the panel. Beholders might connect the figure of the old man to Kairos and converse about lost chances, or they could discuss the relationship between the young man and Kairos and reflect on the possibilities that one must grasp in courtly life. The texts equally opened possibilities for lengthy discussion by addressing the topic of ageing on multiple levels and from a Christian perspective.

The existence of images such as these allegories shows how the Elizabethan market for paintings demanded cryptic paintings that facilitated discussion instead of giving a definite and easily apprehended iconographic message. Some paintings presented explicit riddles, while others featured implicitly riddling iconographies, but they always incorporated layers of secrecy and obscurity that had to be acknowledged by the audience. As ready-made paintings, they must have circulated these subjects and been purchased in the courtly network, where they were presented as intellectualised gifts fit for a courtier of a certain standard. In this way, they were ideal objects with which a courtier could fashion himself. Depending on the subject of the painting, the work could be centred on memento mori or a judicial family connection.

Diversion in solving a puzzle: Other genealogical riddles

To explain the popularity of the Nijmegen riddle within and beyond the Low Countries, Sebastiaan Roes has based his interpretation of the painting on the observation that the old man is either dying or already dead.⁷¹⁷ Following this thought, Roes read the picture as an illustration of the reality of stepfamilies in early modern times. In this era, the death of a spouse and the remarriage of the widow or widower would usually lead to the formation of a stepfamily, which might be more or less complicated than the family in the riddle.⁷¹⁸ As Lyndan Warner has shown, stepfamilies were common in Europe between 1400 and 1800. In most cases, wives died from complications during childbirth, and their widowers remarried quickly, mainly because they needed a wife to fulfil the female duties of the household and care for their children (or bear children if their first marriage had produced

⁷¹⁶ COOPER: “*Memento Mori Portraiture*”, pp. 50–51.

⁷¹⁷ ROES: “‘*The Riddle of Nijmegen*’”, p. 109.

⁷¹⁸ IBID., p. 108.

no offspring).⁷¹⁹ Thus, the average early modern beholder could relate to the extended family scenario in the riddle and apply their personal experiences to solve the problem. This approachability on the surface of the riddle explains why it was so popular in early modern times. At the same time, it was connected to a long tradition of genealogical riddles with myriad forms and transmissions.

A very early biblical family riddle can be found in the Old English *Exeter Book*, a popular vernacular book of riddles from the 10th century. In this book, the 44th riddle tells of a man sitting “aet wine” with his two wives, his two sons, and his two daughters with their two sons, of whom he is also the father. Altogether, they are five people sitting at the table. The reader is challenged to connect the riddle to the story of Lot and his daughters from the Book of Genesis (11–14 and 19).⁷²⁰ In this biblical tale, Lot and his family flee the destruction of Sodom, but his wife is transformed into salt after turning to look back at the city. The father and daughters subsequently continue their lineage through incest. Of course, this case differs from the family riddle in the *Cecil Riddle*, and it accordingly demands that readers follow a different approach to solving it. The purpose of the riddle is not necessarily to figure out the relations but rather to recognise the family structure that emerged in the biblical story and legitimise the otherwise forbidden solution of incestuous connections between family members in the biblical reference.

The family riddle in the *Exeter Book* is not the only one of its kind that can be found in riddle collections. In fact, the subject also appeared in a profane form in two short riddles preserved in a manuscript written in the 10th century on the island of Reichenau. These riddles also challenge the reader to think about family relations. The first riddle briefly describes a man’s unusual family connection to the narrator, which must be decoded by the

⁷¹⁹ WARNER, Lyndan: “Introduction: Stepfamilies in the European Past”, in: WARNER, Lyndan (Ed.): *Stepfamilies in Europe, 1400-1800*, London, New York 2018, pp. 1–19, p. 11; FOYSTER, Elizabeth: “Marrying the Experienced Widow in Early Modern England: The Male Perspective”, in: CAVALLO, Sandra and Lyndan WARNER (Ed.): *Widowhood in Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, New York 1999, pp. 108–124, p. 109, pp. 114–115. Interestingly, in Tudor and Stuart England, the situation of a widow was completely different and could even afford opportunities that a woman would not otherwise have in society. While she had no right or possession while her husband was alive, being a widow made it possible for a woman to act as an administrator of her family’s estates and finances as well as the care of her children. Consequently, most women, especially of a certain social standing, were very careful about remarrying and did not usually do so as quickly as their male counterparts did. More on this is written in STRETTON, Tim: “Widows at Law in Tudor and Stuart England”, in: CAVALLO, Sandra and Lyndan WARNER (Ed.): *Widowhood in Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, New York 1999, pp. 193–208.

⁷²⁰ TUPPER: *The Riddles of The Exeter Book*, pp. 36–37, p. 178; PINSKER, Hans and Waltraud ZIEGLER: *Die Altenglischen Rätsel des Exeterbuchs*, Heidelberg 1985, p. 85, p. 421.

reader: “A man rode with his wife, and his mother was my mother’s mother-in-law.”⁷²¹ The second riddle presents an equally confusing family situation of the narrator: “I carry the son of my son, the brother of my husband, and the second is my only son.”⁷²² While the brevity of these sentences is challenging in itself, those who wish to solve these riddles must think about possible family connections that could explain the given statements. Unlike the riddle in the *Exeter Book*, the manuscript riddles operate within the framework of marriage laws and deny solutions which violate the permitted genealogical configurations.⁷²³ Still, all three examples of family riddles demonstrate the presence of such riddles more than five centuries before the *Cecil Riddle* was made.

In paintings, the subject of a curious lineage was famously evoked by the so-called Holy Kinship or Holy Kindred. Based on the ‘Golden Legend’, which became very popular in the late 15th century, the Holy Kinship framed the family of the Virgin Mary as a stepfamily. In the Golden Legend, Mary’s mother, Anne, married three times and had one daughter with each husband. Artistic interest in the complex of the holy stepfamily arose in the early 15th century and persisted into the 16th century.⁷²⁴ It resulted in many altarpieces, such as the one made by Lucas Cranach the Elder in 1509, with the image of Saint Anne and all of her relatives.⁷²⁵ Portrayals of the holy stepfamily included Saint Anne with her three daughters, their fathers and stepfathers, their husbands, and their children, including Jesus. The concept of the Holy Kinship emerged as a solution to a genealogical riddle in the biblical Gospel of Mark (3:31–3:57), where the statement that Jesus Christ had brothers seems to conflict with the understanding of Christ’s mother, Mary, as an eternal virgin. Since Mary embodied divine purity, how could Jesus have brothers who were not born from his mother? The solution, as presented by Jacobus de Voraigne in 1264, was that his

⁷²¹ “Equitavit homo cum femina; mater eius matris meae socrus fuit.” Cited from ORCHARD (Ed.): *The Old English and Anglo-Latin Riddle Tradition*, pp. 602–603. See also MÜLLENHOFF, K. and W. SCHERER: *Denkmäler. Deutsche Poesie und Prosa aus dem VIII-XII Jahrhundert*, Vol. 1, Berlin 1892, p. 21.

⁷²² “Porto filium filii mei, mariti mei fratrem, alterum unicum filium meum.” Cited from ORCHARD (Ed.): *The Old English and Anglo-Latin Riddle Tradition*, pp. 602–603.

⁷²³ The solution to the first riddle is to think of the riding man as the speaker’s stepfather. In the second riddle, the said son is the son of a stepson. *IBID.*, pp. 890–891.

⁷²⁴ KUHN, Holger: *Die Heilige Sippe und die Mediengeschichte des Triptychons. Familie und Bildrhetorik in Quen Massys’ Annenaltar*, Emsdetten 2018, pp. 23–24; MURPHY, Lisa: “The Holy Kinship. A Study of a Workshop Practice”, in: *The Rijksmuseum Bulletin* 51 (2003), pp. 127–137, p. 127.

⁷²⁵ NAYDENOVA, Mellie and David PARK: “The Earliest Holy Kinship Image, the Salomite Controversy, and the Little-Known Centre of Learning in Northern England in the Twelfth Century”, in: *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 71/1 (2008), pp. 95–119, pp. 95–97; BUCHHOLZ, Marlies: *Anna Selbdritt. Bilder einer wirkungsmächtigen Heiligen*, Königstein im Taunus 2005; WALLERT, Arie, Gwen TAUBER and Lisa MURPHY: *The Holy Kinship. A Medieval Masterpiece*, Amsterdam 2001.

brothers were in fact his cousins, and his mother had several half-sisters who were also named Mary.⁷²⁶

While no reasonable connection can be made between the holy stepfamily and the family situation presented in the *Cecil Riddle*, the Holy Kinship as a popular religious subject highlights the prevalence of genealogical riddles even outside of a legal educational context. The family riddles presented in this chapter illustrate how this kind of puzzle was frequently featured in riddles long before Elizabethan times. These riddles could function as didactic reminders of biblical stories as well as diversions that tested a person's ability to logically decipher a family description. While these family riddles also had an entertaining function, they related to the real-life experiences and situations of the average early modern individual. Thus, it is not surprising that this subject, which was often approached in challenging and entertaining ways, was incorporated into a painting gifted to Elizabeth I's minister William Cecil.

Displaying and discussing the *Cecil Riddle*: Where was it presented?

Previous research has provided no suggestion or source of information regarding how the *Cecil Riddle* was displayed.⁷²⁷ However, contemplating how and in which room the painting might have been presented is an important step towards understanding the object in the complex of the Elizabethan network of paintings, houses, and beholders. William Cecil, as an amateur genealogist and passionate family dynast, had several estates whose interiors were decorated with heraldic and didactical imagery; therefore, it seems likely that he would have consciously displayed such a painting.⁷²⁸

The *Cecil Riddle* is a relatively compact object measuring just 40.5 by 61 centimetres, and it contains several elements, inscriptions, and iconographical details. Therefore, it must be looked at closely. The pictorial framework in particular demands a close view to be adequately seen, even if there was not a picture frame overlapping with the surface. Effectively, the *Cecil Riddle* is a picture that was made to be observed in all of its detail to convey the whole riddle to beholders, which limits its manner of presentation to some degree. The space in which the *Cecil Riddle* was presented must have allowed beholders to

⁷²⁶ HIRAKAWA, Kayo and Toshiharu NAKAMURA: "Faith, Family and Politics in Lucas Cranach the Elder's 'Holy Kinship Altarpiece'", *Images of Familial Intimacy in Eastern and Western Art*, Leiden, Boston 2014, pp. 54–82, pp. 61–62.

⁷²⁷ So far, no inventory listing the *Cecil Riddle* in Cecil's collection has been found.

⁷²⁸ See Chapter 6.

approach the panel and closely inspect it at eye level. The painting was made not to be admired but to be read in every sense of the word; thus, its presentation during the 16th century would probably have been quite different from its current manner of display at Hatfield House, where it hangs on a staircase facing large windows whose light reflects on the painting's surface (**Fig. 30**).



Figure 30: The *Cecil Riddle* on display in Hatfield House, ©Hatfield House.

In contrast to a large portrait, the relatively small *Cecil Riddle* was most certainly not presented in a representative room, such as a gallery or entrance hall, which would have functioned as a public space for greeting and entertaining guests and be used for exercise.⁷²⁹ Instead, being displayed in a study or library seems more probable. As a room for working, contemplation, and reading, a study is especially consistent with the challenging character of the riddle, which encourages beholders to think quietly about the puzzle. A study would also store books, maps, and family treasures, which fits well with the subject of the

⁷²⁹ These rooms are discussed in Chapter 12.

riddle.⁷³⁰ It is conceivable that the *Cecil Riddle* was hung in a room like this, where it would be in the presence of legal documents and manuscripts.

Unlike a dining room or great chamber, the study functioned as a more private space. It would mainly be used by the family and was less suited to having visitors lounge in it and observe the décor. Since the *Cecil Riddle* has been identified as a personal object made for William Cecil, this location would not interfere with the interpretation of the object. Understanding the *Cecil Riddle* as a gift already removes the representative aspect of the object and instead strengthens the personal connection to Cecil. Since the riddle was devoted to him, he was presumably its main beholder, and it functioned as a diversion and entertaining thought exercise for him.

Even though the painting was not made to appeal to the entire courtly society, it still constituted a didactic image which could prompt discussion. Its particular focus on genealogy and the judicial aspects of lineage targeted a specific audience that shared such interests within the courtly circle. It is plausible that learned men, such as Cecil's Cambridge friends Roger Ascham and John Cheke, would have indulged in such a visual challenge. That said, the *Cecil Riddle* might have been displayed in a room that permitted more social interaction than the study would. One possibility is the great chamber, which served as the primary space for hosting musical entertainment, dancing, and games, such as chess or backgammon.⁷³¹ While the family used this room, it was also open to guests who had the honour of being invited to dinner or for entertainment. As a semi-public room, it was equipped with a thoughtfully chosen decorative programme that emphasised the message of its owner.⁷³² While viewing the *Cecil Riddle* and dancing are very different activities, they would both be at home in a room made for entertainment and playful diversions amongst a chosen audience, and such a space would have highlighted the riddle's openness for discussion. Ultimately, both the study and the great chamber are possible spaces for displaying the *Cecil Riddle* which would have uniquely but equally interacted with its character as a courtly painting.

⁷³⁰ COOPER: *Houses of the Gentry*, p. 300.

⁷³¹ GIROUARD: *Life in the English Country House*, pp. 89–90.

⁷³² In an interesting article on the interior decoration of Elizabethan houses, Juliet Fleming proposes that writing on the wall and “graffiti” were common features of the domestic interior. FLEMING, Juliet: “*Graffiti, Grammatology, and the Age of Shakespeare*”, in: FUMERTON, Patricia and Simon HUNT (Ed.): *Renaissance Culture and the Everyday*, Philadelphia 1999, pp. 315–351.

Regarding the house in which it was presented, nearly any of Cecil's houses is a possibility. However, Theobalds seems particularly compatible with the genealogical and didactic approach of the *Cecil Riddle*. As shown in Chapter 2, Cecil built Theobalds for his youngest son and political heir, Robert. It was completed in 1571 and recorded as having a size unmatched in its day.⁷³³ The decorative programme of Theobalds, which heavily incorporated heraldry and arms representing the English realm, especially connected it with the painting's pictorial framework, which has been identified as a personal addition for Cecil.⁷³⁴ Since the *Cecil Riddle* was not commissioned by Cecil himself, however, it was not part of his own decorative scheme, and it therefore could have been presented in any of his houses. Next to Theobalds, the Burghley House seems likely since it was his family's manor. As an heirloom that belonged to his father, the house was a part and expression of the Cecil dynasty, and it would have made sense for the *Cecil Riddle* to hang in the house of Cecil's ancestors, which was also the home from which his later title derived. Either of these houses could have qualified for displaying the *Cecil Riddle*, which the minister could have used to enhance the educational and dynastic approach of his decorative programme.

⁷³³ AIRS: "Pomp or Glory?", pp. 3–8; ANDREWS, Martin: "Theobalds Palace. The Gardens and Park", in: *Garden History* 21/2 (1993), pp. 129–149, p. 130.

⁷³⁴ See Chapter 6.

Preliminary Conclusion

While some questions remain open, Part II has compiled and discussed previous research on the *Cecil Riddle* and conducted the first art historical analysis to show how the *Cecil Riddle* must be examined in the context of English adaptations of the genealogical subject. Unlike the Dutch versions, the English riddle does not have a framework which provides a definite answer to the genealogical puzzle. This ambiguity can be interpreted as a deliberate form of vagueness that enables the audience to discuss the presented family situation and apply their judicial and real-life knowledge. In this way, the *Cecil Riddle* reveals itself as a painting made to be received in a context concerned with lineage, dynasty, and nobility. A courtier such as William Cecil, who was highly interested in genealogy and building his own pedigree, could fashion himself through a discussion of the riddle's problem and demonstrate his ability to solve it in more than one way.

Additionally, Part II has analysed the pictorial framework of the *Cecil Riddle*, which has not been discussed thoroughly before. The framing's four corners display four heraldic signs: a swan, a knot, an antelope, and a lion. These signs present another, more personal riddle for Cecil. This aspect of the object posed many difficulties, but it allowed for speculation about the association of the heraldic signs with Edward Stafford, an Elizabethan courtier of whom Cecil acted as a patron. This discussion has shown how Stafford, who came from a scandalous and curious English family, is most likely the person who gifted the painting to Cecil, possibly on the occasion of an upcoming wedding announcement in the Cecil family. As discussed in the last chapter, riddles are embedded in cultural traditions of negotiating suitability, progress, and status, and their inherently challenging nature fits into the cultural, ceremonial, and domestic complex of Elizabethan courtly times.

The *Cecil Riddle* has been defined as a genealogical puzzle, an Elizabethan courtly painting, and a personal puzzle for William Cecil. Cecil's biography and courtly network have been key in contextualising the riddle within his property and courtly circle — an effort that has not previously been done. Ultimately, this part provides a basis for future research on this extraordinary Elizabethan object.

Part III: Christopher Hatton's Double-Sided Painting

The *Hatton Portrait* is one of the most illustrious emblematic objects showcasing the exceptional qualities of Elizabethan courtly painting.⁷³⁵ However, its provenance is entirely uncertain. It was first documented in an auction catalogue in 1929 while in the possession of Sir Algernon Tudor-Craig, and it subsequently moved to the collection of the museum at Northampton.⁷³⁶ Until 2020, it was exhibited at the NPG for several years. This image, which is painted on both sides, must be examined not only as a picture but also as an object. Its design reveals a complex interplay in linking the two sides, two iconographies, and two perspectives. Since it is not possible to see both sides at the same time, the painting's reception is intellectually challenging as well as physically demanding. Several exhibition catalogues and short entries have acknowledged the portrait's special quality, but researchers have rarely discussed it in detail.⁷³⁷ The few existing works give a good idea of the complexity of this image, but there is still a need for a complete interpretation of its iconography and an investigation of how the portrait was presented.

In 1968, Arthur Beer became the first scholar to perform a close examination of the painting, for which he inspected the image using astronomical methods and interpretation.⁷³⁸ While his approach was not without criticism, his approximate dating to around 1584 was later accepted and used in further research. The most significant clue for the dating seems to be the coat of arms in the top-right corner. Beer has correctly noted that, because of its specific design, the painting was presumably created before 1588, when Christopher Hatton was made a Knight of the Garter. A courtier who was initiated into this illustrious club would have included the sign of the Garter in his coat of arms, which is not the case in the *Hatton Portrait*.⁷³⁹ Today, however, Beer's examination of the painting's iconography should be received cautiously, as Beer saw and examined the painting before it underwent conservational treatment, and his illustrations show that the picture was in a terrible state.⁷⁴⁰

⁷³⁵ Unknown: *Double-Sided Emblematic Portrait of Sir Christopher Hatton*, c. 1580, oil on panel, 96 cm x 72.3 cm, Northampton Museum and Art Gallery.

⁷³⁶ BEER, Arthur: "Astronomical Dating of Works of Art", in: *Vistas in Astronomy* 9 (1968), pp. 177–223, p. 214.

⁷³⁷ JONES: *Being Elizabethan*, pp. 38–39.

⁷³⁸ BEER: "Astronomical Dating of Works of Art".

⁷³⁹ *IBID.*, p. 215.

⁷⁴⁰ *IBID.*, p. 212.

Besides Beer, Tarnya Cooper has discussed the portrait in several publications — first in her unpublished PhD thesis⁷⁴¹ and later in several works and catalogues.⁷⁴² Cooper has presented a stylistic analysis of the painting which agrees with Beer's dating of the object to around 1580. Additionally, she has suggested reading the picture as a “commemorative tablet” and one of the “rhetorical games that were enjoyed by the members of Elizabeth's court who were educated in the humanist tradition”.⁷⁴³ The most detailed analysis of the painting to date is presented in an article by Charles Moseley from 2006.⁷⁴⁴ In the text, Moseley discusses the portrait's iconography with consideration to the humanist sources of early modern English society. The only work which has addressed the portrait more recently is Jane Eade's chapter “Heraldry in Elizabethan and Jacobean Portraiture”, which offers the first specific examination of how the coat of arms is depicted in the portrait.⁷⁴⁵

While no sources about the painter of the *Hatton Portrait* exist, Cooper has assumed that it was a native English painter.⁷⁴⁶ More precisely, the painting has been ascribed to William Segar's workshop.⁷⁴⁷ Although Moseley has rightfully noted that Segar was not active as an artist around 1580, when the portrait was probably made, it is nonetheless an interesting guess.⁷⁴⁸ As shown in Chapter 3, Segar was part of the broader network around Hatton and became a herald at the College of Arms in 1589.⁷⁴⁹ It is conceivable that Segar and Hatton made their acquaintance through Robert Dudley. In any case, the current study assumes that Hatton himself was the commissioner of the object. This assumption is mainly based on the iconographical observations shared below, starting with the analysis of the portrait side and proceeding to the emblem side.⁷⁵⁰

⁷⁴¹ COOPER: “*Memento Mori Portraiture*”.

⁷⁴² EADE: “*William Cecil, 1st Baron Burghley*”, pp. 32–34.

⁷⁴³ COOPER/ORRACK: “*Double-Sided Emblematic Portrait of Sir Christopher Hatton*”, pp. 86–87.

⁷⁴⁴ MOSELEY, Charles: “*A Portrait of Sir Christopher Hatton, Erasmus and an Emblem of Alciato. Some Questions*”, in: *The Antiquaries Journal* 86 (2006), pp. 373–379.

⁷⁴⁵ EADE, Jane: “*Heraldry in Elizabethan and Jacobean Portraiture*”, in: ROBERTSON, Fiona and Peter LINDFIELD (Ed.): *The Display of Heraldry. The Heraldic Imagination in Arts and Culture*, London 2019, pp. 62–83, p. 64, p. 83.

⁷⁴⁶ COOPER: *Citizen Portrait*, p. 32.

⁷⁴⁷ PUYVELDE, Leo VAN: “*Double-Sided Painting with a Portrait of Sir Christopher Hatton*”, in: DORAN, Susan (Ed.): *Elizabeth. The Exhibition at the National Maritime Museum*, Exhibition Catalogue, National Maritime Museum Greenwich, 1 May to 14 September 2003, Greenwich 2003, pp. 137–139.

⁷⁴⁸ MOSELEY: “*A Portrait of Sir Christopher Hatton*”, p. 374.

⁷⁴⁹ ADAMS: “*The Heralds and the Elizabethan Court*”, p. 20.

⁷⁵⁰ Because this study approaches the *Hatton Portrait* as a whole and not as a portrait with a painted back side, the terms “recto-verso” and “front and back sides” are not used. Such terms are regarded as speculative and inaccurate since there is no record of which side was actually considered the front. Unlike the other double-sided objects described in Chapter 12, the *Hatton Portrait* has iconography that does not indicate which side is which. By using the term “portrait side”, I follow the example of Tarnya Cooper, who has used

Since the full details of this painting's iconography have never been analysed, Part III presents a long-overdue approach that recognises their importance. As the following chapters illustrate, Hatton chose this unique picture invention to display his life in the context of the Elizabethan court.⁷⁵¹ The *Hatton Portrait* is proven to encompass a plethora and mosaic of different humanist affiliations, references, and thought games.

The findings of this part were primarily attained through the tremendous support of the Northampton Museum and Art Gallery and the restoration department of the NPG. Jane Seddon and Beth Socci from the Northampton Museum and Art Gallery were kind enough to share their files on the *Hatton Portrait* and allow me to observe the painting directly. During my visit to the NPG in 2020, Abby Granville was kind enough to grant me access to the object and the results of the technical analysis. The visit was made possible by Alexandra Gent as well as Aviva Burnstock, who was also kind enough to accompany me to the workshop and discuss the object's condition.

this expression to refer to the side with the portrait of Hatton. See COOPER: "*Memento Mori Portraiture*", p. 323.

⁷⁵¹ Some of the observations in the following chapters, especially Chapter 10, have already been addressed in an article from 2021. See MINNIGERODE, Elisa VON: "'Because No One Can Seize me from Behind'. Sir Christopher Hatton's Double Portrait and Elizabethan Textual Paintings", in: *Athens Journal of Humanities & Arts* 8/4 (2021), pp. 325–340.

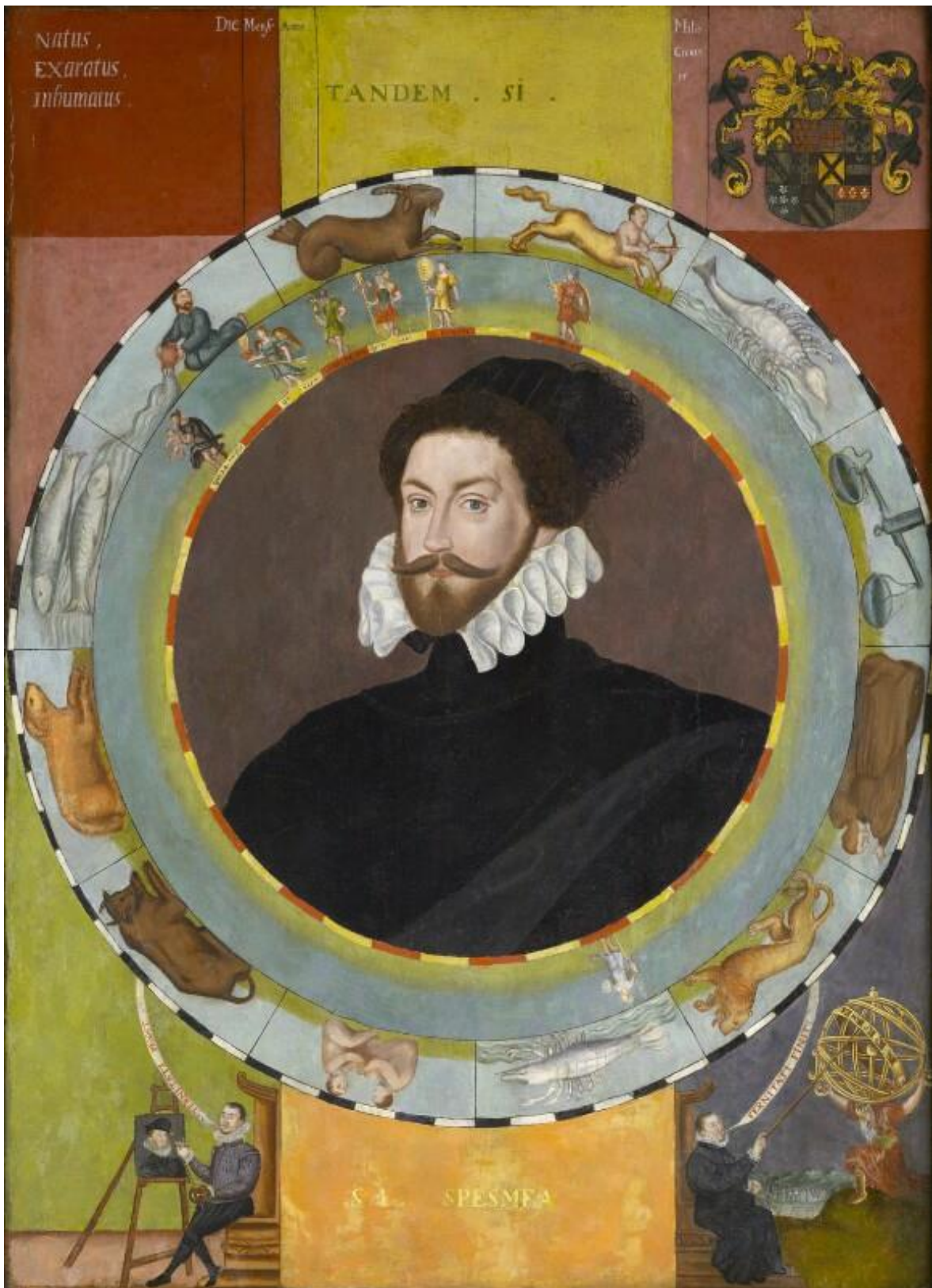


Figure 31: Unknown: *Portrait of Sir Christopher Hatton*, c. 1580, oil on panel, 96 cm x 72.3 cm, portrait side, ©Northampton Museum and Art Gallery.

8. A Horoscopic Likeness and Inscriptions

The portrait of a courtier

When observing the portrait side, the beholder's gaze is first drawn to the middle of the panel, where Christopher Hatton, the queen's favourite, is situated in a circle surrounded by horoscopic and astrological rings (**Fig. 31**). The courtier's black costume and dark hat are in line with the advice for the ideal courtier to dress in modest colours.⁷⁵² Around his neck, Hatton wears a large white ruff, which further signals his social status. This part of his costume is carefully executed and detailed with shadows and bucklings in the small tubes of the ruff. The same care can be seen in Hatton's face, which is modelled with darker shadows underlining his cheekbones and lines around his eyebrows. While his thick brown beard and moustache are painted with straight brown lines and fairer brown paint as a highlight, his hair is depicted as curly. The portrait is further detailed with the fluffy deco on the right side of Hatton's black hat.



Figure 32: *Hatton Portrait*, portrait side, detail of the sitter's eyes, ©Northampton Museum and Art Gallery.

Hatton's face is very finely executed, especially his eyes. Tiny white reflections are visible in his grey-blue eyes, and the area around them is meticulously painted with details on the eyelids and light rings in the eyes (**Fig. 32**). These carefully composed details would be very interesting to a researcher of Hatton's biography since one of the queen's nicknames

⁷⁵² See Chapter 1.

for Hatton was “Lyddes”.⁷⁵³ This physical ascription is believed to have been an analogy: just as the eyelids cover the eyes, Hatton protected Elizabeth in the construction of her power.⁷⁵⁴ While these minutiae can only be recognised upon close observation, they hint at the personal character of the painting’s iconography, which becomes even more apparent from the area surrounding Hatton’s likeness.

Four circles directly enclose Hatton. The inner-most circle is comprised of 36 alternating red and yellow lines, which represent the 36 decans, an astrological subdivision of a circle into segments of 10° each. In Hatton’s time, this system was the basis for a geometrical acquisition of the sky. Each decan was assumed to be “governed by either one of the planets, sun or the moon”.⁷⁵⁵ Personified depictions of the planets, together with the Sun and the Moon, surround Hatton in the second circle. They stand upon a green ground, and the rest of the circle field is coloured in light blue, which creates the impression of an earthly grass and sky scene. The planetary figures were designed with diverse details which would make it possible for a learned beholder to identify them individually.

The Moon, a roughly sketched figure with silvery-blue clothing and hair, is the only personification placed in the lower part of the circle, where it appears under the zodiac sign of cancer (**Fig. 33**). It is not clear if the iconography here depicts the moon as female, in line with the fashion of the Roman and Greek goddesses of the moon, or as male. Compared to the other planet personifications, the Moon lacks one detail: an inscription on the decan field on which it stands. However, it could be that such an inscription was originally present but was lost at some point and could not be restored during the painting’s conservation.⁷⁵⁶

⁷⁵³ DEACON: *The Courtier & The Queen*, p. 19. See also Chapter 3.

⁷⁵⁴ IBID., p. 30. Leicester was called “eyes”. BROOKS: *Sir Christopher Hatton*, pp. 95–96. Furthermore, in his lamentation of Hatton’s death, the poet Robert Greene wrote that Hatton’s “insight perced the sharp-eyed *Linx*”. GREEN, Robert: *A Maidens Dreame vpon the Death of the Right Honorable Sir Christopher Hatton Knight, Late Lord Chancellor of England*, London 1591, fol. 6r.

⁷⁵⁵ BEER: “*Astronomical Dating of Works of Art*”, p. 211. The planets Uranus, Neptune, and Pluto had not yet been discovered during Hatton’s lifetime, so there were only five known planets in addition to the sun and the moon.

⁷⁵⁶ Beer has suggested that no inscription was added “since the woman representing the Moon appears to have covered the whole third decan of Cancer”. BEER: “*Astronomical Dating of Works of Art*”, p. 217.



Figure 33: *Hatton Portrait*, portrait side, detail of the Moon, ©Northampton Museum and Art Gallery.

The next planet, Saturn, is depicted under Aquarius in the left part of the zodiac circle (**Fig. 34**). Saturn is immediately recognisable as a man holding a child, whom he is about to eat. Saturn was associated with the ancient titan Kronos, son of Uranus, who, out of fear that one of his children might take his power away from him, ate them immediately after they were born until his sixth son, Jupiter, defeated him.⁷⁵⁷ This figure stands on a decan field containing an inscription, in which the letters are mostly legible as “Gr·24· [59] ·Scr”. This is another element that emphasises the careful preparation that must have been devoted to this composition. According to Arthur Beer, the inscriptions were markers of the longitudinal positions of the planets.⁷⁵⁸ These details were foundational to Beer’s dating of the portrait, as he calculated that the exact positioning of the planets in the picture corresponded to the year 1581.



Figure 34: *Hatton Portrait*, portrait side, detail of Saturn, ©Northampton Museum and Art Gallery.

⁷⁵⁷ RUCK, Carl and Danny STAPLES: *The World of Classical Myth*, Durham 1994, p. 34.

⁷⁵⁸ “Gr” stands for the degree, and “Scr” (*scrupulum*) stands for the minutes. BEER: “*Astronomical Dating of Works of Art*”, pp. 213–217.



Figure 35: *Hatton Portrait*, portrait side, detail of Venus, ©Northampton Museum and Art Gallery.

To the right of Saturn, the planet Venus is depicted (**Fig. 35**). The figure is designed as a winged female creature wearing loose clothing and holding a burning heart and a long arrow in her right and left hands, respectively. The decan field on which Venus stands is inscribed with “Gr [...] 50·S [...]” but has two damaged areas where parts of the inscription are missing.⁷⁵⁹

The next planet, Jupiter, stands to the right of Venus with his legs crossed. He wears green clothing and a helmet on his head. His left hand rests on his hip in a relaxed pose, while his right hand holds his attribute, a short stick. The inscription in the decan field below him reads “[G]r·22·54·Scr”. To Jupiter’s right, Mercury is depicted in a similar pose, with his legs crossed and his left hand on his hip. In addition to his red clothing, Mercury wears an armoured breastplate and a helmet with golden wings on the side. He holds his large characteristic staff, which is tall enough to reach above his head while the bottom rests on the ground. The inscription beneath him, “Gr·18 [...] Scr”, is also very damaged, and the

⁷⁵⁹ Based on the other positions of the planets, Beer has argued that “no doubt it must read Aqr·(6)·50”. *IBID.*, p. 217. Without the astronomical competence to dispute such a qualified guess, the high-resolution images from the technical examination show that the position must start with “Gr” and not “Aqr”.

middle and end parts are unreadable. Jupiter and Mercury are positioned under Capricorn together with the Sun to Mercury's right (**Fig. 36**).



Figure 36: *Hatton*
Portrait, portrait side,
detail of Jupiter (right)
and Mercury (left),
©Northampton Museum
and Art Gallery.

Like the Moon, the Sun is designed with consistent monochrome colouring, though it is golden in this case (**Fig. 37**). In its right hand, the Sun holds a golden staff with a plate, which reflects little beams of light painted with thin, careful brushstrokes. In the middle, the features of a face can be distinguished, further demonstrating the amount of detail incorporated into this picture. Here, because of damage, the inscription under the Sun is only half-legible as “[...] 0·16·Sc[r]”. The last planet, Mars, stands immediately above Hatton's hat, under the sign of Sagittarius (**Fig. 38**). His right hand clutches a sword, which is turned upwards as if he is ready for action, and he holds a large golden shield in his left hand. This design reflects his status as the god of war. Unlike the other planets, the inscription in the decan field below Mars is not damaged, and it can be fully read as “Gr·17·35·Scr”.

Under the fourth circle, which is designed with the astrological subdivision of 72 alternating black and white segments at 5° intervals, the third circle contains the 12 zodiac signs in a line. Unlike the planets, the zodiac signs are situated in fields framed by thin black lines. Thus, they are visually separated, with one exception: Aquarius is pouring out the water in which the Pisces fish are swimming. The backgrounds of the fields are very simple and can be roughly differentiated into two types. In one group, the water signs are portrayed against a background of stylised waves and light blue sky, whereas the other group has the same sky in the background but a line of green grass instead of water. All 12 figures are relatively equal in size, and most comfortably fill their fields; only Virgo seems to be squeezed in due to her large brown clothing. A pattern suggests that the same template was used for two of the zodiac signs: Cancer and Scorpio. These two signs are almost identical in design and even have the same number of arms. Only their tails differ; Cancer has a shield-like tail, whereas Scorpio seems to have a fish fin (**Figs. 39 and 40**). Possibly, these similar signs were made with the same template and altered just enough to make the differences perceptible to an educated beholder.⁷⁶⁰



Figure 37:
Hatton Portrait,
portrait side,
detail of the Sun,
©Northampton
Museum and Art
Gallery.



Figure 38:
Hatton Portrait,
portrait side,
detail of Mars,
©Northampton
Museum and
Art Gallery.

⁷⁶⁰ In the analysis of the painting at the NPG, infrared and X-ray investigations yielded more details about the design of the whole circle around Hatton, which again demonstrates a high level of planning. Unfortunately, none of the results from the analysis have been published yet.

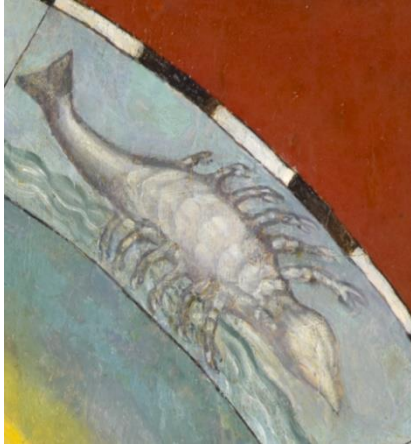


Figure 39: *Hatton Portrait*, portrait side, detail of Scorpio, ©Northampton Museum and Art Gallery.



Figure 40: *Hatton Portrait*, portrait side, detail of Cancer, ©Northampton Museum and Art Gallery.

Astrology and astronomy, which were more or less equivalent in the 16th century, were highly trendy topics and hobbies in the Elizabethan circle.⁷⁶¹ While Thomas Elyot instructed the ideal statesman to be learned in cosmography, the casting of horoscopes and astrological rhetoric became very popular.⁷⁶² For example, the courtier and writer Robert Naunton used planetary references to describe the nature of persons at the court, and he theorised that Sir Philip Sidney was such an excellent courtier because “[...] Mars and Mercury fell at variance, whose servant he should be”.⁷⁶³ According to Naunton, Mars was the planet of soldiers, and Mercury was the planet of courtiers. In Sidney’s case, Naunton considered him the ideal courtier because he met the criteria in each of these categories.

No records indicate that Christopher Hatton had any particular interest in astronomy. Still, it is fair to assume that he had at least average knowledge of his time. In an anecdote shared by Hatton’s biographer Eric Brooks, Hatton impressed the Scottish Jesuit William Crichton by picking up on his astronomical references.⁷⁶⁴ In the courtly circle, Hatton’s connection to the infamous astrologer and royal advisor Dr John Dee is particularly notable but lacking research.⁷⁶⁵ Another interesting contact of Hatton was the intellectual John Case, who was patronised by Hatton and part of the learned circle with which Hatton surrounded himself

⁷⁶¹ Astronomy and astrology in early modern Europe are described in NEWMAN, William and Anthony GRAFTON: *Secrets of Nature. Astrology and Alchemy in Early Modern Europe*, London 2001, pp. 1–38.

⁷⁶² ELYOT: *The Governour*, p. 43.

⁷⁶³ NAUNTON: *Fragmenta Regalia*, p. 20. See Chapter 1.

⁷⁶⁴ BROOKS: *Sir Christopher Hatton*, p. 20.

⁷⁶⁵ See Chapter 3. Dee mentions the younger courtier several times in his journal, but no more about their connection is known. ROWSE: *The Elizabethan Renaissance*, pp. 227–246.

at the court.⁷⁶⁶ While there is no evidence that Hatton worked with a personal astrologer, the astronomical arrangements in the *Hatton Portrait* are so thoughtfully designed that they must have been deliberately planned for the panel.

In view of these considerations and the attention to detail in the *Hatton Portrait*, previous researchers have tried to calculate the date indicated by the position of the planets in the painting.⁷⁶⁷ In the reconstruction of Arthur Beer, the position of the planets corresponded to December 12, 1581, but Beer could not determine why this day was of any particular importance.⁷⁶⁸ Chris Egerton has agreed with Beer's calculation but remarked that the astronomical design could refer to the Gregorian calendar. In that case, the date would have been December 22, 1581, the winter solstice, which is significant since "[t]hat day is the shortest day of the year and represents the point of gradual emergence from the cold and darkness of winter."⁷⁶⁹

While these attempted interpretations of the astrological portrait are intriguing, they address only one side of how the distinctive design can be read. From a different perspective, the distinct iconography can be seen as a commentary on the Elizabethan courtly self-fashioning and humanistic atmosphere of early modern times.⁷⁷⁰ The astrological design of the *Hatton Portrait* used iconography representing a connection between the individual and the planetary system as the basis for discussion amongst the courtly audience. Through the combination of the accurate measurements in the inscriptions, the various depictions of the planets, and the modest likeness of Hatton as the queen's courtier, many references would be revealed to beholders. The design presented opportunities for beholders to test their astronomical knowledge, be seen in the context of a courtier's discussions, and thus discuss Hatton's position in the courtly cosmos around him.

⁷⁶⁶ John Case dedicated his *Sphaera Civitatis* to Hatton. The book uses astronomical imagery to deliver a commentary on the state. See Chapter 3.

⁷⁶⁷ Jane Eade has agreed that the portrait documents a specific moment in Hatton's life. EADE: "*Heraldry in Elizabethan and Jacobean Portraiture*", p. 64.

⁷⁶⁸ BEER: "*Astronomical Dating of Works of Art*", pp. 213–214.

⁷⁶⁹ Egerton has asserted that two different calendar formats should be considered here: the Julian calendar and the Gregorian calendar. The date and time in the Julian calendar, according to Egerton, would be Tuesday, 12 December, 1581 at around 2:45 am GMT. EGERTON, Chris: "*Great Planets. Astrological Imagery in an Elizabethan Portrait of Sir Christopher Hatton*", Unpublished Document, p. 4. In further discussions with him, Egerton mentioned that he found out that the birth of an Alice Fanshaw, daughter of Thomas Fanshaw, who was another courtier of Elizabeth. Alice later married Christopher Hatton II. This appears to be simply a nice coincidence, though it is absolutely possible that Fanshaw and Hatton knew each other. IBID., p. 4.

⁷⁷⁰ David Evett has mentioned Hatton's painting alongside other allegorical planetary designs without analysing it further. EVETT, David: "*Some Elizabethan Allegorical Paintings. A Preliminary Enquiry*", in: *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 52 (1989), pp. 140–166, p. 154.

The iconography of a portrait in the middle of an astronomical design is not unique to the *Hatton Portrait*. In fact, it appears in another object that has hardly been recognised in art historical research: a woodcut after Nicholas Hilliard that shows Louis de Gonzague, Duc de Nevers, in a familiar astronomical setting on the left-hand side.⁷⁷¹ The duke's portrait in the middle of the visual field is surrounded by two circles, each showing 6 of the 12 zodiac signs (**Fig. 41**). In comparison to the zodiac design of the *Hatton Portrait*, this print displays a leaner, more stripped-down version of an astronomical portrait.



Figure 41: Unknown wood-engraver after Nicholas Hilliard: *Louis de Gonzague, Duc de Nevers*, 1579, engraving, ©Bibliothèque nationale de France.

⁷⁷¹ Unknown wood engraver after Nicholas Hilliard: *Louis de Gonzague, Duc de Nevers*, 1579, engraving. Collection of Bibliothèque nationale de France.

Nonetheless, their similarity is compelling, especially in how they position the sitter's portrait in the centre of the arrangement instead of presenting a full-body picture. The duke's image is even completed with a cryptic motto integrated into the portrait field on two banners above and below the bust. The motto, "Nec retrogradior / nec devio" (Without reversing nor deviating), appears to be an emblematic message that the audience should receive in combination with the portrait.⁷⁷² A similar element is absent from Hatton's portrait, at least directly in the zodiac circle. While the production date of the print, 1579, corresponds to when the *Hatton Portrait* was probably made, there is no evidence that the two works are directly connected, and they may simply feature a type of astronomical iconography that was popular in courtly circles.

Another example showing the distribution of such pictorial language is a miniature imprese now located at Waddesdon Manor. The artist, sitter, and commissioning circumstances are not definitively known, but the work has been ascribed to Nicholas Hilliard and reportedly has "a strong claim to be the earliest impresa portrait miniature" in England.⁷⁷³ From looking at the 5.9 by 4.5 centimetres object, it is easy to understand this assumption.⁷⁷⁴ The round image field is dominated by the face of the sitter, whose white ruff and black robe are visible down to his chest. His right hand supports his head, which creates a melancholic impression of the sitter. The white ruff is very detailed, as are his red-blond beard and curly hair. However, the most interesting aspect of this miniature is the choice of perspective. The whole portrait is surrounded by an armillary sphere, which has thin golden bars reminiscent of prison bars. The man grabs one of these bars with his left hand, as if underlining his captivity. The artist also added some inscriptions on the broader horizontal bars. The date of the portrait's production is indicated by the year 1569 inscribed in the background on either side of the sitter's head. In the foreground, closest to the beholder, an Italian motto in capital letters reads "SO·CHE·IO·SONO·INTESO".⁷⁷⁵

While this artefact is undoubtedly a very interesting piece for early modern English research, it has received remarkably little attention. Apart from a mention by Roy Strong, an article by Alexander Marr from 2020 offers the most thorough analysis of the miniature

⁷⁷² "NECRETROGRADIOR / NEC DEVIO". I do not go into detail about the interpretation of this motto at this point. Translation by MARR: "*An Early Impresa Miniature*", p. 3.

⁷⁷³ STRONG, Roy: *The English Renaissance Miniature*, London 1983, p. 58.

⁷⁷⁴ Nicholas Hilliard: *Man in an Armillary Sphere*, 1569, watercolour on vellum, 5.9 cm x 4.5 cm, collection of Waddesdon. It is illustrated in MARR: "*An Early Impresa Miniature*", p. 7.

⁷⁷⁵ Roy Strong has translated it into English as "I know I am in harmony." STRONG: *The English Renaissance Miniature*, p. 58.

so far. In his interpretation of the image, which relies on Strong's work, Marr understands the miniature in terms of an interplay between cosmic harmony and love for the queen: "a devoted and doting servant of the queen, the sitter, has been captivated by her divine glory, [...]"⁷⁷⁶

The next chapter explains how the *Hatton Portrait* used a similar system of references to the queen in another part of the portrait side. So far, the astronomical design exposes at least two threads of interpretation: first, it can be read in direct reference to Hatton as an individual and a particular time of his life; second, it can be read as a commentary of his courtly cosmos, in which he acted and lived as the queen's servant. While these two interpretations differ in focus, they are not contradictory in regard to how the iconography was made, and they offer multiple lines of inquiry leading to Hatton, the Elizabethan court, and his surroundings in the *Hatton Portrait*.

The golden hind and family arms

Hatton's arms can be seen in the top-right corner of the portrait side of the painting. The shield is divided into 11 fields, each of which contains one of Hatton's official arms (**Fig. 42**). The helmet and the mantling over the chief field are very detailed and carefully executed, with fine lines added to the golden colour layer to form the movement of the baroque plant decour. On top of the helmet is Hatton's cognisance, the golden hind, which is also elaborately detailed. The legs, back, and chin are formed by thin black lines, which create depth and shadow and impart a haptic quality to the animal.⁷⁷⁷

The design of Hatton's coat of arms varied throughout his career and can be evaluated as "a visible show of Hatton's rise to fame".⁷⁷⁸ In the late 1560s, Hatton's agent, Laurence Bostock, began to make genealogical inquiries on Hatton's behalf to draw out a pedigree for Hatton showing his noble lineage, which the College of Arms agreed to in 1580.⁷⁷⁹ Eventually, Bostock assigned a coat based on 10 quarterings consisting of the arms of all of the families with which Hatton "claimed kinship by virtue of these researchers".⁷⁸⁰ This coat included the arms of the Hattons of Hatton, the Holdenby family, and several other

⁷⁷⁶ MARR: "An Early Impresa Miniature", p. 7.

⁷⁷⁷ As shown in Chapter 3, Hatton's contemporaries knew this little animal to be a reference to Hatton.

⁷⁷⁸ DEACON: *The Courtier & The Queen*, p. 67; FLETCHER, W.Y.: "English Armorial Bookstamps and their Owners", in: *Bibliographica* 3 (1897), pp. 309–343, pp. 320–321.

⁷⁷⁹ For the procedure, see ADAMS: "The Heralds and the Elizabethan Court", pp. 7–10; CHESSMAN, Clive: "Grants and Conformations of Arms", in: RAMSAY, Nigel (Ed.): *Heralds and Heraldry in Shakespeare's England*, Donington 2014, pp. 68–104.

⁷⁸⁰ BROOKS: *Sir Christopher Hatton*, p. 80.

Cheshire families.⁷⁸¹ This coat of arms was the basis for Hatton’s signet of six quarterings with which he officially sealed his deeds.⁷⁸² In the archway of the family manor Holdenby, which dates to 1573, a shield with 14 quarterings shows that, depending on the occasion, the coat of arms was more or less detailed. While Hatton’s funeral monument was destroyed in a fire at St Paul’s Cathedral, an image of it survives in an etching in Dugdale’s *History of St. Paul’s Cathedral*, which shows a shield with 12 quarterings surrounded by the motto of the Garter with the golden hind on the top. Apart from an empty field in the bottom-right corner, the coat of arms is equivalent to the one in the portrait.⁷⁸³



Figure 42: *Hatton Portrait*, portrait side, detail of Hatton’s coat of arms and the inscription “Miles Creat[us] 15”, ©Northampton Museum and Art Gallery.

As Jane Eade notes in her short description of the *Hatton Portrait*, incorporating the sitter’s coat of arms was common in English 16th-century portraiture.⁷⁸⁴ Heraldry accompanied the rise of new men to power and their need to justify and display their heritage to successfully position themselves in these circles.⁷⁸⁵ This aim was echoed in the various interior design elements which incorporated heraldic decorations into the public spaces of houses. In his main manor, Holdenby, Hatton displayed the arms of the Northamptonshire nobility and gentry in the hall.⁷⁸⁶ Heraldry demanded a certain knowledge and understanding of

⁷⁸¹ The blue (azure) sign with the three golden (or) wheat sheaves were the arms of the Hatton family (top row, far left), which explains why it was the only one used by Hatton in, for example, his portrait as Chancellor of the University of Oxford. The red (gules) cross with the four birds belonged to the Goldborne family (top row, third from the left), the black eagle to the Brune family (top row, fourth from the left), the faded-silver (argent) cross on black to the Hallow family (middle row, second from the left), the black diagonal cross on yellow to the Hellesby family (middle row, third from left), and the white five-piece blossoms on blue to the Holdenby family (bottom row, far left). DEACON: *The Courtier & The Queen*, p. 52; KENK, Vida Carmen: “*The Importance of Plants in Heraldry*”, in: *Economic Botany 17/3* (1963), pp. 169–179; BROOKS: *Sir Christopher Hatton*, p. 81.

⁷⁸² IBID., p. 81. It is illustrated in DEACON: *The Courtier & The Queen*, p. 52.

⁷⁸³ BROOKS: *Sir Christopher Hatton*, p. 354. It is illustrated in DEACON: *The Courtier & The Queen*, p. 190.

⁷⁸⁴ EADE: “*Heraldry in Elizabethan and Jacobean Portraiture*”, p. 64.

⁷⁸⁵ This is discussed at length in Chapter 6.

⁷⁸⁶ GIROUARD: “*Elizabethan Holdenby II*”, p. 1400.

common signets in their regulated and elitist forms, and it can thus be understood as both a marker of Hatton's personal achievements and a reference to his position within the courtly circle. In the *Hatton Portrait*, the coat of arms emphasises that the painting is a representative piece made for close observation and examination, which is further communicated through the use of multiple inscriptions.

To the right of the armour, an extra field is separated on the same pinkish background as the arms. Another vertical black line delineates the field. In a lighter, white-rose colour, the words "Miles. / Creat[us]: / 15" are written beneath one another. Previous researchers have concluded that this field was one of two that were left unfinished.⁷⁸⁷ The Latin phrase, which means "Knight / created / 15", suggests that this field was supposed to be filled in with the year that Hatton became a knight, which would in turn indicate that the picture was made before Hatton was knighted at Windsor Castle on November 11, 1577. Alternatively, the dates might not have been filled in even though they were known, or the inscription could refer to another official position at the court.⁷⁸⁸ These inscriptions may have been left unfinished for some reason, but it seems highly unlikely that two numbers would be simply forgotten or overlooked, especially since the first two numbers of the year were already painted into the overall carefully planned design. Therefore, it is questionable whether this inscription was indeed incomplete.

Another possible reading of this number is as the Elizabethan calculation of the year, the so-called regnal year. Elizabeth's official documents were often dated by counting from the year she was crowned, 1558, as the first year of her reign. The year "Elizabeth 15" would thus be 15 years into her sovereignty, or 1572. Notably, Hatton received many honours from the queen in 1572; he was named Keeper of Corfe Castle and Admiral of Purbeck, entered the parliament as Knight of the Shore of Northamptonshire, was appointed Captain of the queen's bodyguards, and started accompanying the queen on her summer progress, amongst other honours.⁷⁸⁹ It could be that "Miles / Creat[us] / 15" refers to the year 1572, which was very significant in Hatton's life.

⁷⁸⁷ BEER: "Astronomical Dating of Works of Art", p. 215; MOSELEY: "A Portrait of Sir Christopher Hatton", p. 375; EADE: "Heraldry in Elizabethan and Jacobean Portraiture", p. 64.

⁷⁸⁸ Beer has proposed that the Latin word *Miles* can also be translated as "Officer", thus reading the whole inscription as "Made Officer in the Year 15...". BEER: "Astronomical Dating of Works of Art", p. 215.

⁷⁸⁹ BROOKS: *Sir Christopher Hatton*, p. 58, p. 119; FORREST: *Ralph Treswell's Survey*, p. 2; NICOLAS: *Memoirs of the Life and Times of Sir Christopher Hatton*, pp. 8–20; VINES: *Neither Fire nor Steel*, p. 6.

So far, all discussion of the nature of the portrait makes it seem like a much more personal picture, though representative at the same time. The regnal year was usually used in official documents, which clearly connected to Elizabeth as the state sovereign. Hence, beholders of the *Hatton Portrait* would need to have specific knowledge in order to read it properly, which is consistent with the demanding character of the painting. Furthermore, using a date that automatically connected to the figure of Elizabeth when speaking about Hatton’s “miles creatus” would make it a personal statement, though also official. With this number, the portrait would connect Hatton’s status to his sovereign, to whom he owed so much. Given these circumstances, it is highly probable that Hatton was referencing his position in the queen’s favour and wanted to present a sign of his loyalty. While this question must remain open in this study, it encourages a different reading of an otherwise ‘unfinished’ element of the *Hatton Portrait*, which was so carefully painted in many other respects.⁷⁹⁰

The next inscription can be found in the centre of the upper half of the picture against a yellow background. This change in colouring creates a visual separation from the reddish backgrounds on the left and right. In the middle, Hatton’s motto “TANDEM SI” is written out in green capital letters (**Fig. 43**). Hatton used this motto in his later years, including in maps of his estates dating to around 1580, and it appears in other portraits of Hatton as well.⁷⁹¹ Perhaps its most interesting use is in William Segar’s *The Book of Honour and Arms* from 1590, where the author presents a dedication to Hatton that includes Hatton’s



Figure 43: *Hatton Portrait*, portrait side, detail of Hatton’s motto “Tandem Si” and the inscriptions on the left-hand side, ©Northampton Museum and Art Gallery.

⁷⁹⁰ A problem with this theory is that Elizabeth’s name, which is probably the most important part of regnal dating, is not included. So far, it remains an interesting but never theorised possibility.

⁷⁹¹ EADE: “*Heraldry in Elizabethan and Jacobean Portraiture*”, p. 64. It is also included in other portraits of Hatton. See, for example, NPG 2162, which is believed to be based on a portrait from 1589 and is discussed in Chapter 3.

coat of arms.⁷⁹² As mentioned, the *Hatton Portrait* is believed to have been made in Segar's workshop. Although this inscription does not prove Segar's authorship, it strengthens the assumption that the portrait was made during Hatton's later years at the court rather than early in his courtly career.

While Hatton used many mottoes throughout his career, "Tandem Si" was the most cryptic, as it can be understood in numerous ways.⁷⁹³ It has been translated as "(it will) finally (be reached) if" by Arthur Beer, as "if at length" by Tarnya Cooper, and as "if at last" by Jane Eade.⁷⁹⁴ While these translations differ only slightly, they reveal how much a single word can shift the meaning of the whole motto. Still, a commonality of these translations is the grammatical structure of conditionality, which does not specify what the exclamation depends on. Given the game-loving and intellectual culture around Hatton, it can be assumed that the motto was intentionally ambiguous to complement the encrypted and demanding character of the whole picture.

In the upper half of the picture, another group of inscriptions is inserted in a chart composed of fine lines. At the top of the columns, "Die", "Mensr", and "Anno" are written from left to right. To the left, the rows are labelled "Natus", "Exeratus", and "Inhumatus", respectively.⁷⁹⁵ This area has been read as a chart of the three crucial dates of Hatton's life and death.⁷⁹⁶ The use of these Latin words, which mean "Born", "Raised", and "Buried", is logical for this theory. An important portrait would specify the day, month ("Mensr" is to be read as "Mense"), and year of Hatton's birthday, but, yet again, these elements are

⁷⁹² DEACON: *The Courtier & The Queen*, p. 115; BROOKS: *Sir Christopher Hatton*, p. 392. Brooks has further identified the use of this motto for Hatton in William Dugdale's *Origines Juridicales; Or Historical Memorials of the English Laws, Courts of Justice, Forms of Tryal, Punishment in Cases Criminal, Law-Writers, Law-Books* from 1666.

⁷⁹³ Other mottoes used by Hatton during the 1570s were "virtus tutissima cassis", "Cerva charissima et gratissimus hinnulus Pro 5", in accordance with his cognisance, the golden hind, and "Foelix Infortunatus". The latter likely derives from the anthology of poems *A Hundreth Sundrie Flowres* by George Gascoigne. It is speculated that Hatton wrote one of those poems. See BROOKS: *Sir Christopher Hatton*, pp. 135–144; DEACON: *The Courtier & The Queen*, pp. 203–204.

⁷⁹⁴ BEER: "Astronomical Dating of Works of Art", p. 215; COOPER/ORRACK: "Double-Sided Emblematic Portrait of Sir Christopher Hatton", p. 86; EADE: "Heraldry in Elizabethan and Jacobean Portraiture", p. 64.

⁷⁹⁵ Tarnya Cooper is the only researcher to attend to the fact that "Mensr", not "Mense", is written. She has recommended understanding the whole triad as "Dic-Mensr-Anno" (This table speaks the year). COOPER/ORRACK: "Double-Sided Emblematic Portrait of Sir Christopher Hatton", p. 87. Indeed, the design of the lowercase letter "e" allows for speculation that it is actually a lowercase "c". Unfortunately, no other lowercase "c" is written in the portrait side inscriptions or on the emblem side.

⁷⁹⁶ BEER: "Astronomical Dating of Works of Art", p. 215; EADE: "Heraldry in Elizabethan and Jacobean Portraiture", p. 64; COOPER/ORRACK: "Double-Sided Emblematic Portrait of Sir Christopher Hatton", p. 87.

supposedly unfinished.⁷⁹⁷ At this point, in the greater context of the portrait side, it is odd that “exaratus” appears twice. As a word for a sort of promotion, it is already present in the “Miles Creatus” next to the coat of arms. It is possible that it refers to a different advancement in position that Hatton achieved during his career. Ultimately, the chart remains one of the most puzzling parts of the portrait side, and no alternative meaning has been theorised yet. While the inscription “Natus / Exeratus / Inhumatus” may reference a popular verse or proverb in Elizabethan society, its combination with the other texts in the chart is striking.

As part of the *Hatton Portrait*, the upper-left corner represents the overall geometric design of the portrait side. The top half of the painting is divided into five squares of three different colours: red, a rose-tone on each side, and yellow in the middle. A different tone of yellow is used in the lower half of the panel. Lines separate the yellow from the red and the left and right rose fields from the yellow field at the bottom.⁷⁹⁸ When viewed from afar, this coloured division of the portrait side gives the impression of separate fields, which helps to add structure to the plethora of elements on the panel. At the same time, they are all marked as parts of the design surrounding the portrait of Hatton in the centre.

⁷⁹⁷ In the infrared-reflectographic analysis, a preparational construct of lines around the three words “Natus”, “Exaratus”, and “Inhumatus” is visible, as if forming a chart. It seems, though, that the chart was meant to start slightly more to the left. I am thankful to Abby Granville, the Paintings Conservator of the NPG, for sharing this information. GRANVILLE, Abby: Personal correspondence, orally, 20.01.2020.

⁷⁹⁸ Jane Eade has called this division a “geometric quartering of a heraldic shield”. EADE: *Heraldry in Elizabethan and Jacobean Portraiture*, p. 64. However, the “Anno” is the only inscription that overlaps with the yellow field where Hatton’s motto “TANDEM SI” is integrated, thus breaking the separation. It would have been more convenient for the symmetry of the composition if the whole “Die, Mensr, Anno” column had started one gap to the left, as the three inscriptions would all have been on the corresponding red field, and the yellow field would not have been disturbed by the “Anno” and the vertical line bordering it. It remains unclear whether this compositional detail is an intentional, meaningful flaw.

9. An Astronomer and a Painter

In the lower part of the portrait side, two scenes and one inscription field complete the composition. As in the upper half, the pictorial field is divided into three parts. The middle part is coloured in plain yellow with bright yellow letters written over it. Unfortunately, this area of the painting has been significantly damaged, so only cryptic fragments of the inscription are visible (**Fig. 44**). Cooper and Eade have read this inscription as “S[...]i[...]Spesmea” and translated it as “if my hope”.⁷⁹⁹ However, Beer and Moseley have expressed doubts about this reading since the spacing of the letters suggests that there were originally more letters between those that are still visible.⁸⁰⁰ Moseley has instead proposed the reading “fides mea spes mea”, a message which would “exactly fit Hatton's religious position, and would be entirely appropriate for a memorial [...] painting”.⁸⁰¹

While Moseley's overall interpretation should be questioned, his suggested reading does match the visual cues on the panel, including the spacing and the possible combinations of letters in Latin.⁸⁰² The English translation of this phrase is “my faith, my hope”. As a concept, it refers to the first two of the three theological virtues “Fides, Spes et Caritas”,

⁷⁹⁹ COOPER/ORRACK: “*Double-Sided Emblematic Portrait of Sir Christopher Hatton*”, pp. 86–87; EADE: “*Heraldry in Elizabethan and Jacobean Portraiture*”, p. 64.

⁸⁰⁰ MOSELEY: “*A Portrait of Sir Christopher Hatton*”, p. 375; BEER: “*Astronomical Dating of Works of Art*”, p. 215. Beer has suggested multiple possible readings, such as “Fides mea spes mea” and “Simil(ite[r] ac spes mea” (In the same way also my hope).

⁸⁰¹ MOSELEY: “*A Portrait of Sir Christopher Hatton*”, p. 375. Moseley has not explained his understanding of Hatton's religious position or if he is referring to rumours that Hatton was a Catholic.

⁸⁰² More information on this area can be obtained from the infrared reflectographic image results made during the analysis at the NPG. From a close examination of this area, the outlines of “PESMA” are undoubtedly visible on the right. Next to the “P” on the left, the serpentine form of an “S” can also be made out. The left side is far more difficult. Again, an “S” is easily seen because of its form. Next to it on the right, the part of the letter which has previously been read as an “I” actually appears to be half of an “M” since the right side of the letter, the vertical line and the diagonal, can be seen. The space between the “S” and this letter would be large enough to fit an “M”. If this were indeed “SI”, then there is no reason why the “S” and the “I” would be written with so much space between them. The next letter to the right seems to be an “E” or an “L”, as the bottom horizontal line of the letter is visible. In Latin, as in English, the consecutive combination of “M” and “L” is not very common, so it is safe to say that this letter used to be an “E”. Thus, the left word reads as “SME” so far, and there is good reason to think that there were more letters, at least to the left of these, given the space available. Unfortunately, the extensive damage prevents the detection of any further writing in the technical images. I must thank Abby Granville for providing the results of the infrared reflectography. With this new reading of the inscriptions of “SME” and “SPESMEA”, some additional information might be gained from the context and a comparison with the other inscriptions in the painting. At the top-centre part of the painting, the inscription “TANDEM SI” is right-aligned, and there is a large gap between the two words. Since the position of the two inscription fields is already almost symmetrical, we can assume that symmetry, or at least analogy, was sought in the design and position of the letters as well. Thus, if the bottom inscription also started in the right corner of its field, there must have been other letters in front of “SME”. The space would accommodate three to four letters, and there is enough space to fit an “A” after the “SME”. Therefore, Arthur Beer's suggested reading of “Fidesmea” seems very likely.



Figure 44: *Hatton Portrait*, portrait side, detail of the inscription in the middle-lower part, ©Northampton Museum and Art Gallery.

meaning faith, hope, and love (or charity).⁸⁰³ This reading underlines Moseley’s point about the inscription reflecting the religious position of the sitter.

However, such an interpretation has one fault: the third part, “Caritas” (love), is absent from the picture. The spaces to the left and right of “SPESMEA” do not seem wide enough for “CARITASMEA” to fit, although only “CARITAS” could. While this “FIDESMEA SPESMEA” may have had another meaning, it remains possible that “Caritas” was omitted on purpose, and Hatton, as the commissioner of the painting, wanted to shift the meaning of the phrase away from the trio of faith, hope, and love and more towards a sentiment focused on faith and hope.

As illustrated in the previous chapter, the position of Hatton’s portrait at the centre of an astrological design made it possible to connect his likeness with the broader courtly system. The same could be suspected of the inscriptions. As texts crafted for a learned audience, they were made to bewilder and evoke multiple layers of meaning, which courtly beholders would have to decipher and discuss. Besides the inscriptions, the two small figures of an astronomer and a painter in the lower part of the portrait side add to the painting’s challenging character.

The yellow “SPESMEA” field in the lower part of the portrait side is flanked by two wooden pillars. While these pillars frame the inscription field, thus dividing the painted area, they also serve as chairs for two little figures. On the left, a painter in elegant courtly clothes paints a portrait; on the right, a similar-looking man wearing a long black robe uses

⁸⁰³ RZIHA, John: *Perfecting Human Actions. St. Thomas Aquinas on Human Participation in Eternal Law*, Washington (D.C.) 2009, pp. 143–149; ANNAS, Julia: *The Morality of Happiness*, Oxford 1993, pp. 73–84.

a stick in his right hand to point to an armillary sphere (**Fig. 45**).⁸⁰⁴ This armillary sphere — a complex, golden instrument — is being carried on the back of an older man with a long white beard. The signs of the zodiac are displayed on the broad band in the middle of the sphere, which the astrologer points to with his long wand.⁸⁰⁵ If the armillary sphere is understood as a representation of the sky and a schematic illustration of the celestial orbits used for measurement, then the figure can be identified as Atlas.⁸⁰⁶ The Greek titan Atlas was punished by Zeus and doomed to lift Uranus, the celestial heaven, from Gaia, the Earth. In this painting, Atlas is dressed in red clothing and wears a golden crown on his head. Unfortunately, since the part of the panel where Atlas is represented also has extensive paint loss, a closer description is very difficult.⁸⁰⁷ The only well-preserved part of Atlas that still retains more detail is his right hand, which tightly holds the astronomical instrument by a handle. His left hand has suffered from its position at the edge of the painting on the cropped side, as discussed more thoroughly in a later section.

Interestingly, Atlas is the one element on the whole portrait side that has attracted almost no attention in prior research. In fact, the figure is not even mentioned in some publications.⁸⁰⁸ While the armillary sphere has been widely recognised, there has been no commentary on its pictorial combination with Atlas. The repetition that appears within the picture has also been neglected. As an instrument displaying the signs of the zodiac, the armillary sphere echoes the depiction of the horoscope surrounding Hatton. Essentially, the zodiac signs appear twice in the same image, just in different forms: once as creatures around Hatton and another time as symbols on the armillary sphere. This second depiction of the zodiac signs reveals a relation between the two pictorial elements. Observing the astrologer, who holds the stick in his hand, there could be a compositional reason to include Atlas; for instance, Atlas might have been needed to have the armillary sphere in a certain position while not disturbing the manner of the picture as a whole.⁸⁰⁹

⁸⁰⁴ In Arthur Beer's opinion, these two figures are not identical but nonetheless represent the same person: the sitter of the portrait, Hatton. BEER: "*Astronomical Dating of Works of Art*", p. 215.

⁸⁰⁵ Beer has mentioned that the armillary sphere's specific design could not have been adequate for such an instrument in Hatton's time. IBID., p. 211.

⁸⁰⁶ The motif of Atlas is discussed in PANOFSKY: *Studies in Iconology*, pp. 20–21.

⁸⁰⁷ Unfortunately, since the part of the panel where Atlas is represented also seems to have been damaged, a closer description is very difficult.

⁸⁰⁸ Moseley, for example, has not mentioned Atlas at all when describing the astronomer and the armillary sphere. MOSELEY: "*A Portrait of Sir Christopher Hatton*", p. 373. Beer has not mentioned Atlas either. BEER: "*Astronomical Dating of Works of Art*", p. 211.

⁸⁰⁹ Again, a publication of the results found in the technical analysis done at the NPG would reveal more insights to this area.



Figure 45: *Hatton Portrait*, portrait side, detail of the astronomer and Atlas, ©Northampton Museum and Art Gallery.

Given that the astronomer seems to be pointing to an exact position on the armillary sphere, Moseley and Beer have questioned which astrological date he is referencing.⁸¹⁰ A close examination reveals that he is pointing directly between two signs of the zodiac, namely Virgo and Leo.⁸¹¹ According to Moseley, the two constellations would meet in late August.⁸¹² This estimation does not align with the day Hatton was knighted, which was in November, or with any other known date of importance in Hatton's life.⁸¹³ However, in general, this concealed reference to a vital time in Hatton's life again represents only one reading of the iconography in this area of the portrait side.

In connection with Hatton's position at the court, the armillary sphere is also an interesting symbol to include in a picture of an Elizabethan favourite. As one of the most complex

⁸¹⁰ BEER: "Astronomical Dating of Works of Art", p. 211; MOSELEY: "A Portrait of Sir Christopher Hatton", p. 373.

⁸¹¹ At first sight, the sign of Virgo seems to be that of Aquarius. This must surely have been just a careless mistake since, apart from this field, the order of the signs is correct, just as in the horoscope around Hatton. There is one other curious element of the zodiac signs in the armillary sphere, however: Moseley has noted that the sign at the top of the sphere, where one would expect Libra to be, is that of Libra's planetary ruler, Venus. See MOSELEY: "A Portrait of Sir Christopher Hatton", p. 378, note 2.

⁸¹² *IBID.*, p. 373.

⁸¹³ One possibility is that this date was (or was close to) Hatton's birthday. While Hatton's birthday is not known, it would not be unusual to include that date in such a personal portrait.

symbols of the time, the armillary sphere was a frequently used reference to the queen in Elizabethan portraiture. Even though few articles have engaged with this royal symbol, it appears strikingly often in portraits of the queen. For example, she wears armillary sphere earrings in the *Ditchley Portrait* (c. 1592), and her sleeves are decorated with little spheres in the *Rainbow Portrait* (c. 1603).⁸¹⁴ Courtiers also used the symbol to refer to their sovereign. In Nicholas Hilliard's miniature of George Clifford, Earl of Cumberland (c. 1590), an armillary sphere is joined by olive branches on the sleeves of the sitter's heavy costume.⁸¹⁵ In Antonis Mors' portrait of Sir Henry Lee from 1568, the sleeves of the royal favourite are decorated with depictions of an armillary sphere together with true love knots (**Fig. 46**).⁸¹⁶ While there are more examples of the armillary sphere serving as a symbolic reference to Elizabeth, these short descriptions already evidence its frequent use in Elizabethan times.⁸¹⁷

The meaning of the armillary sphere is multi-layered, however, and it combines different associations and traditions. Until Frances Yates reconstructed the early modern discourse on the armillary sphere as an emblematic sign associated with intelligence and worship, it was mainly perceived as a specifically Protestant symbol of the Christian faith.⁸¹⁸ In such a religious context, the association of the queen with the armillary sphere casts her as the defender of the reformed faith and a guarantor of its stability.⁸¹⁹ The spectrum of interpretations has been further enriched by Jean Wilson in an article from 2006, where she proposes that the armillary sphere in portraits of Elizabeth draws a connection between the queen and Urania, the Renaissance muse of astronomy-astrology.⁸²⁰ Wilson reconstructs the English 16th-century use of Urania as both a symbol of higher learning and an alternative

⁸¹⁴ Marcus Gheeraerts the Younger: *The Ditchley Portrait*, c. 1592, oil on canvas, 241.3 cm x 152.4 cm, National Portrait Gallery London. For more on this portrait, see STRONG: *Gloriana*, pp. 135–141. Isaac Oliver (attr.): *The Rainbow Portrait of Queen Elizabeth*, c. 1603, oil on canvas, 127 cm x 99.1 cm, Hatfield House. This portrait is discussed in STRONG: *The Cult of Elizabeth*, pp. 50–55.

⁸¹⁵ Nicholas Hilliard: *George Clifford, 3rd Earl of Cumberland*, c. 1590, mixed paints on vellum, 25.8 cm x 17.6 cm. WILSON, Jean: "Queen Elizabeth I as Urania", in: *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 69 (2006), pp. 151–173, pp. 151–153.

⁸¹⁶ Antonis Mor: *Sir Henry Lee*, 1568, oil on panel, 64.2 cm x 53.3 cm, National Portrait Gallery London, NPG 2095. Here, it has been theorised that the armillary sphere acted as a symbolic sign of love for Elizabeth or for Lee as a courtly lover, as he is dressed in her personal colours, black and white. STRONG: *Gloriana*, p. 139.

⁸¹⁷ More examples are discussed by Jean Wilson in her article on the queen's celestial symbolism. WILSON: "Queen Elizabeth I as Urania".

⁸¹⁸ YATES, Frances: *Astrea. The Imperial Theme in the Sixteenth Century*, London 1975, pp. 29–87, p. 217. See also WILSON: "Queen Elizabeth I as Urania", p. 162.

⁸¹⁹ STRONG: *Gloriana*, p. 140.

⁸²⁰ WILSON: "Queen Elizabeth I as Urania", p. 163.

representation of the goddess Aphrodite, which evokes the interplay of sacred and profane love.⁸²¹

Thus, the depiction of an armillary sphere in the *Hatton Portrait* could have a variety of connotations. While it signifies the celestial sphere — a space which can be measured and used to hint at certain moments of life — it also represents Hatton's direct courtly



Figure 46: Antonis Mor: *Sir Henry Lee*, 1568, oil on panel, 64.2 cm x 53.3 cm, NPG 2095, ©National Portrait Gallery London.

⁸²¹ For instance, the portrayal of Elizabeth as a Muse would not contradict the concept of her holy virginity. Since Urania is also understood as a motherly figure, there would still be room for the possibility of marriage. This subject was important in the earlier years of Elizabeth's reign and continued to be relevant until the marriage negotiations with the Duke of Anjou around 1580, in which Hatton also played a part at the court. IBID.

surroundings and the queen.⁸²² Simultaneously, it demonstrates Hatton's knowledge of the courtly discourse and fashions him in the plethora of conversations it may engage. The diverse meanings of the armillary sphere oscillate between the Elizabethan court, Renaissance discourses, the queen, and Hatton himself.

Between Atlas and the astrologer, another striking pictorial element can be seen on the panel: a scene of small, pointy rooftops and windows in blurry greenish-white and grey colours. In the front, a grey half-circle gives the impression of an archway (**Fig. 47**). In the background of this little scene, mountains and a minimalistic sky form the rural setting of the building. This construction of a large house and an archway recalls Hatton's grand estate, Holdenby.⁸²³ The particular detail of the archway could be a visual allusion to this estate, which was Hatton's most ambitious building project. Judging from the relevant dates, it is indeed possible that this detail references Holdenby, as work on the estate started in the 1570s and concluded around 1583. If 1580 is accepted as the year of the portrait's production, Holdenby would have been near completion and of great importance to Hatton, who wished to establish it as his family home and one day welcome the queen there.⁸²⁴



Figure 47: *Hatton Portrait*, portrait side, detail of the house in the background, ©Northampton Museum and Art Gallery.

⁸²² In combination with the figure of the astrologer, one could think of the meaning of some emblems of the time which showed a scholar with a globe, a book, and death. Here, the meaning is described as the immortality of the spirit: "Disce bonas artes, et opes contemne caducas./ Vivitvr ingenio; caetera mortis ervnt." See HENKEL/SCHÖNE (Ed.): *Emblemata*, pp. 1055–1056.

⁸²³ Admittedly, Hatton had several houses. However, his main residence in London certainly did not fit into that background, and his other properties in Corfe and Purbeck were seemingly of lesser importance to him compared to his heritage estate, Holdenby. See Chapter 3.

⁸²⁴ See Chapter 3. DEACON: *The Courtier & The Queen*, p. 93.

In its position between the astronomer and the armillary sphere in the *Hatton Portrait*, the depiction of Holdenby is symbolically charged within the image. By combining the matters of time and astronomy with the estate, Hatton was surely hoping the stars would align for his big project. Building a house in the 16th century was a time-consuming but crucial endeavour for a courtier to secure his status at the court. Hatton had to wait not only for the date of Holdenby's completion but also for the day that the queen would come to visit the estate, which would assure him of his standing in the courtly society. If the *Hatton Portrait* was thought of as a testament or reflection, then his family estate would have been a likely element to include.⁸²⁵

With this subtle detail and its position in the portrait, Hatton incorporated a personal element which placed the mythological and concealing subjects of Atlas and the astrologer in the context of his own world and life. An inscription added to the scenery underlines the reading of this small picture of Hatton's estate as a testament to his own person and status. This inscription, which comes from the astrologer's mouth in a manner reminiscent of modern speech bubbles, says, “[ae]ternitati finiti[s]”, which can be interpreted as either “he destined to eternity” or “he destined from eternity”.⁸²⁶ Holdenby, which was expected to house the Hatton family for generations to come, is depicted here in Hatton's personal image for eternity. However, Hatton's position at the court and his devotion to the queen, which are referenced in multiple areas on the portrait side, were also meant to be portrayed as everlasting and loyal. At the same time, the inscription implies that the picture itself is “made for eternity”, in contrast to the mortality of the individual it portrays. This small, detailed scene in the bottom-right part of the *Hatton Portrait* presents itself as a highly charged meta-text which negotiates between the detail in the picture, the picture as a whole, and painting in general.

As for the other figure on the left-hand side, the painter works on an easel painting of a portrait of a bearded man (**Fig. 48**). It is apparent that the lower half of the *Hatton Portrait* aims for a sort of symmetry in its design; with his position and even some parts of his depiction, the painter is presented as a pendant to the astrologer. However, his posture is

⁸²⁵ It was surely intended to be home for the Hatton family, even after Hatton's death. When Hatton died in 1591, he left behind many financial problems and no legitimate heir. The estate was inherited by his nephew and adopted heir, William Newport-Hatton, who had to sell it shortly after. Kirby, on the other hand, remained in the Hatton family and was the home of Hatton's later famous descendants Christopher Hatton, First Baron Hatton, and his son, also named Christopher. The present owner, the Earl of Winchilsea, is descended from that line. BROOKES: *Sir Christopher Hatton*, pp. 153–166.

⁸²⁶ MOSELEY: “*A Portrait of Sir Christopher Hatton*”, p. 373.

very different, and he is positioned more actively. Although he is sitting, he seems to be moving his body and needing space. His right leg is extended out and touches the ground just in front of the easel. Meanwhile, the astrologer is seated comfortably and appears to be stable on the pillar, only moving to point with his wand.

Contrary to the astrologer's side of the picture, the scenery around the painter is minimalistic. The painter holds a palette in his left hand, and he approaches the surface of his portrait with a long brush in his right hand. The colours on his palette are yellow, white, incarnate, red, and black, which are also found in the portrait. The figure in the portrait is dressed in the same courtly attire as Hatton, the astrologer, and the painter, including a white ruffed collar, black robe, and carefully styled beard.⁸²⁷

Several studies have shown that the motive of a painter painting a portrait was not uncommon during the Renaissance. Judith Dundas, for example, has illustrated the wide use of this motive and its moral implications. In her essay "Emblems on the Art of Painting: Pictura and Purpose", she presents several European emblems which contain artists at easels.⁸²⁸ In most cases, the painter painting his portrait is associated with the story of the famous ancient painter Apelles, which can be found in Pliny's texts. In this narrative, Apelles sets up one of his paintings in public in order to hear the passing audience's remarks about the picture. When a shoemaker criticises the painting, Apelles steps out and tells him to stick to his own business. This story became a popular exemplar of the proverb "Ne Sutor Ultra Crepidam" (Shoemaker, not beyond the shoe).⁸²⁹

On the one hand, the persona of the shoemaker embodies the need for a person to focus on what they know. On the other hand, Apelles exemplifies the inconsistent person who solicits feedback but cannot handle it once it is received. In the case of the shoemaker, it is better to be aware of one's own position and place than to claim to know things that one should not.

⁸²⁷ Moseley has stated that the painter made the portrait of Hatton to create a portrait within the portrait. IBID. See also STOICHITA: *Das selbstbewusste Bild*, p. 275. This idea is very intriguing; however, apart from that observation, there is no other sign of a connection between the portrait of Hatton in the horoscope and the portrait on the easel.

⁸²⁸ DUNDAS: "Emblems on the Art of Paintings".

⁸²⁹ IBID.



Figure 48: *Hatton Portrait*, portrait side, detail of the painter and the easel, ©Northampton Museum and Art Gallery.

Another interesting example of the iconography of a painter with his easel can be found in an object analysed by H.L. Meakin: a series of panels made around 1605 that once decorated a walk-in wardrobe. In these panels, Meakin found one plate showing a male artist sitting in front of a painting that rests on an easel. Here, the painter works on a portrait of a woman. Although the depiction is unfinished, it is already quite detailed; the woman has coloured cheeks and eyes which seem to meet the artist's gaze.⁸³⁰ This scene also includes a motto: "Die mihi, qualis eris?" (Tell me, what will you be?). The fact that the portrait is of a woman could be explained by the panel's audience, the Protestant Gentlewoman Lady Anne Bacon Drury, who commissioned it. Since the panels decorated the area where Lady Bacon dressed herself, the picture and motto can be understood as encouraging self-reflection or self-knowledge.⁸³¹ Meakin has interpreted the whole panel arrangement in the cultural context of Protestant meditation. When looking at the panels, the beholder, who would presumably be part of the intellectual milieu around Lady Drury, would also be prompted to look inwards and reflect on their thoughts and faith.⁸³²

Regarding the figure of the painter in the *Hatton Portrait*, two aspects should be noted. First, in the early modern era, the consciously used motive of a painter working on a portrait

⁸³⁰ MEAKIN, H. L.: *The Painted Closet of Lady Anne Bacon Drury*, Farnham 2013, p. 169. The plate is illustrated in this publication in Color Plate 18.

⁸³¹ *IBID.*, pp. 169–170.

⁸³² This is examined in detail in *IBID.*, pp. 107–123.

could, as a pictorial element within a picture, be understood in connection to the beholders of the painting who would closely observe it. Second, the same motive served to create a space for self-reflection by the owner of the picture and other audiences, such as fellow courtiers.

Just as in the panel from Lady Drury's wardrobe, a motto accompanies the painter in the *Hatton Portrait*. In an analogous manner to the astrologer pendant on the other side of the portrait's lower part, an inscription field comes from the painter's mouth, which reads "[ae]ternitati pinxit" (he painted for eternity).⁸³³ Again, this inscription makes a reference to eternity — a place and time beyond the here and now — just like the astrologer's inscription. Additionally, it assumes the same self-referential character detected in the pendant's inscription. Whether or not the painter is speaking about himself, the expression "he painted for eternity" addresses the process of painting inside of the painted picture in a double sense that involves both the large portrait of Hatton and the small detail of the portrait beside the motto.

By observing this scene, beholders were invited to contemplate their own positions and the courtly discourse around the presented motive. The painter painting a portrait would evoke a space of self-reflection and awareness amongst courtly beholders. A learned Elizabethan who was aware of the implications of this motive would interpret this scene as a warning or, rather, a reminder of how to present oneself and the effect of that presentation on one's status as a courtier. At the same time, the portrait of the model courtier presented in the lower part of the picture evokes the discourse on defining the perfect courtier. In the middle of the scene, Hatton is fashioned in this discussion of the ideal man of his position and his achievements in the queen's service.

In this detail of the painter and various other areas on the portrait side, a great amount of consciousness is evident in the meticulous arrangement of details to form a connection to Christopher Hatton, whose likeness is always in the centre of the composition. References to dates from Hatton's life, special occasions in his career, places of importance to him, and his heritage are made in the picture.⁸³⁴ More than once, the ambiguity of distinct elements complicated their interpretation. Still, numerous aspects of Hatton's life and circle are

⁸³³ MOSELEY: "*A Portrait of Sir Christopher Hatton*", p. 373.

⁸³⁴ Tarnya Cooper has read the picture as a "commemorative tablet [which] appears to be designed as a testament to Hatton's achievements [...]". COOPER/ORRACK: "*Double-Sided Emblematic Portrait of Sir Christopher Hatton*", p. 87. I fully agree with this interpretation, though I do not believe that it pays full tribute to the complexity of the pictorial arrangements.

offered to the beholder. The playful yet puzzling character of different iconographical elements reveals itself as the driving factor of the whole composition. The picture challenges the beholder to fully engage with its appearance and make connections within and beyond what is shown. It was designed for a certain audience which would build a particular kind of conversation around the viewing of the image.⁸³⁵ These observations are tested in the following chapters of Part III, which analyse the emblem side of the *Hatton Portrait* (Fig. 49).

⁸³⁵ However, it is not said that this object should be called a “conversation piece”, which is a term that came into use in the late Stuart period, after Elizabethan times. EDWARDS, Ralph: *Early Conversation Pictures from the Middle Ages to about 1730*, London 1954, p. 9.



Figure 49: Unknown: *Portrait of Sir Christopher Hatton*, c. 1580, oil on panel, 96 cm x 72.3 cm, emblem side, ©Northampton Museum and Art Gallery.

10. Time and a Cryptic Text

Time or opportunity?

The emblem side of the *Hatton Portrait* displays allegorical scenery.⁸³⁶ Visually, the image is horizontally divided into three parts. The top shows a bearded old man with wings spread out from his back and his feet. A complex figurative scene is presented in the middle, while the bottom part contains a long Latin inscription.

The figure at the top of the emblem side wears only a red scarf, which curves around his body from his right shoulder. He has no hair on his head apart from a long lock which grows from his forehead. An inscription around the old man labels him as “TEMP:PUS”, or Father Time. This visually connects the figure to the long Latin text, which repeats the reference to time in the capitalised header:

DIALOGUS DE TEMPORE / cuius opus; quondam lysippi dic mihi guis tu; tempus quidnam operae / est tibi; cuncta domo, cur tam summa tenes; propero super omnia / pernix, cur celeres plantae; me leuis aura vehit cur tenuem tua dextra / tenet tonsoria falcem; omnia nostra fecans redit acuta manus, cur tibi / tam longi pendet a fronte capilli, fronte guidem facilis sum bene posse / capi cur tibi posterior pars est a vertice calva; posterior nemo / prendere me poterit, talem me finxit quondam sytiomus hospes, et / monitorem hoc me vestibulo posuit, pulchrum opus artificem laudat / pro iuppiter o guam, debuit hoc pigros sollicita[r]e viros.⁸³⁷

Since knowledge of the Latin language was expected of the ideal courtier, such an inscription in a courtly painting is not surprising.⁸³⁸ A Latin inscription might be included to make references to classical literature and cue courtiers to demonstrate their knowledge in this area. The English translation of the inscription is as follows:

A DIALOGUE OF TIME

Whose work are you? Of Lysippus, once. Tell me who you are. Time. What do you do? I subdue all things. Why do you so occupy the highest place? Swift, I hurry over all things. Why are your feet swift? The light breeze carries me. Why does your shearer's right hand hold a slender crescent? My

⁸³⁶ This sub-chapter is based on findings previously published in MINNIGERODE/VON: “*Because No One Can Seize me from Behind*”.

⁸³⁷ Several transcripts of this Latin text have been presented before, while some of them misread letters, which could be a result of the lack of high-resolution images. The “sytiomus” in the third line from below seems to be a spelling mistake in the text and should be “sycionius” (of Sicyon). Moseley already transcribed it accordingly. MOSELEY: “*A Portrait of Sir Christopher Hatton*”, p. 374. However, it is not clear if this mistake was made because artist or commissioner did not know the Latin language or for another reason. I have already addressed this question in MINNIGERODE/VON: “*Because No One Can Seize me from Behind*”, p. 331, note 28.

⁸³⁸ This is discussed in Chapter 1.

severe hand, as it cuts, makes all things mine. Why do long locks hang from your forehead? From the front, I am easy to be held fast. Why is your posterior part bald at your head? No one posterior can seize me. Of that kind [Lysippus] of Sicyon created me once, visitor, and placed me in this Entrance Hall as a lesson, a beauteous work praises the artist, oh Jupiter, oh that this was destined to stir up lazy men.⁸³⁹

Moseley and Cooper have traced this text to a poem printed in Andrea Alciato's *Emblematum liber*.⁸⁴⁰ This Renaissance emblem book was published in 1531 and gained enormous popularity throughout Europe. As Peter Daly has shown, the book was held in many private and institutional libraries in the 16th and 17th centuries. In fact, John Dee and Robert Cecil both owned an edition of it.⁸⁴¹ Alciato's emblem titled "In Occasionem" features a familiar-looking composition of a naked figure with a lock of hair on her forehead and a sickle in her hand (**Fig. 50**). However, here, the figure is a woman instead of an old man. The emblem's text is a slightly altered version of the text of the *Hatton Portrait* in verse form.⁸⁴² Hence, it reveals a connection between the figure of Father Time and the topic of 'occasio', an occasional fortunate moment.

Indeed, per Erwin Panofsky's reconstruction, the personification of Father Time is closely connected to the emergence of the iconography of Kairos, the god of opportunity and its swift moments.⁸⁴³ While portrayals of time as an old, bearded man with wings circulated in the emerging humanistic tradition of the 14th century, Kairos was usually represented as a youth with a prominent forelock for grabbing him as he swiftly passes.⁸⁴⁴ Since he signified the passing of time as well as opportune moments, his motif was blended with the older, bearded god Kronos and the younger female Fortuna, thus producing two personifications of the Kairotic moment: a naked female with curly hair, and an older, winged man who is bald except for a single strand of hair on his forehead.⁸⁴⁵ While Alciato's female Occasio and the old winged man in the *Hatton Portrait* are different

⁸³⁹ The translation presented here used Moseley's and Cooper's translations as a reference, while some alterations have been made: MOSELEY: "A Portrait of Sir Christopher Hatton", p. 378, note 4. Also COOPER/ORRACK: "Double-Sided Emblematic Portrait of Sir Christopher Hatton", p. 86.

⁸⁴⁰ ALCIATO: *Emblematum liber*, pp. 14–15; COOPER: "Memento Mori Portraiture", p. 325. This is also mentioned in EADE: "Heraldry in Elizabethan and Jacobean Portraiture", p. 64.

⁸⁴¹ DALY: *Andrea Alciato in England*, pp. 96–97.

⁸⁴² MOSELEY: "A Portrait of Sir Christopher Hatton", pp. 375–376.

⁸⁴³ PANOFSKY: *Studies in Iconology*, pp. 69–93.

⁸⁴⁴ COHEN, Simona: *Transformations of Time and Temporality in Medieval and Renaissance Art*, Leiden, Boston, pp. 301–306.

⁸⁴⁵ PANOFSKY: *Studies in Iconology*, pp. 71–73; BAERT, Barbara: "Kairos. Nachleben, Ikonographie und Hermeneutik", in: *Das Münster* 2 (2017), pp. 135–150, p. 143.

personifications, they ultimately embody the same Kairotic concept, which is conveyed in both cases by the combination of the figure and the text.⁸⁴⁶



Lysippi hoc opus est, Sycion cui patris, tu quis?
 Cuncta domans capta temporis articulus
 Cur pennis stas, usq; rector, talaria plantis
 Cur retines passim me leuis aura rapit
 In dextra est tenuis dic unde nauacula? acutum
 Omni acie hoc signum me magis esse docet
 Cur in fronte coma occurrens ut preñar, at heus tu
 Dic cur pars calua est posterior capitis
 Me semel alipedem si quis permittat abire.
 Ne possim apprenso crine deinde rari
 Tali opifex nos arte tui causa edidit hospes
 Vtq; omnes moneã per gula aperta tenet

Figure 50: Andrea Alciato: *In Occasionem*, 1531. Picture quote: ALCIATO: *Emblematum*, pp. 14–15.

Kairos' appearance as a winged, bald figure with a single forelock is famously described in the *Greek Anthologies* in the form of a statue made by the ancient sculptor Lysippus (400 BC). This sculpture, which is now lost, stood before the entrance of the artist's house in Sycion with an epigram at its base.⁸⁴⁷ Written as a question-and-answer dialogue between the beholder and the statue, the text presented the god as a work of Lysippus who is positioned in a higher place and must be grabbed by the forelock as he runs away swiftly. The texts of the *Greek Anthologies* are deeply tied to the emblematic culture of the

⁸⁴⁶ The relation of the text and image in the *Hatton Portrait* is further described in MINNIGERODE/VON: "Because No One Can Seize me from Behind", pp. 335–337.

⁸⁴⁷ This epigram is supposedly a later addition to the statue made by Posidippus of Pella (c. 300 BC). CHILDS, William A. P.: *Greek Art and Aesthetics in the Fourth Century B.C.*, New Jersey 2018, p. 256; BAERT: "Kairos", pp. 138–142; GULTZWILLER, Kathryn: "Posidippus on Statuary", in: BASTIANINI, Guido and Angelo CASANOVA (Ed.): *Il papiro di Posidippo un anno dop*, Florence 2002, pp. 41–60, pp. 42–60.

European 16th century, especially in Alciato's case.⁸⁴⁸ Moseley has previously remarked that Alciato's text for the emblem "In Occasionem" is a Latin translation of Kairos' description in the *Greek Anthologies*, which in turn connects this figure to the text in the *Hatton Portrait*.⁸⁴⁹

On the emblem side, the iconography of Father Time at the top is completed by the recognition of the god Kairos described in the text. However, in the *Hatton Portrait*, this reference to a popular emblem book from the Elizabethan era or an Ancient Greek source constitutes more than just a quotation; it is a demonstration of the engaging quality of Elizabethan courtly paintings. Beholders would ultimately connect the figure with the scripture in the act of observation by detecting distinct compositional decisions on the panel. Father Time/Kairos is positioned at the top of the whole composition, where he hovers over the scene in a sphere of clouds. Meanwhile, the text is located in the lower part, thus creating a visual discrepancy between the two. Although these two parts relate to each other, they are separated on the panel by the scene between them. Their connection must be realised through a performative reception by beholders, who would gaze up at the picture while reading the inscription, thereby re-enacting the text's narrative of looking up at a figure that is at "the highest place" with "swift feet", carrying a "slender crest", and "bold ad [the] head". While reading the text, the beholders would be presented with an ekphrasis of what is depicted in the image (**Fig. 51**).

⁸⁴⁸ SAUNDERS, Alison: "Alciati and the Greek Anthology", in: *The Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 12/1 (1982), pp. 1–18, pp. 2–3.

⁸⁴⁹ MOSELEY: "A Portrait of Sir Christopher Hatton", p. 376. For more on the Occasio emblem's use in Elizabethan England, including in the English emblem book by Whitney, see MINNIGERODE/VON: "Because No One Can Seize me from Behind", pp. 333–334. For more on Alciato's translation, see TEMPLE, Camilla: "The Greek Anthology in the Renaissance. Epigrammatic Scenes of Reading in Spenser's *Faerie Queene*", in: *Studies in Philology* 115/1 (2018), pp. 48–72.



Figure 51: *Hatton Portrait*, emblem side, detail of Father Time/Kairos, ©Northampton Museum and Art Gallery.

Apart from the particular source of this text, the distinct usage of a dialogic text in this object further develops its function in the process of interpreting. The dialogue serves as a model process of perception, an implicit dialogue between the beholder and the painting. Through the speaker's questions, beholders assume the position of someone inquiring about more than just what they see. The dialogue creates a rhetorical space in which beholders obtain answers to questions that might arise during their observation of Father Time/Kairos. Yet, it is also a space in which the latter is given a voice as a picture.⁸⁵⁰ Although the painted figure cannot speak directly, its combination with the text allows it to talk to the audience. As one speaker of the dialogue, Father Time/Kairos provides information about his meaning and attributes, which are illustrated above.⁸⁵¹ In turn, the beholder is put in the questioner's position as they explore the depicted figure by reading and integrating the information into their pure observation of the figure.

In this particular combination of text and image, the dialogue between the speaker and Father Time/Kairos — or between the picture and the implicit beholder — becomes a didactic demonstration of the communicative ability of paintings.⁸⁵² When the figure calls

⁸⁵⁰ Interestingly, in her article on Alciato's Kairos emblem, Judith Dundas notes that the text treats the "ability of picture or statue to speak directly to the viewer". DUNDAS: "*Emblems on the Art of Paintings*", p. 69. Dundas compares this dialogue between the speaker and the statue to a student of emblems interrogating a picture.

⁸⁵¹ With this connection, it also addresses the famous subject of *ut pictura poesis*, the paragon between painting and poetry. IBID., p. 95.

⁸⁵² IBID., p. 69.

itself a “warning to stir up lazy men”, it is also talking about the function of the whole painting. The iconography, encrypted design, double-sidedness, and text-image relation posed a playful challenge for humanistic beholders. Accordingly, the painting was made for an audience that included courtiers, such as Hatton and Cecil, who would have to decode the intertwined layers of images, texts, and meaning. These courtiers were part of a highly intellectual community that was familiar with the symbols and references that were frequently utilised by the Elizabethan and early Stuart elite. The language chosen here for both the text and image is one that the targeted beholders could certainly understand and respond to. It is a language full of ambiguities and implicit references, which are precisely where the dialogue opened up between the image and the beholders. It fostered a specific reception experience in the close observation of the picture and the discernment of the parts that are not shown.⁸⁵³

Nevertheless, the merging of the two areas on the emblem side would be demanding, as it required beholders to read and understand Latin and have knowledge of either classical sources or personifications in order to recognise Kairos. In this regard, the audience would have to make a connection between the title of “TEM:PUS”, the image of Father Time/Kairos, and the text. If understood, the image could be recognised as an emblematic design which challenged the audience to combine its parts and discuss possible meanings.⁸⁵⁴ The picture, however, does not convey a definite message and instead makes a plethora of references to emblem books, ancient sources, and mythology, amongst others. While observing the image, beholders would enter into an internal or external discussion. A courtier who was well versed in Latin and ancient literature would have been able to draw the necessary connection in the image, fashion himself in the presented discourse, and step into conversation with the object. Ultimately, such a conversation is already represented in the dialogue in the lower part of the emblem side: by displaying the Latin text, the *Hatton Portrait* demonstrates the dialogic structure that has to be sought within the object.

The panel offers several interpretations of Father Time/Kairos. While the figure has been understood as an Elizabethan courtly concept, the subject can be enriched even further. References to sources outside of the image are embedded in the courtly painting, but a

⁸⁵³ BÜTTNER: “*Performative Rezeption*”, pp. 66–68.

⁸⁵⁴ MINNIGERODE/VON: “*Because No One Can Seize me from Behind*”, p. 338.

connection that considers the intellectual and visual culture of Hatton's network at the court has yet to be made.

Kairos: A topic for courtiers

Previous works have not made a connection between the figure of Father Time/Kairos in the *Hatton Portrait* and the figure's popularity in Elizabethan society. However, it was a common theme in the Elizabethan intellectual circle, and it played an important role in rhetoric and princely education. The figure appeared in allegorical images that were popular observation riddles in Elizabethan times, including in a series of panels made between 1590 and 1600 in which each panel displays an allegorical scene concerning old age and youth, with Kairos depicted at the top of the image (**Fig. 29**).⁸⁵⁵ Although the figure in these panels has not yet been recognised as Father Time/Kairos, this identification is obvious from a comparison with the *Hatton Portrait*, as both works portray him with the same wings, crescent, and forelock on his bald head.⁸⁵⁶

While Kairos is positioned at the top of the iconography in both the panels and the *Hatton Portrait*, the overarching subjects of these works differ greatly. In the vanitas paintings, Kairos is seen in swift movement, but he stands with his arms spread in the *Hatton Portrait*. This slight difference significantly impacts the iconographic readings of Kairos. In the *Hatton Portrait*, Kairos is not in motion; he appears still, as if he could be easily grabbed by the forelock. Additionally, some elements of the panels' iconography are missing from the *Hatton Portrait*, such as the apparent depiction of old and young age and the clear inscription on the topic of mortality and ageing. While the comparison with these memento mori paintings demonstrates the prevalence of Kairos as a motif in Elizabethan times, his iconographic meaning seems to be different in the *Hatton Portrait*.

Another appearance of the Kairotic figure at the centre of Elizabethan society is in the frontispiece of John Dee's *General and Rare memorials Pertayning to the Perfect Arte of Navigation* from 1577. This book was planned as a four-part history of navigation, but only one publication survives from Elizabethan times. The book was completed with a frontispiece woodcut, of which a sketch by Dee himself exists that is nearly identical in

⁸⁵⁵ These are described in Chapter 7. There are at least five versions of these paintings, but Cooper has elaborated on only three of them. COOPER: "Memento Mori Portraiture", p. 223, pp. 238–239.

⁸⁵⁶ Cooper and Moseley, the only two researchers who have published on these paintings so far, have both described the old man at the top as "time". JONES: *The Print in Early Modern England*, p. 270; COOPER: "Memento Mori Portraiture", pp. 50–51.

composition and imagery.⁸⁵⁷ The image shows an allegorical scene in which Elizabeth is situated at the head of a ship, thus representing the head of the English naval power. In the image, the personification of Britannia points at Occasio and asks the queen to grab her by the forelock. Occasio, resembling the personification in Alciato's emblem, stands on top of two rocks on the left-hand side of the image, with her typical lock of hair waving in the wind.⁸⁵⁸ Roy Strong has quoted a passage by Dee in which the Elizabethan astrologer and scientist states,

for these many yeres past, hath by MANIFEST OCCASION, most Graciously, not only invented us: but also, hath made, EVEN NOW, the way and Means, most evident, easie, and Compendius: Inasmuch as, [...] our Freends are become strong: and our Enemies, sufficiently weake [...].⁸⁵⁹

In Dee's frontispiece, the Occasio/Kairos subject is translated into an imperial context celebrating England's maritime power.⁸⁶⁰ Thus, it applies to the whole destiny and auspicious past of an entire nation rather than an individual's life. Dee's choice to depict the female version of Occasio rather than the male Kairos might have been due to his personal preference in ancient sources and should not be over-interpreted. In the print, the Kairotic moment emerges as a decision that Elizabeth must make for the greater good of her realm.

A well-known example to further illustrate this imperial and ethical dimension of the Kairotic idea in Elizabethan England is found in the work of the diplomat and humanistic author Thomas Elyot, who authored the pre-Elizabethan courtesy book *The Governour*.⁸⁶¹ Kairos, in the sense of "the right timing", is integral to Elyot's idea of the rhetoric of counsel, which he addresses in *Pasquill the Playne*. In this book, which was published in 1533, Elyot uses the Kairotic moment in connection with the notion of decorum, the art of adequacy, and its ethical and rhetorical dimensions. In ancient literature, the figure of Kairos was used to illustrate certain concepts, such as the importance of civic education for making decisions before an opportunity has passed.⁸⁶² In this book, which is written as a

⁸⁵⁷ Both are illustrated in STRONG: *Gloriana*, pp. 90–91.

⁸⁵⁸ For a much closer analysis and more information about this highly complex image and its history, see IBID., pp. 90–92; FRENCH: *John Dee*, pp. 184–185.

⁸⁵⁹ STRONG: *Gloriana*, p. 91.

⁸⁶⁰ Moreover, according to Strong, this symbolism connects Elizabeth and her Tudor descent to figures such as Brutus and the conquests of Arthur. IBID.

⁸⁶¹ See Chapter 1. More on Kairos and rhetoric is written in PAUL, Joanne: "The Use of Kairos in Renaissance Political Philosophy", in: *Renaissance Quarterly* 67 (2014), pp. 43–78, pp. 43–45.

⁸⁶² The different dimensions of the Kairotic idea are presented in KINNEAVY, James: "Kairos in Classical and Modern Rhetorical Theory", in: SIPIORA, Phillip and James BAUMLIN (Ed.): *Rhetorics and Kairos. Essays in History, Theory, and Praxis*, Albany 2002, pp. 58–78, pp. 58–69. This topic is further addressed in

dialogue between Pasquill and Gnatho, timing becomes important when discussing how to advise princes and increase the likelihood of a desired outcome when addressing the sovereign. Pasquill raises the point that a counsellor should consider the influence of timing when advising the prince. His words are interesting in this context:

Oportunitie consisteth in place or tyme, where and whan the says affections or passion of wrathe be some dele mytygate and out of extremitie. And wordes be called conueniente [appropriate], which haue respecte to the nature and state of the personne, vnto whom they be spoken, and also to the detrymente, which mought ensure by the vice or lacke that thou haste espied, and it ought not to be as thou haste supposed.⁸⁶³

Here, opportunity is defined as an awareness of time and taking action according to the ‘appropriateness’ of the moment. The Kairotic moment emerges as a crucial factor for the success — and, in turn, the quality — of a counsellor.⁸⁶⁴ This theory is tied to the skills of improvisation and adaptability since the statesman has to react to diverse situations. As a rhetorical ideal, it should be understood as functioning primarily in the context of courtly behaviour and formal rules. As stated in Elyot’s text, “respecte to the nature of state of the personne” had to be demonstrated at any time, and the speech must therefore be formed in accordance with the right timing.⁸⁶⁵

Elyot’s princely educational aspect of Kairos is illustrated through iconography in a striking portrait by Robert Peake from the Elizabethan and early Stuart period. This portrait, which currently hangs at Parham House, depicts Henry Prince of Wales, James I’s eldest son, who dramatically died in 1612 (**Fig. 52**).⁸⁶⁶ The picture was painted around 1610 and presents

BAUMLIN: “*Ciceronian Decorum*”, p. 141; WALZER, Arthur: “*Rhetoric of Counsel in Thomas Elyot’s Pasquill the Playne*”, in: *Rhetorica. A Journal of the History of Rhetoric* 30/1 (2012), pp. 1–21, pp. 8–15. The aspect of timing in Castiglione’s book is analysed in COBLENTZ, Dori: “*Maister of al artificial force and sleight’. Tempo and Dissimulation in Castiglione’s Book of the Courtier*”, in: *Italian Studies* 73 (2018), pp. 53–65.

⁸⁶³ ELYOT, Thomas: *Critical Editions of Four Works on Counsel. The Doctrinal of Princes, Pasquill the Playne, Of that Knowledge Whiche Maketh a Wise Man, and The Defence of Good Women*, ed. by Robert SULLIVAN and Arthur WALZER, Leiden, Boston 2018, p. 182.

⁸⁶⁴ DONNER, H. W.: “*The Emperor and Sir Thomas Elyot*”, in: *The Review of English Studies* 2/5 (1951), pp. 55–59, pp. 56–57. Another text-based attempt to analyse Kairos in English literature has been done by Maurice Hunt, who has transferred the Kairotic concept to Shakespeare’s *As You Like It*. HUNT, Maurice: “*Kairos and the Ripeness of Time*”, in: *Modern Language Quarterly* 52 (1991), pp. 113–135. See also COBLENTZ, Dori: “*Killing Time in Titus Andronicus. Timing, Rhetoric, and the Art of Defense*”, in: *Journal for Early Modern Cultural Studies* 15/4 (2015), pp. 52–80.

⁸⁶⁵ The problematic adaptability of this ideal is discussed in MACPHAIL, Eric: *The Sophistic Renaissance*, Genève 2011, pp. 108–112.

⁸⁶⁶ PEAKE, Robert: *Prince Henry on Horseback*, c. 1610, oil on canvas, 228.6 cm x 218.4 cm, Parham House, West Sussex. The portrait’s history is not well known, and there is no evidence that it was ever in the Royal Collection. The picture was recorded for the first time in 1614, when it was part of the collection of Henry Howard, First Earl of Northampton. MACLEOD, Catharine: “*Prince Henry on Horseback*”, in: MACLEOD,

Henry atop a white horse. He is fully dressed in armour and holds a whip in his right hand.⁸⁶⁷ In the background, an immense brick wall stands immediately behind the prince. On the left side, an architectural scheme with a tree and a landscape scene is visible, which has been said to resemble the prince's own garden at Richmond Palace.⁸⁶⁸ On the right, a naked winged figure stands behind Henry and the horse. The figure carries the prince's helmet in his right hand and holds a jousting lance in his left hand. His bald head and long white beard suggest that he is the figure of Father Time/Kairos, and, upon closer inspection, the long lock on his forehead confirms this identification. Interestingly, his forelock is bound to the prince's right arm by a heavy piece of cloth, which is coloured in the same red-blue-grey tones as the feathers on Henry's helmet.⁸⁶⁹ The prince seems to be dragging the god of opportunity along in an extremely literal visualisation of the expression "to grasp an opportunity by the forelock".

However, this iconography was not always visible to beholders. In a previous version, Kairos was not visible in the background, which instead displayed a dark landscape with a tree holding a tablet from which the feathers of the prince of Wales were hung.⁸⁷⁰ The brick wall and the Kairos figure were not visible until the 1980s, when the painting was cleaned,

Catharine (Ed.): *The Lost Prince. The Life & Death of Henry Stuart*, Exhibition Catalogue, National Portrait Gallery London, 18 October 2012 to 13 January 2013, London 2012, pp. 94–95, p. 94. Furthermore, Roy Strong has reported that it belonged to a Mr Godfrey Williams at St Donat's Castle at the time of its auction at Christie's in 1946. STRONG: *The English Icon*, pp. 337–339.

⁸⁶⁷ Scholars have typically accepted 1610 as the year of the painting's production, which was when Henry became Prince of Wales. To underline this dating, the sign on the brick wall over the horse's head shows the coronet and feathers, known as the "heir apparent feathers", of the Prince of Wales. However, Catharine MacLeod has argued that this sign was already being used in association with Henry long before 1610, and the painting could thus have been made before the year of Henry's investiture. MACLEOD: "*Prince Henry on Horseback*", p. 94. At present, it is not known who commissioned this painting. Anthony Rooley has proposed that it was commissioned and designed by Henry Lee of Ditchley, who was a mentor to the young Stuart prince and held festivities honouring his investiture in 1610. Rooley has further suggested that the figure identified as Kairos is meant to be Henry Lee himself. ROOLEY, Anthony: "*Time Stands Still. Devices and Designs, Allegory and Alliteration, Poetry and Music and a New Identification in an Old Portrait*", in: *Early Music* 34/3 (2006), pp. 443–460, p. 545. However, it is hard to believe that the figure is meant to be Henry Lee, as it does not resemble surviving portraits of the queen's champion.

⁸⁶⁸ KABBANI, Raifah: "*Conservation. A Collaboration Between Art and Science*", in: *The Chemical Educator* 2/1 (1997), pp. 1–18, p. 12.

⁸⁶⁹ These colours were the official colours of the prince. A full description of the armour is given in WEIGL, Gail: "'And when slow Time hath made you fit for warre'. *The Equestrian Portrait of Prince Henry*", in: WILKS, Timothy (Ed.): *Prince Henry Revived. Image and Exemplarity in Early Modern England*, London 2007, pp. 146–172, pp. 146–148.

⁸⁷⁰ A coloured and relatively good illustration of the picture before the cleaning has been given by KABBANI: "*Conservation*", p. 13. The reason for the overpainting has not been determined. Chris Caple has stated that the subsequent repainting of the portrait shows that the portrait was intended to be preserved in its display of the monarchy, but the depiction's fashion was altered in form to be more like the portraits of King Charles II. CAPLE, Chris: *Objects. Reluctant Witnesses to the Past*, London 2006, pp. 89–93.

treated, and examined at the Hamilton Kerr Institute.⁸⁷¹ Since the brick wall was uncovered, the painting's appearance and meaning shifted dramatically from a portrait of the prince to an emblematic portrait of Henry in an unusual humanistic interpretation. The cleaning exposed not only a different background and the figure of Kairos but also the horse's decorative tilting accessories and the prince's lance and helmet held by Kairos.⁸⁷²

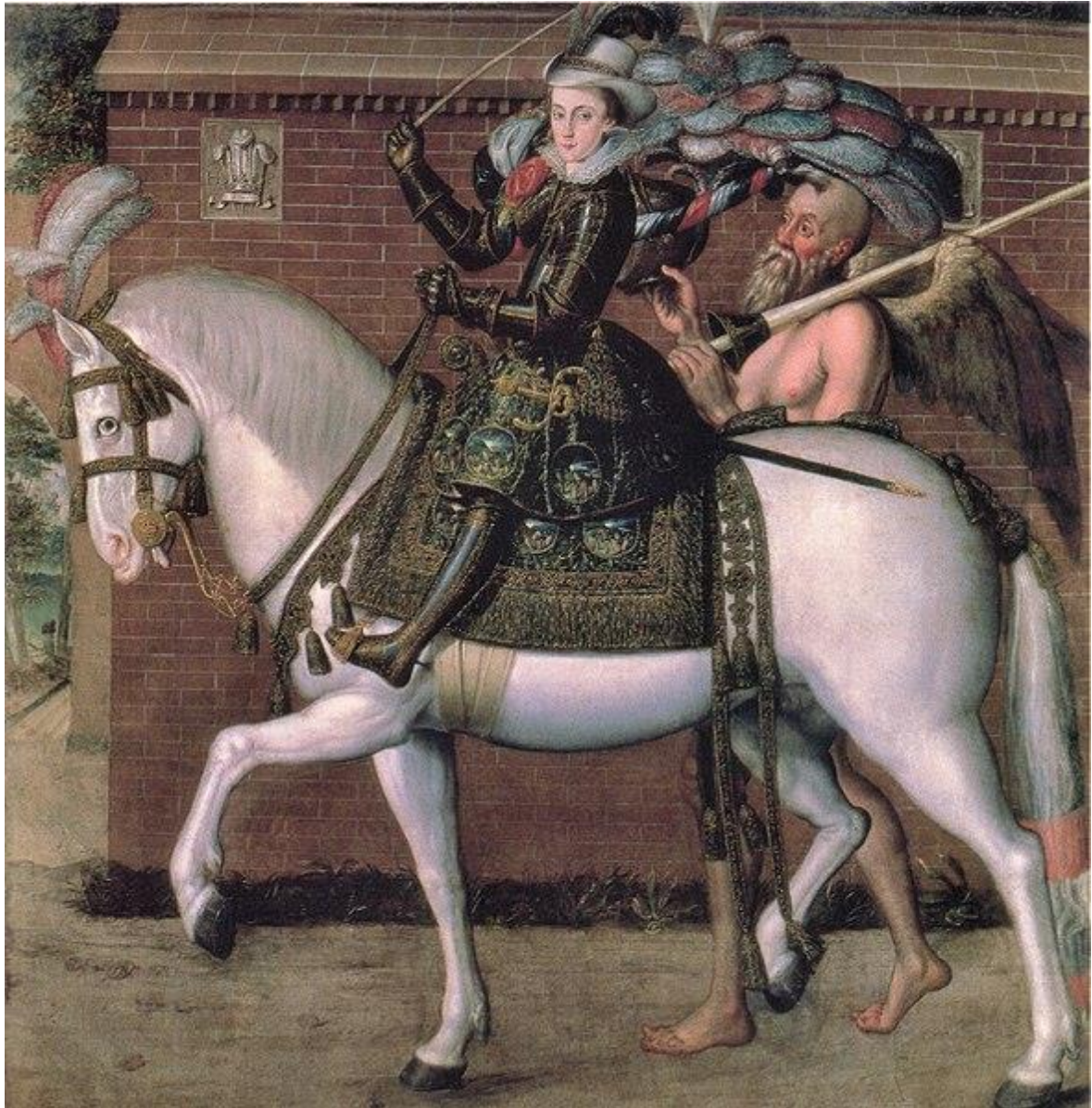


Figure 52: Peake, Robert: *Prince Henry on Horseback*, c. 1610, oil on canvas, 228.6 cm x 218.4 cm, ©Provided by kind permission of Parham Park, West Sussex.

⁸⁷¹ WOULDHUYSEN-KELLER, Renate, Ian MCCLURE and Sally THIRKETTLE: “*The Examination and Restoration of Henry Prince of Wales on Horseback by Robert Peake*”, in: MCCLURE, Ian (Ed.): *The First Ten Years. The Examination and Conservation of Paintings 1977 to 1987*, Cambridge 1988, pp. 12–21.

⁸⁷² The process is described in detail in CAPLE: *Objects. Reluctant Witnesses to the Past*, pp. 89–93.

In this picture, the prince is clearly represented as a young and vivid heir to the English and Scottish thrones. Henry was known amongst his contemporaries as a skilled horseman, and he participated extensively in jousting and other tournaments at the court.⁸⁷³ The portrait depicts him in full armour with small, cryptic pictures along the hemline of his dark tunic.⁸⁷⁴ Kairos carries Henry's lance and helmet, which was a duty usually performed by a squire or servant to the knight. This iconography seems to predicate what must have been known by a 17th-century beholder: that the god acted as a servant to the prince, carrying his weapon and necessities to allow him to perform well on the jousting field. Kairos, representing a fortunate opportunity, is shown supporting the young prince on his way to a tournament and, in this sense, on his way to becoming a young nobleman and just king.⁸⁷⁵

The interrelation of courtly fashion and the duty to rule as the prince becomes even more clear from a closer examination. Because Kairos is carrying the lance and helmet, Henry is able to use his right hand to hold a horsewhip and guide the beast with a firm hand. The whip, as a symbol of control and well-tempered power, fashions the prince as the ideal heir to the throne.⁸⁷⁶ Kairos further serves as an attribute of the prince's awareness of the importance of action and right timing — a crucial quality for both jousting and reigning over a country.⁸⁷⁷

In summary, the use of Kairos as a motif as well as a theoretical and educational concept was highly prevalent during the Tudor and Stuart times. When depicted in connection with a sovereign, Kairos enhanced the individual's image as an ideal ruler who was willing to take action in an opportune moment. Meanwhile, for a courtier, Kairos emphasised the

⁸⁷³ MACLEOD, Catharine: “*Festivals, Masques and Tournaments*”, in: MACLEOD, Catharine (Ed.): *The Lost Prince. The Life & Death of Henry Stuart*, Exhibition Catalogue, National Portrait Gallery London, 18 October 2012 to 13 January 2013, London 2012, pp. 92–93.

⁸⁷⁴ These pictures show mysterious impresse of hands rising from grass, each holding an anchor. Technical analysis of the painting has proven that the ground in the small pictures is actually grass and not water, as one might assume. WOUDHUYSEN-KELLER/MCCLURE/THIRKETTLE: “*The Examination and Restoration*”, p. 15. It has been suggested that these impresse were the actual trappings with which the prince's armour was embroidered and were thus not inherent pictorial elements of the portrait. WEIGL: “*The Equestrian Portrait of Prince Henry*”, p. 153.

⁸⁷⁵ After the picture's restoration, Roy Strong has interpreted it as “the prince seizes Opportunity by the forelock”. STRONG, Roy: *Henry Prince of Wales and England's Lost Renaissance*, London 1986, p. 115.

⁸⁷⁶ Gail Weigl has made a similar assumption and further connected the subject of time with truth as the daughter of time. WEIGL: “*The Equestrian Portrait of Prince Henry*”, p. 157.

⁸⁷⁷ An iconography such as this is not unlikely in connection with Henry Stuart, who was thrust into national Scottish mythology from birth. Scottish poetry identified Henry with Hercules early in his life, which was not only uplifting for the young infant but also meant as a signal to the English neighbour. In the late 16th century, Hercules was understood to be a symbol of justice against tyranny and was therefore used in the context of Catholics awaiting their chance to overthrow the Protestant reign of England. WILLIAMSON, Jerry Wayne: *The Myth of the Conqueror Prince Henry Stuart. A Study of 17. Century Personation*, New York 1978, pp. 1–6.

crucial duty of serving and advising the ruler. When speaking to a prince or queen, it was essential for a courtier to find the right timing and decorum to successfully perform his services. For Christopher Hatton, an Elizabethan favourite, the presence of Father Time/Kairos invoked the presence of the court and his duties as a courtier in the depiction. The aforementioned plethora of references to several humanistic topics was extended to thematising behavioural guidelines for the courtier. Thus, the courtly audience could address various aspects of courtly life while observing and discussing the emblem side. However, the so far emblematic character of the text and the figure of Father Time/Kairos at the top was expanded by the pictorial area between them.

11. “Lachesis Trahit”

Spinning connections: The moon as a symbol and a royal reference

The middle third of the emblem side is equally complex in detail as the other two. The scene depicts five figures: a dancing couple and a musician on the left, a large woman in the middle, and a shining golden vessel atop a pillar on the right. All of the figures stand on a green ground. Under them, a river flows by along the very bottom of the scene, which visually distinguishes this middle part from the section with Latin text below it.

The middle scene presents a nightly space with three horizontal lines of stars at the top. On the left, a little grey crescent moon appears amongst the stars. When examined closely, the moon shows even more striking details: a face and a circle of fine lines around it, which represent swift rays emanating from it (**Fig. 53**). Like the armillary sphere, the moon was widely used by courtiers as a symbol of the queen, particularly regarding her reputation as a female ruler and monarch of God’s will.⁸⁷⁸ This extended to the crescent moon, which was especially prevalent as a reference during the later period of Elizabeth’s reign. To support her political standing and divine status, the queen’s public image as a virgin was enhanced by references to the chaste goddess Diana.⁸⁷⁹

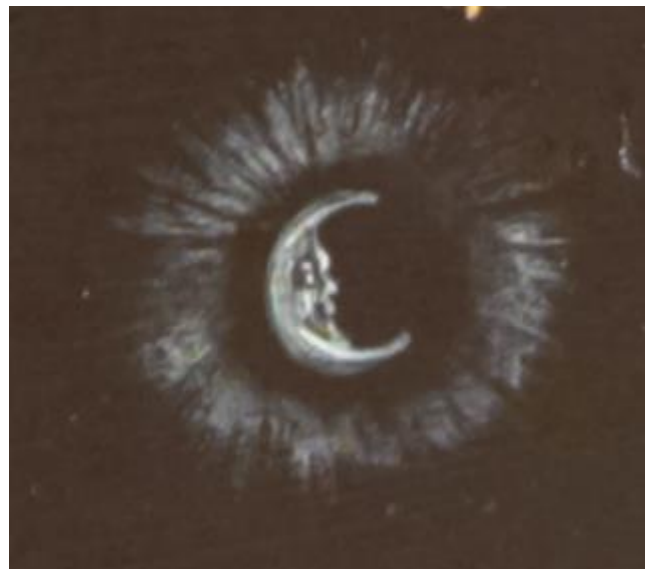


Figure 53: *Hatton Portrait*, emblem side, detail of the moon, ©Northampton Museum and Art Gallery.

⁸⁷⁸ For further information on the connection between Elizabeth and the planetary system, see Chapter 1.

⁸⁷⁹ DORAN, Susan: “*Virginité, Divinité et Pouvoir: Les Portraits de Elizabeth I*”, in: DORAN, Susan and Thomas FREEMAN (Ed.): *The Myth of Elizabeth*, Basingstoke, New York 2003, pp. 171–199, pp. 172–189.

In relation to the link between Elizabeth and the moon, a further connection can be made between the many stars in the middle scene and the queen’s courtiers. Although these stars shine throughout the sky, they are still in the shadow of the moon, which shines most brightly of all. Just as the stars exist in a sphere which is powerfully and gently dominated by the moon, the courtiers moved within the queen’s circle and depended on her attention. The moon is also represented as a planetary figure on the portrait side of the *Hatton Portrait*, where it is part of the horoscopic design surrounding the courtier’s likeness.⁸⁸⁰ Its reappearance on the emblem side, albeit in a different pictorial context, connects the two sides and guides the beholder’s attention towards the moon. In this painting of an Elizabethan courtier, the moon cannot be seen as a meaningless or coincidental detail; rather, it was consciously chosen to represent the queen in the picture and create an image of her court reacting to her rule. Such an understanding of the court and the queen as represented by the moon and the stars is expressed in some verses of John Davies’ poem *The Orchestra* from 1594:

Where the bright moon doth sit in majesty. / A thousand sparkling stars about her shone, / But she herself did sparkle more alone / Than all those thousand beauties would have done / If they had been confounded all in one. / All yet she thought those stars mov’d in such measure / To do their sovereign honour and delight, / As sooth’d her mind with sweet enchanting pleasure.⁸⁸¹

In this excerpt, the narrator describes how Penelope used a mirror brought by Love to see “the glorious throne” in which Queen Elizabeth, as the moon, was sitting. Meanwhile, the stars can be understood as her courtiers dancing, which, in this poem, implies following the action of order.⁸⁸² Through the details of the moon and the stars, the two sides of the *Hatton Portrait* are united by their astronomical references to Elizabeth. Diana, Astraea, and Urania — like the moon, the armillary sphere, and the crescent moon — were also part of the rich Elizabethan symbolic vocabulary for describing the power and state of the queen.⁸⁸³ When they are taken on their own, each signifies one aspect of the pictorial language for the queen; when they are taken together in one object, though split through compulsory changes of perspective, they illustrate the Elizabethan pictorial language regarding the

⁸⁸⁰ Chris Egerton has gone as far as identifying the moon figure on the front with Diana and Artemis. EGERTON: “*Great Planets*”, p. 2.

⁸⁸¹ DAVIES: *Orchestra or a Poem of Dancing*, pp. 45–46, stanzas 124–25. Davies’ poem was actually not published until 1596. BRISSENDEN: *Shakespeare and the Dance*, p. 4.

⁸⁸² See Chapter 1.

⁸⁸³ TITTLER, Robert: *Portraits, Painters, and Publics in Provincial England, 1540 - 1640*, Oxford 2012, p. 40; GAJDA, Alexandra: *The Earl of Essex and Late Elizabethan Political Culture*, Oxford 2012, p. 131.

queen and the court who spoke that language. However, this reference must also be considered in combination with the other pictorial elements with which it is compositionally grouped.



Figure 54: The *Hatton Portrait*, emblem side, detail of the dancers and the musician, ©Northampton Museum and Art Gallery.

A musician and two dancers

Under the moon, the phrase “LACHESIS TRAHIT” is written in red capital letters. Beneath it, a musician plays a violin-like instrument, and a man and a woman dance together (**Fig. 54**). The couple both wear the noble white ruff of the aristocratic society, and the musician is nobly dressed as well. The way in which the musician holds his instrument in front of his chest might seem odd to a modern beholder.⁸⁸⁴

The couple, and particularly the man, have been linked to Christopher Hatton’s own skill and love of dancing, and they could even be interpreted as a reminder of the day that Hatton

⁸⁸⁴ By closer inspection, the area of the dancers and the musician suggests that it has been highly damaged.

became Elizabeth’s favourite when she saw him dancing.⁸⁸⁵ Such a reading corresponds with the figure of Kairos at the top of the emblem side. Regarding Kairotic timing and opportunity, Hatton’s entry to the court through dancing was undoubtedly an important moment in his career and in his life overall. However, apart from the hat, the male figure bears no particular resemblance to Hatton as he appears in the portrait field. Thus, rather than interpreting this scene through an identifying method, it is more productive to read it in another way: as not only commemorating Hatton’s dancing but also referencing the active courtly life in a broader sense.

As shown in Chapter 1, dancing was an important part of the court’s ceremonial and physical culture. The movement of dance was understood as a harmonious representation of the movement of the stars and planets, which in turn represented the universal order. As Thomas Elyot explains in *The Governour*, the dancing of a man and a woman together had a special connotation at the court regarding the concept of universal harmony, as it expressed the male and female harmony corresponding to the powers of the cosmos.⁸⁸⁶ The dancing couple in the painting can thus be seen as a visual reference to the discourse on dancing. Courtiers who were well trained in dancing and aware of the universal importance of this ceremonial action would have had enough knowledge and experience to connect the depiction of the dancers to the broader significance of dancing. The reference to the queen in the crescent moon would also be apparent to them, though not obtrusively.

Indeed, the depiction of Elizabeth in connection to musical actions was not a rarity in Elizabethan times.⁸⁸⁷ As Katherine Butler has shown, Elizabeth was known as a “musical monarch” who played various instruments, patronised musicians, and was highly educated in singing and dancing.⁸⁸⁸ She achieved a balancing act between the demonstration of her

⁸⁸⁵ MOSELEY: “*A Portrait of Sir Christopher Hatton*”, p. 373. Egerton has seemingly managed to identify the dance as a Pavan, “a slow processional step dance”. EGERTON, Chris: “*Further Notes on the Portrait of Sir Christopher Hatton*”, Unpublished Document, p. 1. For my own reading of this scene, the kind of dance is less important than the fact that dancing is depicted at all, so I do not investigate it further.

⁸⁸⁶ “[...] it behouethe the dausers and also the beholders of them to knowe all qualities incident to a man, and also all qualities to a woman lyke wyse appertaynyng.” Elyot also names those qualities: for a man, “his natural perfection is fiers, hardy, stronge in opinion, couaitous of glorie, desirous if knowledge, appetiting by generation to brynge for the his semblable”; for a woman, her “good nature [...] is to be milde, timerouse, tractable, benihne, of sure remembrance, and shamfast”. ELYOT: *The Governour*, pp. 94–95.

⁸⁸⁷ For more on the connection between music and rhetoric in the English 17th century, see BOSE, Mishtooni: “*Humanism, English Music and the Rhetoric of Criticism*”, in: *Music & Letters* 77/1 (1996), pp. 1–21.

⁸⁸⁸ “[In] the 1580s and 1590s Elizabeth’s poets and courtiers drew on musical images of political harmony to associate her musicality with power and authority, asserting her suitability to rule.” BUTLER, Katherine: “*‘By Instruments her Powers Appeare’*. *Music and Authority in the Reign of Queen Elizabeth I*”, in: *Renaissance Quarterly* 65/2 (2012), pp. 353–384, pp. 353–354. Additionally, musical education and the ability to play an instrument were important talents expected of both men and women in the nobility. IBID., p. 355.

authority and intellect through music and the delicate expression of sensuality by performing as a woman. In addition to the moon symbolism, Elizabeth’s musicality was equally employed to create and underline her image as a ruler. Today, only a few known pictures of the queen show her in such a context.⁸⁸⁹

The bowed stringed instrument held by the musician is another fascinating detail. To date, there have been very few comments about the type of instrument and no clear identification of it.⁸⁹⁰ Based on how the instrument’s neck is rounded back, it seems to resemble a lute; however, the musician appears to be playing it with a bow, which is not used on a lute. Another possibility is that the instrument is a very early example of a viol played in a standing position. In any case, more research is needed to identify the instrument.⁸⁹¹

In aristocratic circles, stringed instruments such as the lute, the harp, and the violin were the preferred instruments, even before Elizabeth acceded to the throne. According to Claire Bardelmann, stringed instruments “symbolised the life of the court, the symbolism of feminine purity and the social rites of love”.⁸⁹² Since properly tuning and playing the strings could produce musical harmony, stringed instruments were symbolic of the overall harmonious manner and handling courtly matters.⁸⁹³ In a more figurative sense, stringed instruments also evoked a connection between the human body and the soul. The body could be seen as the instrument played by the soul, or vice versa, with the soul being the melody produced by the bodily strings.⁸⁹⁴ In 1558, the Elizabethan John Dee referenced this figurative concept on a larger scale in his *Propaedeumata Aphoristica*, stating, “the whole world is, as it were, a lyre [...] and man too, for all is analogous”.⁸⁹⁵ In 1612, Henry Peacham’s *Minerva Britannia* connected the stringed lute with one of the human humours, sanguine, in a departure from its usual association with melancholy.⁸⁹⁶ This interesting reference to the human body and soul recalls the presentation of Hatton’s likeness in the

⁸⁸⁹ One is the sparsely shown miniature depicting Elizabeth playing a lute, which has been ascribed to Nicolas Hilliard and is now in private possession. It is illustrated in GOLDRING: *Robert Dudley*, p. 96.

⁸⁹⁰ I am indebted to the stringed instrument conservator Chris Egerton for the information he shared about this instrument and his suggestion that it could be a violin. EGERTON, Chris: Personal correspondence, 07.11.2021.

⁸⁹¹ The main book on early viols is FLEMMING, Michael and John BRYAN: *Early English Viols. Instruments, Makers and Music*, London 2019.

⁸⁹² BARDELMANN: *Eros and Music*, p. 87.

⁸⁹³ HOLLANDER, John: *The Untuning of the Sky. Ideas of Music in English Poetry, 1500-1700*, Princeton (N.J.) 1961, pp. 26–31. For example, in Alciato’s emblem book, a lute is pictured on the emblem for alliances. ALCIATO: *Andreas Alciatus*, p. 10.

⁸⁹⁴ HOLLANDER: *The Untuning of the Sky*, p. 268.

⁸⁹⁵ Quoted in BARDELMANN: *Eros and Music*, p. 79.

⁸⁹⁶ ROOLEY, Anthony: “1612—John Dowland and the Emblem Tradition”, in: *Early Music* 41/2 (2013), pp. 273–280, p. 274.

middle of the horoscope circle on the portrait side. Again, the macrocosm and microcosm are present in their interplay, and the many different strings that formed the courtly life are shown. The image of a stringed instrument, music, and music-making can therefore be understood in relation to courtly intellectual discussions and rules.⁸⁹⁷

The stringed instrument in the *Hatton Portrait* was not randomly selected to accompany the dancing figures. Like the dancing of the man and the woman, the stringed instrument comments and reflects on the discourse of nobility, behaviour, and harmony in the noble circles around the queen.⁸⁹⁸ In this way, it is perfectly aligned with how the portrait disguises and conceals itself while simultaneously opening itself up to an ambivalent reading.

Lachesis: Goddess of fate

The most prominent figure in the middle third of the emblem side is the woman in the centre of the depiction. Her black-shoed feet rest upon the same green ground on which the pair dances to her right. In view of the red inscription, “LACHESIS TRAHIT”, the woman can be easily identified as Lachesis, one of the three goddesses of fate from Greek and Roman mythology. Her white ruff and the stuffed white cloth around her sleeves situate her in the time period in which the image was painted. Her heavy blue dress is rolled up to her knees, and a red skirt covers her legs, while her hair is covered by a piece of black cloth (**Fig. 55**).

Lachesis is almost equal in size to the figure of Father Time above her. In her central position, she visually dominates the middle scene. With her left hand, she holds up a distaff, from which a long string hangs down to the ground; with her right hand, she leisurely holds the string above a little spindle at its end. The distaff is positioned very close to her face, and her eyes are fixed on the point where the string parts from the spindle. This attribute and the woman’s action of observing the string make it even more clear that she is indeed Lachesis, as the inscription indicates. As the Moirai, Lachesis and her sisters, Clotho and Atropos, were believed to watch over the lives and destinies of gods and men. The Greek word *Μοῖραι* has the double meaning of “fate” and “a share”, which frames the singular

⁸⁹⁷ The connotations of female and male music were very different. Music was a mathematical and rational art for men but a sensitive and harmonious art for women. HOLLANDER: *The Untuning of the Sky*, pp. 20–51; WELLS, Robin Headlam: *Elizabethan Mythologies. Studies in Poetry, Drama and Music*, Cambridge 1994, pp. 4–7.

⁸⁹⁸ See RENTSCH: “*Der adlige Tänzer*”. See also Chapter 1.



Figure 55: *Hatton Portrait*, emblem side, detail of Lachesis, ©Northampton Museum and Art Gallery.

life or fate of an individual as only one “share” of a greater whole.⁸⁹⁹ As a divine trio, the Moirai essentially determined human life and destiny. The spinning of the thread mirrors this role, for which each sister had a particular duty: Lachesis measured the thread of the life in terms of length and quality, as illustrated in Hatton’s portrait; Clotho spun the thread from the distaff onto the spindle to give the life; and Atropos cut the thread to end the life. In this sense, the three sisters defined the length of the human life as well as its impending quality, the good and the bad. Some ancient sources, such as Ovid, also regard the structure and colour of the thread as relevant to the life it represents. For example, a black colour would suggest harm and misfortune, while a strong thread of any other colour would promise a blessed and content life.⁹⁰⁰ The string in Hatton’s portrait appears to be white, which could be interpreted as favourable for the courtier.

⁸⁹⁹ The Romans adapted the idea of the Moirai and called them the Parcae, deriving from the verb *parere*, or “giving birth”. The single goddess was named *Fatum*, which translates to the participle “said” and refers to the concepts of predestination and a higher will. These two concepts merge in the Parcae, thus designating them as the goddesses of birth and fate, who pronounced and directed human fate. GIANNOULIS, Markos: *Die Moiren. Tradition und Wandel des Motivs der Schicksalsgöttinnen in der antiken und byzantinischen Kunst*, Münster 2010, pp. 10–11.

⁹⁰⁰ BLISNIEWSKI, Thomas: *Kinder der dunkelen Nacht. Die Ikonographie der Parzen vom späten Mittelalter bis zum späten XVIII. Jahrhundert*, Köln 1992, p. 6; GIANNOULIS: *Die Moiren*, pp. 111–112. The black thread is discussed in Ovid *Trist.* IV. 1,63: “Here also I recognize the threads of my nativity, threads twisted for me from a black fleece. To say naught of ambushes or of dangers to my life - true they are, yet too heavy for

Markos Giannoulis, who authored an introductory book on antique and byzantine perceptions of the Moirai, has highlighted their apparent importance for life-changing moments, such as deaths, births, and weddings.⁹⁰¹ The Moirai were regularly depicted in connection to such momentous occasions throughout medieval and early modern times.⁹⁰² However, a much more specific image of the fatal sisters also emerged. This version portrayed them as older women wearing black, which is similar to the depiction of the woman in Hatton’s picture. Petrarch’s *Trionfi* is considered the inspiration for this idea of the Moirai. Although this work contains no explicit mention of the Moirai, Thomas Blisniewski has retraced how Petrarch’s description of death as a “woman wrapped in black cloth” was assimilated in the northern Alps and fused with the image of the Moirai.⁹⁰³ In the *Hatton Portrait*, the presence of a goddess of fate ultimately relates to the depiction of Hatton on the portrait side. Even on the panel, Lachesis is connected to Hatton’s individual fate, life, and death. The painting’s double-sided design links Hatton and Lachesis through their respective positions, as Hatton’s comparatively large face is at precisely the same height as the ruff and face of the goddess (**Fig. 56**). While each figure appears on their own side, Hatton and Lachesis are both in the centre, and they therefore lay against each other. If they were on the same side, Lachesis would be gazing down at Hatton’s eye. Beholders have to make this transfer themselves by observing each side with the composition of the opposite side in mind. In such a process, it is not particularly important for beholders to remember the exact position of Hatton’s face or Lachesis, but they must recognise that these figures occupy the central point of their respective images.

belief in truth - [...]” OVIDIUS NASO, Publius: *Ovid. In Six Volumes. Tristia & Ex Ponto*, Vol. 4, transl. by Arthur WHEELER, London 1988, p. 163.

⁹⁰¹ GIANNOULIS: *Die Moiren*, pp. 15–19. For example, they appear in the scenes of Achill’s birth and the wedding of his parents, Thetis and Peleus. *IBID.*, pp. 93–113.

⁹⁰² RAUPP, Hans-Joachim: *Historien und Allegorien*, Münster 2010, p. 397. Apart from mythological usage, they also lived on in Christian works of art. For example, they are implicitly present in scenes showing the fortune teller Sybille and the spinning Virgin Mary, and they are again spectators at scenes of birth. GIANNOULIS: *Die Moiren*, pp. 119–172. However, their importance in the mythological reception was still apparent at this time, including in illustrations of mythological manuals from the 14th century. BLISNIEWSKI: *Kinder der dunkelen Nacht*, pp. 43–51.

⁹⁰³ *IBID.*, pp. 57–59. Additionally, as Panofsky has shown, there were depictions of the Moirai as winged women, which he has theorised was to “express the swiftness and ubiquity of Fate”. PANOFSKY, Erwin: *The Iconography of Correggio’s Camera di San Paolo*, London 1961, p. 37. Considering the image of the winged Kairos above Lachesis on the emblem side, this idea is very interesting for visualising how closely the two concepts are intertwined.



Figure 56: Illustration of Hatton and Lachesis overlapping on the panel.

Although the wooden panel visually separates the two figures, they are nonetheless united and blended by the careful composition.⁹⁰⁴

The figure of Lachesis is further connected to the astronomical design that encircles Hatton. However, this link requires specific knowledge to be recognised. In his 10th book of the *Politeia*, Plato depicts the Moirai sisters as ruling over the celestial spheres.⁹⁰⁵ All three move the so-called spindle of necessity from time to time, thus helping to keep the spheres of the cosmos in motion. Plutarch elaborated on this idea, assigning each sister one particular sphere to rule over.⁹⁰⁶ Interestingly, Lachesis acted as a mediator between her sister’s cosmic activities and the earth. These ideas were adapted and further developed during the Renaissance, most prominently in *Deorum Gentilium*, where Giovanni

⁹⁰⁴ Of course, a 16th-century beholder would have had to merge the two figures without an x-ray, and I can only speculate that the manner in which the panel was displayed, maybe with a specific mechanism, underlined this merging of the two sides of the panel. This topic is discussed at length in the next chapter.

⁹⁰⁵ PLATO: *Republic. Books 6-10*, ed. by Chris EMLYN-JONES and William PREDDY, London 2013, section 67c.

⁹⁰⁶ MÜLLER, Gernot: “Moiren”, in: MOOG-GRUENEWALD, Maria (Ed.): *Mythenrezeption. Die antike Mythologie in Literatur, Musik und Kunst von den Anfängen bis zur Gegenwart*, Stuttgart 2008, pp. 436–440, p. 437.

Boccaccio pairs each sister with one of the three levels of time: Clotho is the present, Lachesis is the future, and Atropos is the past.⁹⁰⁷

As the centre of the emblem side of the *Hatton Portrait*, Lachesis is positioned right in the middle of the depiction. In this sense, Tarnya Cooper has likened Lachesis to the “middle age [...] winding out the thread of man’s days”.⁹⁰⁸ Cooper’s assumption about Lachesis is very interesting and underlines how the subject of time reoccurs in the figure of Lachesis. This subject is also directly addressed above her by Father Time/Kairos, and the horological design on the portrait side refers to a certain moment in Hatton’s life.⁹⁰⁹ In combination with the figure of Lachesis, it might signify a moment in his life when he felt dependent on the goodwill of Lachesis. Figuratively speaking, Hatton is painted in Lachesis’ shadow; while there is no certainty of what the future holds for Hatton, the painting highlights his particular dependency on the queen, the opportune moment, and the inevitable passage of time. To varying degrees, the three figures of Kairos, Lachesis, and Elizabeth are shown ruling over the happenings of the picture, just as they ruled over life at the court and the lives of the courtiers.

With a similar approach, Cooper and Moseley have interpreted the figure of Lachesis as “winding out of the thread of man’s days”.⁹¹⁰ Here, the red inscription in the middle scene, “LACHESIS TRAHIT”, is worth looking at in detail. While it identifies one of the presented figures, it also functions as a supplication. The Latin word *trahit* in the inscription is significant in this regard. As Moseley and Cooper have correctly stated, this declination of the verb ‘trahere’ means “to drag” or “to haul” in the sense of weaving or spinning. However, it is perfectly chosen for the subject of a Moira since it also means “to derive” in the sense of measuring. This subtle distinction underlines the multi-layered interpretation of the iconography of the goddesses of fate, who not only start and end human life but also determine its length and quality. The two-word inscription could be considered textual guidance for the beholder that completes the scene. Alternatively, it can be understood as a concealed petition asking Lachesis to draw a favourable thread — and, thus, a favourable lot — for Hatton.⁹¹¹ Given that it is positioned so close to the moon, yet another possibility

⁹⁰⁷ This identification of the Moirai with the different stages of time was adapted by other authors and artists, though the allocation of the stages to the goddesses continually changed. *IBID.*, p. 438.

⁹⁰⁸ COOPER/ORRACK: “*Double-Sided Emblematic Portrait of Sir Christopher Hatton*”, p. 87.

⁹⁰⁹ See Chapters 8 and 9.

⁹¹⁰ *IBID.* See also MOSELEY: “*A Portrait of Sir Christopher Hatton*”, p. 373.

⁹¹¹ As incomplete as it may seem, the inscription “Lachesis Trahit” could be read in similar manner as the inscription in a now-lost drawing by Albrecht Dürer, which depicted the three Moirai sisters together with the inscription “Grata trahe Lachesis filia”. For more information and illustrations, see BLISNIEWSKI: *Kinder*

is that the inscription is an appeal to the actual ruler of Hatton’s life: the queen. Again, this ambiguity was consciously maintained in this Elizabethan courtly painting in order to give ample room for discussion about the picture’s elements.⁹¹²

Moirai in the Elizabethan times: A reference to literature

One source which incorporates the Moirai theme is a poem intimately connected to Hatton: “A Maiden’s dreame” by Robert Greene. This poem was written and published at the time of Hatton’s death in 1591 and dedicated to Elizabeth Hatton, the wife of Christopher Hatton’s heir, William Newport-Hatton. The poem laments the death of the courtier, whom it calls “so worthie a knight, and so vertuous a iusticiarie, had by his death left many memorable actions performed in his life, deseruing highly by some rare men to be registred”.⁹¹³ A section entitled “Complaint of Justice” mentions the Parcea, the Roman equivalent of the Moirai, and Lachesis’ sister Clotho is invoked in the following words:

Vntoward Twins that tempers humane fate, / who from your distaffe draws the life of man /
Parce impartiall to the highest state, / Too soone you cut what Clotho earst began, / Your fatall
doomes this present age may ban, / For you haue robd the world of such a knight, / As best could
skil to ballance Iustice right.⁹¹⁴

Here, the “[Parce] temper humane fate [...]”, which is considered the instance of determining the destiny of the earthly individual. Additionally, they are strongly connected to the subject of death through their power to end a human life, which occurred “too soon” in Hatton’s case, according to the text. While this poem does not directly refer to the *Hatton Portrait*, it illustrates the relevance of the Moirai in Hatton’s circle and is a personal example of the Moirai theme in the Hatton discourse.

A less personal but equally important piece of literature for the Elizabethan times is Ludovico Ariosto’s *Orlando Furioso*, which was first published in 1516 and reissued in

der dunkelen Nacht, p. 18. PANOFKY, Erwin: *Albrecht Dürer*, Vol. 2, London 1948, p. 98; STRAUSS, Walter: *The Complete Drawings of Albrecht Duerer*, Vol. 3, New York 1974, p. 1592.

⁹¹² To my knowledge, there is no distinct connection between the figure of Lachesis and the figure of the queen. However, as shown in the discussion of the little moon symbol, it was very common to connect Elizabeth with mythological figures. A courtly beholder would have been familiar with such a practice and certainly would have known how to make these connections when they were offered in a painting.

⁹¹³ GREEN: *A Maidens Dreame*, fol. 2r.

⁹¹⁴ IBID., fol. 4v–5r. Why Greene speaks of the sisterly trio as “twins” is a mystery at this point. Maybe he referred to older sources, which spoke of a duo instead of a trio, or he was just misinformed. Another possibility is that, speaking of “Too soone you cut what Clotho earst began” he is only talking about Lachesis and Athropos, since Clotho is extracted by her field of action here.

1521 and 1531.⁹¹⁵ The set of verses about the palatine Orlando going mad due to his eternal love for the lady Angelica was an instant success “which was arousing such significant responses across European courts”.⁹¹⁶ The first real English translation was not published until 1591 by Sir John Harington, the queen’s godson; however, this does not mean that *Orlando* was not present in English discourse before then. In fact, the multilingual society of the English elite received *Orlando* in its original language or its French translation.⁹¹⁷ Soon, under Elizabeth’s reign, knowledge of Ariosto’s *Orlando* manifested in various adaptations of the story and references to it by English authors. One famous example is in Philip Sydney’s *Apologie for Poetry*, published posthumously in 1595, which states, “I dare vndertake, Orlando Furioso [...] will neuer displease a Souldier.”⁹¹⁸

Given the widespread knowledge of the plot of *Orlando*, the English noble circle must have at least been familiar with the Moirai, who are featured and named in the story. They make an appearance in the 34th song as “le Parche”, spinning and sorting threads and various fabrics, which Astolfo sees when trying to restore Orlando’s sanity.⁹¹⁹ Because of the author’s minimal description of the women “as una femina cana [canuta]”,⁹²⁰ they were often interpreted as grey-haired peasant women in adaptations and translations. In the “booke”, as Harington’s translation was called, they are described as older women at work with threads and fabrics: “An aged woman spunne the divers peecis, / Whose loose and hew did show her old and rotten / Not much unlike unto that labour this is / By which in Sommer new made silke is gotten.”⁹²¹

⁹¹⁵ EVERSON, Jane, Andrew HISCOCK and Stefano JOSSA: “Introduction”, in: EVERSON, Jane, Andrew HISCOCK and Stefano JOSSA (Ed.): *Ariosto, The Orlando Furioso and English Culture*, Oxford 2019, pp. 1–25.

⁹¹⁶ HISCOCK: “*Orlando Furioso Among the Elizabethans*”, pp. 96–97.

⁹¹⁷ IBID. Remarkably, with regard to the foreign language abilities of Renaissance English courtiers, Giordano Bruno recalls in his *La cena de le ceneri* (1584) that a European diplomat in England had no need to learn English “because all gentlemen of any rank with whom he holds conversations can speak Latin, French, Spanish and Italian” and “are aware that the English language is used only on this island and they would consider themselves barbains if they knew no other tongue than their own”. Translated in YATES, Frances: *Renaissance and Reform. The Italian Contribution. Collected Essays*, Vol. 2, London 1982, pp. 165–166.

⁹¹⁸ Quoted in HISCOCK: “*Orlando Furioso Among the Elizabethans*”, p. 94. Another prominent example is a passage in John Jeffere’s comedy *The Bugbears* from 1564, where one character claims, “I had a book / Of Orlando Furioso whereon I loved to look, / As oft as I had leisure, with passing great delight.” IBID., p. 97. Even Edmund Spenser, the model author of the Elizabethan times, spoke about his reading of Ariosto. IBID., p. 104.

⁹¹⁹ “[...] le Parche, che con tali stami filano vite a voi mortali.” ARIOSTO, Ludovico: *Orlando Furioso*, ed. by Cesare SEGRE, Milano 1990 (1516), p. 902, verse 89.

⁹²⁰ “Nel primo chiostrò una femina cana / fila a un asp traea da tutti quelli, / come veggian l’estate la villana / traer dai bachi le bagnate spoglie, / quando la nuova seta si raccoglie.” IBID., p. 905, verse 88.

⁹²¹ HARINGTON, John: *Ludovico Ariosto’s Orlando Furioso. Translated into English Heroical Verse*, ed. by Robert McNULTY, Oxford 1972 (1591), pp. 397–398, verse 87.

Harrington’s translation is also interesting from an art-historical point of view since his edition contains 46 full-page illustrations, one for each canto.⁹²² The Moirai are not depicted in much detail in these illustrations, but they are part of the plate of the 34th song (**Fig. 57**). The three sisters, whose names are written beneath them, are loosely sketched as figures inside the house where the threads and fabrics are located. Here, it is interesting to explore the other details added to the scene in this illustration, as some of them seem familiar in regard to Hatton’s image. For instance, a river runs through the space next to the house, and a figure described as “Tem.” is sketched as if running swiftly. These two elements recall the river flowing under the green ground on which Lachesis stands and the swift figure of Father Time/Kairos above, respectively. Could there be a connection between this scene and the setting of the 34th and 35th songs of *Orlando Furioso*?

The scene starts with Astolfo visiting the empire of the moon on a mission to cure Orlando of his furiousness. Saint John the Evangelist brings Astolfo to a palace next to a flowing river. They find the palace stuffed with cotton, silk, and flax, which three women are eager to weave into fibres. Saint John explains that these women are the Parcea, who weave the mortal life:

Now, she that diuide them, and bestow / The course from finer, and the thicke from thin, / Workes to that end, that those which finest grow, / For ornaments in Paradise must dwell, / The course are curst to be consum’d in hell.⁹²³

The work of the three women is supported by an old man who carries plates with names on them to be bound around the woven bundles. Scholars have identified this “aged man”, who “did hold his pase so swift / as though to runne he onlie had bin borne”, as the personification of time.⁹²⁴ Clearly, Harrington did as well, as he labelled the figure “Tem[pus]” in his illustrations. Harrington’s illustration of the 35th song shows this figure in more detail as a bearded and winged old man (**Fig. 58**). The man does not have a single lock on his forehead or wings on his feet, but his iconography is otherwise very similar to

⁹²² This was and still is a remarkable number of illustrations, especially considering Harrington almost certainly published his work at his own expense. DEGL’INNOCENTI, Luca: “Reading the Poem ‘in the Very Picture’. New Evidence on Harrington’s *Original Sin*”, in: EVERSON, Jane, Andrew HISCOCK and Stefano JOSSA (Ed.): *Ariosto, The Orlando Furioso and English Culture*, Oxford 2019, pp. 50–68, p. 52.

⁹²³ “Sceglie le belle fila ha l’altra cura, / perchè si tesson poi per ornament / del paradiso; e dei più brutti stami / si fan per li dannati aspri legami.” ARIOSTO: *Orlando Furioso*, p. 905, verse 90. HARRINGTON: *Ludovico Ariosto’s Orlando Furioso*, pp. 397–398, verse 89.

⁹²⁴ “This aged man did hold his pase so swift / As though to runne he onlie had bin borne / Or had it gev’n him as a special gift, / And in the lappet of his cloke were borne / The names of men with which he made such shift.” HARRINGTON: *Ludovico Ariosto’s Orlando Furioso*, p. 398, verse 91; EMMENS, J.A.: “Een Fabel van Ariosto”, in: *Nederlands kunsthistorisch jaarboek 15* (1964), pp. 93–104.

that of Father Time/Kairos in the *Hatton Portrait*. Besides the visual similarities, the description of the old man and the words used to describe him in *Orlando* spin a connection between the two figures. The Moira’s work is linked to the work of Time, which is a connection also made by the composition of the emblem side of the *Hatton Portrait*. In the latter, Father Time/Kairos levitates directly above Lachesis’ head, which is not a compositional coincidence.

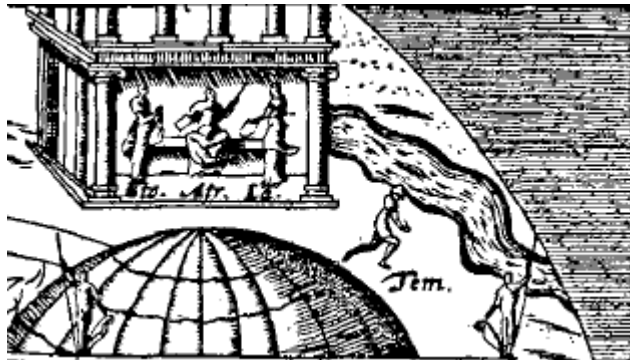


Figure 57: *Illustration of the 34th Song of Ariosto's Orlando Furioso, translated by Sir John Harington, detail of the Moirai.* Picture quote: HARINGTON: *Ludovico Ariosto's Orlando Furioso*, Plate 34.

Figure 58: *Illustration of the 35. Song of Ariosto's Orlando Furioso, translated by Sir John Harington, detail of Father Time.* Picture quote: HARINGTON: *Ludovico Ariosto's Orlando Furioso*, Plate 35.



A beholder of the *Hatton Portrait* who was familiar with Ariosto’s setting of a moon empire, which included the Moirai, a river, and Father Time, would be able to draw a connection between the text and the painting. The details of the moon and the river underneath the Lachesis scene especially highlight this reference and the possibility to understand and connect the iconography with the courtesy discourse of the Elizabethan

times. However, this similarity to Ariosto’s scene was not unique in early modern Europe, and such references can be found in other paintings from the 16th century. In his article “Een Fabel van Ariosto”, J.A. Emmens shows how the Venetian edition of Ariosto’s work from 1556 already illustrated the Parcea/Father Time scenery of the 34th and 35th songs in the discussed manner. Emmens further notes that artists adapted the setting even earlier and cites the incorporation of the scene into the painting *Le tre Parche* in 1530 by the Italian painter Sodoma.⁹²⁵ This picture, which is an allegory of human life, depicts the three young naked sisters in a complex setting discussing human life with Time, an old man (**Fig. 59**).⁹²⁶ This painting is just one of the many examples of how widely the scene inspired works of art all over Europe throughout the 16th century.⁹²⁷



Figure 59: Sodomas:
*Allegory of Life. Le Tre
Parche, 1525, Rome, Gallerie
Nazionale, ©Palazzo
Barberini.*

For displaying Lachesis, the goddess of fate, a courtier such as Hatton would have thought of a setting that was familiar to him and his fellow courtiers. In the same manner, adapting the symbolism of the literary scene adds a new layer of meaning to the depicted subject by incorporating it into the image’s wider context. Here, the empire of the moon also becomes the sphere of Elizabeth, Hatton’s ruler, whose empire Hatton was a servant to and who had

⁹²⁵ IBID., pp. 103–104.

⁹²⁶ This portrayal of the Moirai as naked young women is connected to a special iconography which Giannoulis has called “die erotische Moira”, which depicts the sisters naked or with bare torsos. GIANNOULIS: *Die Moiren*, pp. 74–77.

⁹²⁷ Another interesting example cited by Emmens is a little-known print from 1585 that is now in the collection of the Uffizi in Florence. EMMENS: “*Een Fabel van Ariosto*”, pp. 103–104.

the power to determine his life. Like Lachesis, who measures the thread of Hatton’s life, Elizabeth was the one person whose goodwill was vital to a courtier. Tempus, who collects the plates of names for the human souls in *Orlando*, supports Lachesis in ruling over a human’s life span. In the *Hatton Portrait*, he becomes Kairos, who represents the opportune moment to be seized. This adaption extends the frame of external powers ruling over Hatton’s life and enriches the pool of courtly subjects.

Besides the book’s popularity, there is further reason to believe that Hatton had read *Orlando*. Based on an analysis of books in the possession of members of the Hatton family, W.O. Hassal has posited that Hatton had a particular interest in Italian books, as suggested by the several dedications to him by Citoloni and Ubaldini.⁹²⁸ Certainly, it can be assumed that Hatton, as a man of the court, also had a copy of *Orlando* in his private library. At the very least, there is evidence that his descendants owned a copy, as the *Catalogue of Lady Hatton’s Books*, a list of properties from the early 17th century, identifies a version of *Orlando Furioso* in “The scow next the (sic!) the closet. / The fifth shelf from the ground.”⁹²⁹ Unfortunately, the list does not specify a date or location, but another entry indicates that the list was most likely made for the wife of Christopher Hatton III (1605–1670), who became the First Baron Hatton under Charles I.⁹³⁰

In summary, Ariosto’s *Orlando Furioso* warrants recognition as an essential work in the English 16th century and even into the 17th century. Similarly to Hatton’s portrait, Lachesis appears in this book with her sisters as the goddesses of fate in circumstances of life, death, and pivotal moments. In combination with the figure of Lachesis, the dancing couple and the musician form a common courtly scene in the *Hatton Portrait* in their ritual of enjoyment and celebration. Another side of this life is represented in the figure of Lachesis, who drew the favourable thread that allowed for such joy and motion in the harmony of the Elizabethan court. The importance of this thread is repeated in the musician’s instrument, which illustrates the harmony of music and courtly life. Only a good thread can make a

⁹²⁸ HASSALL: “*The Books of Sir Christopher Hatton at Holkham*”, pp. 6–7.

⁹²⁹ Finch-Hatton Papers: FHN0642: *Catalogue of the Lady Hatton’s Books*, Northamptonshire Record Office, 17th century, fol. 3r.

⁹³⁰ Alternatively, it could have been Christopher Hatton II or Christopher Hatton IV. However, given that a headline on the last folio recto reads “Bookes t[hat] S[ir] Chris: Hatton had with him in Cornbury”, I believe that it must have been Christopher Hatton III, and the list was of the books of his wife, Elizabeth (d. 1672). Cornbury Park was the seat of Henry Danvers, First Earl of Danby, in Oxfordshire. Danvers was another successful diplomat under Charles I, and he worked with the same architect, Nicholas Stone, as Christopher Hatton III. For more information, see CHEW, Elisabeth: “*A Mockery of the Surveyor’s Style? Alternatives to Inigo Jones in Seventeenth-Century Elite British Architecture*”, in: MCKELLAR, Elizabeth (Ed.): *Articulating British Classicism. New Approaches to Eighteenth-Century Architecture*, London 2017, pp. 57–95.

good sound for dancing. As the portrayed, Hatton is fashioned in the mythology of the goddess of fate, to whom he owed his skill and his lucky opportunity to perform in front of the queen, which enabled him to secure his career and wealthy position at the court.

Night, a lamp, and courtly life

To the right of Lachesis, another element is present which has not yet been discussed: a golden vessel upon a round column. While this pictorial detail seems plain at first sight, it draws a lot of attention, as it is singled out in the composition as the only element on the right-hand side of the middle scene, and a dense circle of sparks forms a shining aureole around the vessel. Yet, this detail has received little attention in articles and entries on the double-sided portrait, and only a few readings of it have been suggested. Thus, the vessel has been largely overlooked by the already sparse interpretations of the double-sided portrait.

Of the few researchers who have considered it, Tarnya Cooper has proposed that the vessel should be seen as a golden chalice representing the human soul.⁹³¹ Charles Moseley has disagreed with that proposition on the basis that such symbolism is “not known to him”.⁹³² Instead, he has interpreted this element as a lamp on a small pillar and described it as “the lamp of faith, shining in the darkness, standing on a pillar of constancy” in the context of the picture as a whole.⁹³³ This interesting religious interpretation is rooted in Moseley’s assumption that this portrait is “an anticipatory funeral portrait” meant to illustrate Hatton’s life after his death.⁹³⁴ However, such an interpretation reduces the variety of references on the panel. For example, it has been shown that the appearance of one of the goddesses of fate does not ultimately lead to the subject of death but instead allows for several strings of interpretation. While a Christian reading such as Moseley’s should not be discarded, the vessel offers a variety of symbolic readings.

⁹³¹ COOPER, Tarnya: “*A Double-Sided Portrait. Christopher Hatton*”, in: DORAN, Susan (Ed.): *Elizabeth. The Exhibition at the National Maritime Museum*, Exhibition Catalogue, National Maritime Museum Greenwich, 1 May to 14 September 2003, Greenwich 2003, pp. 136–139.

⁹³² MOSELEY: “*A Portrait of Sir Christopher Hatton*”, p. 378, note 3. Of course, Moseley’s argument against Cooper seems to lack effort. Unfortunately, Cooper has not included references or sources in her interpretation of the vessel, so it is not possible to retrace her thought process.

⁹³³ IBID., p. 377.

⁹³⁴ IBID. Moseley has also connected this portrait with the actual funerary portrait of Henry Unton in the NPG. I discuss this comparison in more detail in the following chapter, as I think it does not pay tribute to either of the portrait’s unique narratives.



Figure 60: *Hatton Portrait*, emblem side, detail of the vessel on a pillar, ©Northampton Museum and Art Gallery.

In the humanistic image culture of Hatton’s time, this pictorial element should be seen as part of the whole rather than an independent element. Indeed, several details in the middle section on the emblem side only start to make sense when considered in relation to one another.

Upon closer examination of the vessel, differences in the yellow colouring of the vessel and the sparks can be noticed on the right-hand side (**Fig. 60**). An even more subtle detail is a large spot above the vessel. The brushstrokes here seem to have obliterated the area, as if something was overpainted. At first

glance, it looks like a snake’s head is coming out of the vessel (**Fig. 61**).⁹³⁵ Given the evidence of overpainting, it can be assumed that the vessel’s shape was at some point different from how it is today. While it is impossible to say by whom or when this overpainting was done, it is a key observation when discussing this detail. Overall, this area of the image deserves more attention from scholars, especially since no form of overpainting has been observed or mentioned before.⁹³⁶ What could have been overpainted here? And what implications does this have for the object’s identification?

⁹³⁵ These superficial observations could be completed by results found in the technical analysis done at the NPG.

⁹³⁶ Of course, this is most likely because the painting was examined thoroughly for the first time when it was lent to the NPG by the museum in Northampton. Before that, there were only low-quality photographs of both sides, which nevertheless showed its terrible condition. Consequently, it was not possible to examine the painting in as much detail as it is today.



Figure 61: *Hatton Portrait*, emblem side, detail of the vessel, ©Northampton Museum and Art Gallery.

The apparent compositional connection between the vessel and the figure of Lachesis implies a well-prepared and meaningful combination. In this sense, it is worth shifting from an observational approach to an iconographical one to explore an object that accompanied the Moirai in the pictorial context of the 16th century. Adapting Moseley’s suggestion, this study proposes that the vessel should be seen as an oil lamp. As a symbol, the oil lamp is an ambiguous detail whose meaning has varied from context to context. First, the oil lamp, or candle in some cases, is a symbol which has often been used in the context of scholars and late-night studying. This concept is known as *lucubratio*, which is the basis for the words “lucubration” and “to lucubrate” in the English language. More commonly, the phrase “burning the midnight oil” is still used as a euphemism for intellectual work carried out at night. A common theme in classical writings is an appreciation for late-night hours in which one can work peacefully and without distractions.⁹³⁷ Quintilian, for instance, wrote about the “advantage of lucubration, when the silence of the night, a shut-up

⁹³⁷ For example, Cicero, Tusc. 4,44., writes about the late-night work of Demosthenes: “Cui non sunt auditae Demosthenis vigillae? qui dolere se aiebat, si quando opificum antelucana victus esset industria” (Who has not heard of the sleeplessness of Demosthenes? Who said that he was grieved if ever he had been beaten by the diligence of workmen rising before the break of day). CICERO, Marcus Tullius: *Tusculan Disputations*, transl. by J.E. KING, Cambridge (Mass.) 1927, pp. 374–375.

chamber, and one light, keep the mind, collected, as it were, upon its subject”.⁹³⁸ Plutarch similarly used “lamplight” as a symbol of such important night-time work in his biography of Demosthenes.⁹³⁹

In 16th-century Europe, humanist scholars adapted this concept of fruitful late-night work. Most famously, Erasmus of Rotterdam published his *Lucubrationes* in 1516, in which he adapts the image of the oil lamp as a visual symbol for the concept of lucubration. Cesare Ripa also uses it as a critical attribute in the entry of his *Iconologia* entitled *Studio*. The image shows a busy scholar working late at night. He sits on a bench next to a rooster, which signifies nightly attentiveness in this context, and an oil lamp provides the necessary light (**Fig. 62**).⁹⁴⁰ Even before Ripa’s work, the topos of working at night was heavily adapted and used by writers and artists alike during the Renaissance.⁹⁴¹ Even the emblem books of the 16th century use the oil lamp and the candle to symbolise diligence and hard work.⁹⁴² An example from England is the picture *Studiis Invigilandum* in Geoffrey Whitney’s *Choice of Emblems*. In this emblem picture, which is reminiscent of Ripa’s *Studio*, a candle stands in the middle of a table with a book and an hourglass inside a sparse interior (**Fig. 63**).⁹⁴³ Indeed, artists and authors used the lamp and the candle interchangeably to address lucubration.⁹⁴⁴ The text under Whitney’s picture acknowledges the importance of studying and making the most of the passing time:

⁹³⁸ Notably, however, Quintilian did not recommend lucubration as an everyday activity: “But this manner of study, much more than any other, requires a good state of health; and in order to preserve that health, it should be used but sparingly, as otherwise we encroach upon nature, by allotting to hard labour a time, which she has granted to us for the rest of our body and the recruiting of our strength.” QUINTILIAN: *Institutes of the Orator. In Twelve Books*, Vol. 2, transl. by J. PATSALL, London 1774, p. 234. For more information on the reception of lucubration in Imperial Rome, see KER, James: “Nocturnal Writers in Imperial Rome. The Culture of *Lucubratio*”, in: *Classical Philology* 99/3 (2004), pp. 209–242.

⁹³⁹ Plutarch recalls an instance where Demosthenes was mocked by another orator, Pytheas, who claimed that his arguments smelt of oil lamps. Demosthenes replied, “Lamplight shares different experiences with you and me, Pytheas.” PLUTARCH: *Demosthenes and Cicero*, transl. by Andrew LINTOTT, Oxford 2013, p. 27.

⁹⁴⁰ RIPA, Cesare: *Iconologia*, ed. by Sonia MAFFEI, Torino 2012 (1611), p. 562. With reference to Aulus Persius Flaccus, who wrote about late-night studies in one of his satires, the conception emerged that a student consumes more oil than wine because he works so much at night. This notion has often been cited in interpretations of oil lamps in pictures of scholars. BORCHHARDT-BIRBAUMER, Brigitte: “*Lucubratio Krincingeriana oder Die Liebe zur Wissenschaft*”, in: BRANDT, Barbara, Verena GASSNER and Sabine LADSTÄTTER (Ed.): *Synergia. Festschrift für Friedrich Krinzinger*, Vol. 2, Wien 2005, pp. 503–511, p. 504.

⁹⁴¹ Borchardt-Birbaumer has given an excellent overview of the development of *lucubratio* throughout the Renaissance, which I highly recommend as an entry text on this topic. *IBID.*, pp. 506–508.

⁹⁴² HENKEL/SCHÖNE (Ed.): *Emblemata*, pp. 1366–1370.

⁹⁴³ WHITNEY, Geoffrey: *A Choice of Emblems*, ed. Henry GREEN, New York 1967 (1586), p. 172. The interior undoubtedly hints to the study of a scholarly ideal, the *Raumkasten*, which Roland Kanz has traced from Petrarch back to St. Geronimo. KANZ, Roland: *Dichter und Denker im Porträt*, München 1993, pp. 25–43.

⁹⁴⁴ Indeed, the lamp and the candle were used interchangeably by artists and authors addressing the lucubration. For more on this, see BURY, John: “*The Use of Candle-Light for Portrait Painting in Sixteenth-Century Italy*”, in: *The Burlington Magazine* 119/891 (1977), pp. 434–437; Cf. SEIDEL, Katrin: *Die Kerze. Motivesgeschichte und Ikonologie*, Hildesheim, Zürich, New York 1996.

Watche, write, and reade, and spende no idle hower, / Inritche your mindes with some thinge, everie
 daye: / For losse of time, all other losse exceedes, / And evermore it late repentaunce breedes. / [...]
 Wherefore behoulde this candle, booke, and glasse: / To use your time, and knowe how time dothe
 passe.⁹⁴⁵



Figure 62: Cesare Ripa: *Iconologia, Studio*, 1611. Picture quote: RIPA: *Iconologia*, fol 6.



Figure 63: Geoffrey Whitney: *Studiis invigilandum*, 1586. Picture quote: WHITNEY: *A Choice of Emblemes*, p. 172.

Given such connotations, an oil lamp shining in the dark could be an encrypted sign of the courtly elite’s educational and intellectual environment. Especially when combined with the Moirai, it emerges as a vanitas symbol depicting the impermanence of life and the inevitable fate of death.⁹⁴⁶ An oil lamp can be seen, for instance, in a Moirai print by Joris Hoefnagel, Hans von Aachen, and Aegidius Sadeler the Younger from 1589. In this print, the three sisters of fate, with Clotho in the middle, are in a complex and highly emblematic arrangement (**Fig. 64**). On the left side of the picture, Lachesis, who observes the thread, has a burning oil lamp next to her. It stands upon a column, which forms an iconography similar to that of the *Hatton Portrait*. On the right side of the print, another oil lamp is shown next to Atropis; this time, the smoke is black. While Lachesis’ light is still burning,

⁹⁴⁵WHITNEY: *A Choice of Emblemes*, p. 172.

⁹⁴⁶WILBERG VIGNAU-SCHUURMANN, Theodora: *Die Emblematischen Elemente im Werke Joris Hoefnagels*, Vol. 2, Leiden 1969, p. 218.

the one next to Atropos is fading, which reflects her death-bringing duty of cutting the thread.⁹⁴⁷

While deciphering the complex composition of this print is beyond the scope of the current discussion, it illustrates the humanistic tradition of connecting the Moirai with the oil lamp. As a symbol of lucubration — work done at night — it further fits into the nightly sphere of the middle scene on the emblem side of the *Hatton Portrait*. As shown, this area is sprinkled with stars and a moon and seems to be ruled by Lachesis, a daughter of the night. Well-educated Elizabethan beholders would have certainly taken notice of the iconographical language used here and spun their own connections to other pictures of the Moirai they had encountered.

Alongside the observation that the vessel’s depiction was somehow altered, these iconographical considerations strongly indicate that the vessel is in fact an oil lamp, which embeds it in a highly complex humanistic discourse. With the Moira Lachesis and the courtly dancers, the middle scene reveals itself as a courtly reflection on fate and the dependency on higher powers. Additionally, this scene is connected to the Kairotic moment: just as Hatton used his dancing to grasp an opportunity, courtiers should seize the moment and capitalise on the favourable fate they are granted. Of course, this would also include educating themselves in the fashion of their time and being aware of their circumstances.⁹⁴⁸ However, as seen in the print by Hoefnagel, the oil lamp carried the connotation of a vanitas symbol as well, as burning in one moment could cause its light to fade in another.

Lachesis is an equally ambiguous pictorial figure. She might be the fatal sister who represents the future and is accountable for life on earth, but she is still a mediator between the celestial and earthly spheres and between life and death. In this regard, it is not entirely wrong to read the *Hatton Portrait* as a memorial portrait. However, the lamp is shining bright, not fading, and the goddess depicted is Lachesis and not another sister of fate. While the pictorial language in the painting entertains many readings, it emphasises life rather than death, particularly the life of a courtier who was dependent on the favour of others, above all the queen. Her symbols — and, thus, her image — reoccurred in the observation

⁹⁴⁷ BLISNIEWSKI: *Kinder der dunkelen Nacht*, pp. 120–123.

⁹⁴⁸ As shown in Chapter 1, self-discipline in education and studying was required of the ideal courtier in the 16th century.

The middle scene on the emblem side acts as both a commentary on and independent addition to the combination of Father Time and the Latin poem around it. Still, it is connected to other parts of the emblem side image and the portrait side in more than one way. Its position in the middle of the panel is not coincidental; on the contrary, it intentionally locates Lachesis in the very centre of the portrait. The beholder can therefore draw connections between Lachesis and Father Time above her, the text below her, or the Hatton portrait behind her. Overall, the pictorial and textual elements of the image form a network that maps all of the motifs and creates connections amongst them. Analyses can rebuild and reinterpret this network time and time again. In such a context, the middle scene proves to be the core part of the iconography on the emblem side, and it presents many opportunities to be deciphered by an attentive beholder who would seek to solve the riddle of the double-sided portrait.

12. Display and Functioning of a Double-Sided Painting

After examining both sides of the portrait, it is time to connect the two and formulate an understanding of the object as a whole. What kind of reception was the portrait intended for? And what was the audience of such a demanding piece? Moreover, how and where might a double-sided painting like this have been presented? These questions are crucial to understand the object and draw conclusions about its context in Elizabethan England. In this chapter, connections and comparisons are made with other English and European images from the 16th century to clarify the cultural atmosphere in which this particular object was commissioned and created. While the *Hatton Portrait* has yet to be connected with any other Elizabethan picture painted on both sides, this chapter presents some objects that can help contextualise the seemingly unique way in which the *Hatton Portrait* was crafted and ultimately contribute to a better understanding of this kind of painting in general.

A two-faced picture and its intended beholders

Understanding and interpreting a portrait such as Christopher Hatton's begins by addressing its status as a whole picture that features two separate images. As shown, objects and hints of Hatton's life and status are interspersed on the portrait side of the *Hatton Portrait*. This side also situates his figure in the context of his time and representation, which centres on his role as a courtier. On the emblem side, the iconography evolves into a discourse about opportunity, dependency on higher powers, and the courtly culture, which integrates mythological figures, such as Father Time/Kairos and Lachesis, the goddess of fate, with carefully chosen inscriptions. Furthermore, it contains references to parts of Hatton's life, including his skill and fondness for dancing, and the overarching presence of the queen.

Even though Christopher Hatton is not explicitly portrayed on the emblem side, he is nonetheless the focal point of both sides. As shown, the absence of his likeness in the emblem side image shifts the focus away from his personal attachments and towards a much broader discussion of the circle in which he lived. Still, the picture offers numerous connections to Hatton as a person through, for example, the dancers' display and the calculated location of Lachesis in the centre of the painting. When viewing this two-sided painting, it is always necessary to take into account the presence of the other side, and

neither side should be ascribed inordinate importance or be seen as defining the overall interpretation.

Regarding the simultaneity of both sides, it should be noted that previous research on this object has concentrated heavily on the iconography of the emblem side. Tarnya Cooper, who is the only scholar to have addressed an interpretation explicitly, has differentiated between the functioning of the portrait side versus the emblem side: “The portrait side acts as a kind of register of Hatton’s worldly achievements, while the reverse warns of the need to consider passing time and thus man’s mortality.”⁹⁴⁹ Similarly, Charles Moseley has described the portrait as “an anticipatory funeral portrait”, or an image of Hatton meant to memorialise his life as if he were already dead.⁹⁵⁰ Such interpretations are not wrong, but they are too narrow. This particular reading of the emblem side makes the mistake of limiting its meaning to the subject of death. In fact, the pictorial elements also play with the ambiguity of life and destiny as well as the importance of time and fate. This discussion certainly encompasses the impermanence of life and human mortality, but it does not emphasise it as the central aspect to be read.⁹⁵¹ The two sides are more closely connected, as the extraordinary quality and two-sidedness of the object marked it as a complex piece for discussion in a highly intellectual humanistic atmosphere.

A funeral portrait of Henry Unton, now displayed at the NPG, can be examined to illustrate the difference between an apparent memorial portrait and the *Hatton Portrait*. This example has been mentioned by Moseley in connection with Hatton’s portrait.⁹⁵² The enormous horizontal panel measures 74 by 163.2 centimetres and is a rare narrative portrait from the Elizabethan times. Unlike the two objects of this study, the commissioning process of this painting is very clear: it was commissioned after Unton’s death by his widow, Dorothy Wroughton, and recorded in her will in 1634.⁹⁵³ Henry Unton (1557–1596) was a diplomat at Elizabeth’s court and a friend of Christopher Hatton.⁹⁵⁴ The two men wrote letters to

⁹⁴⁹ COOPER: “*A Double-Sided Portrait. Christopher Hatton*”, p. 138.

⁹⁵⁰ MOSELEY: “*A Portrait of Sir Christopher Hatton*”, p. 377.

⁹⁵¹ Alternatively, Chris Egerton has understood the portrait in connection with the completion of Holdenby in 1581 as “the ‘birth’ chart or nativity chart of the completed building, as well as an astrological and pictorial snapshot of the proprietor himself; an example of multi-electional astrology”. EGERTON: “*Great Planets*”, p. 4.

⁹⁵² “But some links with the convention represented by the well known funeral portrait of Sir Henry Unton 1597”. MOSELEY: “*A Portrait of Sir Christopher Hatton*”, p. 374.

⁹⁵³ BOLLAND: *Tudor & Jacobean Portraits*, p. 100.

⁹⁵⁴ GREENGRASS, M.: “*Unton (Umton), Sir Henry (c. 1558-1596), Diplomat and Soldier*”, in: *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (23.09.2004), <https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-26203>. (accessed 02.08.2022).

each other, some of which are transcribed in a letter book compiled by Harris Nicolas.⁹⁵⁵ Hatton's heir, William Newport, was also a companion of Unton during some of his travels.⁹⁵⁶ Unton's funeral portrait features a plethora of motives, with the courtier's likeness in the middle (**Fig. 65**). His figure appears multiple times on the panel, with each iteration portraying him in one of the important stages of his life and profession. In the middle, he is shown in the act of writing, which reflects his profession as a diplomat. While Unton's death is the explicit topic of this left part of the panel, the right side illustrates the stages of his life.⁹⁵⁷

Unton's portrait has not received much attention from art historical research.⁹⁵⁸ The only in-depth picture analysis is presented in an article by Roy Strong, who interprets the painting as a "memorial portrait, a genre which enjoyed a considerable vogue in Elizabethan and Jacobean England".⁹⁵⁹ He explains that the portrait's most remarkable quality is its combination of didactic elements with memento mori symbolism.⁹⁶⁰ Indeed, the subject of vanitas pervades the portrait. To Unton's right, a skull with an hourglass steps towards him, symbolising that his time has come. As a counterpart, an angel flies towards Unton from his left to welcome him to the sphere of the divine heaven. In the top-right corner of the painting, a moon with a face is seen amongst the clouds, and a sun with a face appears in the opposite corner. These two small figures underline the portrait's contrast between vivid life as the day and its end as the night.⁹⁶¹

⁹⁵⁵ NICOLAS: *Memoirs of the Life and Times of Sir Christopher Hatton*, pp. 490–493.

⁹⁵⁶ STRONG, Roy: "Sir Henry Unton and His Portrait. An Elizabethan Memorial Picture and Its History", in: *Archaeologia or Miscellaneous Tracts Relating to Antiquity* 99 (1965), pp. 53–76, pp. 60–66.

⁹⁵⁷ Transcribed in STRONG: *Tudor & Jacobean Portraits*, pp. 315–316.

⁹⁵⁸ Like Hatton's portrait, this picture has mostly received only singular mentions or entries in exhibition catalogues. See NICHOLL, Charles: *Shakespeare and his Contemporaries*, London 2015, pp. 14–15; BOLLAND: *Tudor & Jacobean Portraits*, p. 100.

⁹⁵⁹ STRONG: "Sir Henry Unton and His Portrait", p. 53; PIGLER, A.: "Portraying the Dead. Painting-Graphic Art", in: *Acta Historiae Artium Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 4 (1956), pp. 1–75.

⁹⁶⁰ STRONG: "Sir Henry Unton and His Portrait", p. 54.

⁹⁶¹ Considering the special meaning of the moon in Elizabethan iconography, the moon could of course be understood as a reference to Elizabeth. Unton, like Hatton, was professionally dependent on his monarch. When commissioning his portrait, Unton's widow would surely have thought about presenting her deceased husband in a favourable light to the sovereign.



Figure 65: Unknown: *Sir Henry Unton*, c. 1596, oil on panel, 74 cm x 163 cm, NPG 710, ©National Portrait Gallery London.

The use of symbolism in these details is comparable to that in Hatton's portrait, where the moon appears several times, and other planets set the scene. However, the symbolism in Unton's portrait clearly revolves around one main theme since, above all, the picture functions as a memorial painting visualising the life of the late courtier, including his ancestry, his social affiliation, and the places he had been. The mourning march, which seems to start directly at the house where he was born and started his career, reflects how his life inevitably led to his death. Unton's portrait primarily focuses on the idea that he had reached the end of his earthly life and entered the afterlife, yet his memory would live on in his monuments and portraits. The depiction is dominated by the subject of his death, while the scenes of his "selective visual biography" illustrate the life he lived before that death.⁹⁶² Such a clear focus is not evident in the *Hatton Portrait*, although its symbolism does not deny that his life eventually must end. While Hatton's two images include memento mori symbols and references, the overall iconography celebrates his life with the same emphasis. Thus, it differs in how it addresses multiple areas of his life rather than only his inevitable death.

To further understand the *Hatton Portrait*, another equally complex image can be inspected and compared with it: a print entitled *Emblem of Sir Thomas Tresham* (**Fig. 66**).⁹⁶³ The print's prominent emblematic character makes it immediately similar to Hatton's portrait, especially the emblem side, which has been shown to function as an emblem on its own.⁹⁶⁴ Like the portrait side of Hatton's painting, the print features a circular form. Specifically, it contains a round field in which Thomas Tresham, an avowed Catholic in Elizabethan England, is depicted sitting at a desk. His hand rests upon a book, and he is surrounded by scholarly attributes. This small print, which is now in the British Library, is only about 157 millimetres in diameter. Its artist, who signed the emblem on the left, was Remigius Hogenberg, a Dutch engraver who worked primarily in England. However, it is assumed that Tresham himself arranged the iconography of the emblem.⁹⁶⁵

Gerald Kilroy, who has written an extensive article on the portrait's inherent symbolism and numerical meaning, has called the emblem a "pictorial psychomania".⁹⁶⁶ Tresham's

⁹⁶² STRONG: "*Sir Henry Unton and His Portrait*", p. 53.

⁹⁶³ Remigius Hogenberg: *An Emblematic Portrait of Sir Thomas Tresham*, c. 1585, engraving, 14.7 cm (diameter), British Library, London.

⁹⁶⁴ See Chapter 10.

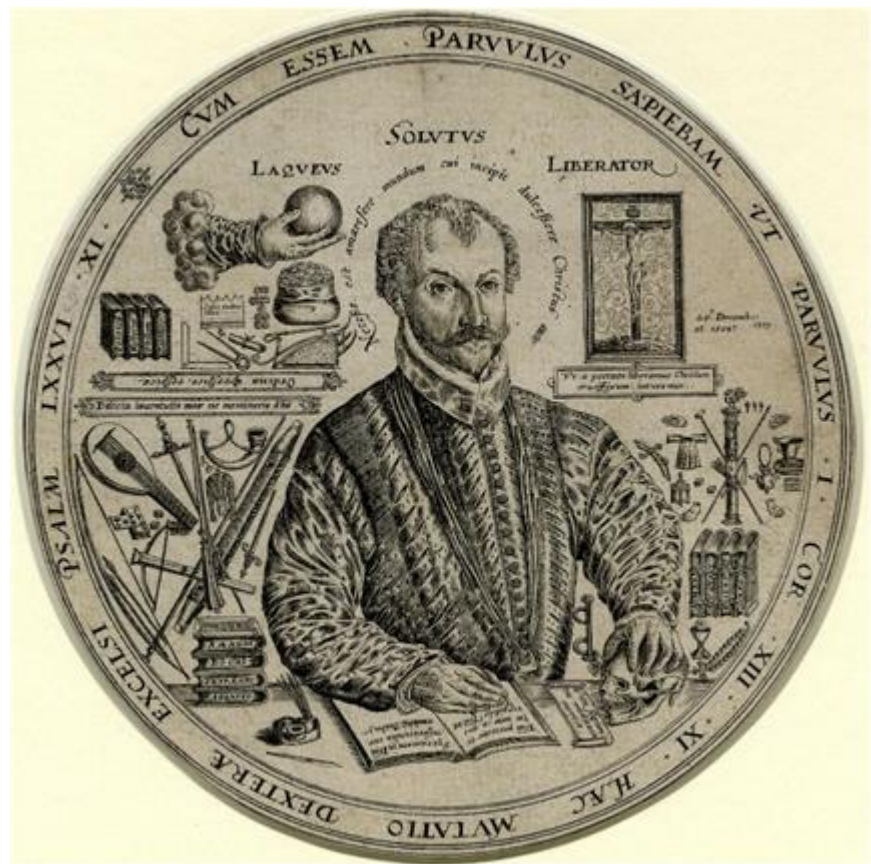
⁹⁶⁵ KILROY, Gerard: "*Sir Thomas Tresham. His Emblem*", in: *Emblematika 17* (2009), pp. 149–179, pp. 155–156.

⁹⁶⁶ *IBID.*, p. 162.

likeness is surrounded by numerous signs of the Passion of Christ and representations of the worldly sins that Tresham rejects as he enters his spiritual life. Kilroy has dated the print to around 1585 since Tresham seems to be about 42 years old in the picture.⁹⁶⁷ This emblem might have been part of a series, but it is the only one of its kind to be found so far. A unique arrangement of text and several small images surround Tresham's portrait: a hand coming out of clouds, which symbolises the hand of god offering the world; an image of the crucifixion of Christ; and several books, instruments, and pieces of armour. The choice of a circle as the form of the representation is essential since the circle signifies God's unity. Kilroy has further demonstrated how the whole arrangement of the emblem follows a specific geometrical structure that incorporates more Catholic numbers and forms of importance into the design.⁹⁶⁸

Of course, the iconography is far more complex than described here, and more research on this neglected piece of Elizabethan art is due. Still, it is notable that this emblem was made with a similar strategy as Hatton's portrait. Both images require a close reading and

Figure 66:
Regimius
Hogenberg:
Thomas Tresham,
c. 1585, engraving,
14.7 cm
(diameter), © The
Trustees of the
British Museum.
Shared under a
Creative
Commons
Attribution-
NonCommercial-
ShareAlike 4.0
International (CC
BY-NC-SA 4.0)
licence.



⁹⁶⁷ *IBID.*, pp. 155–156.

⁹⁶⁸ “The whole arrangement is geometrically symbolic. The circle, symbol of God's oneness, his unity, encloses an invisible equilateral triangle of exactly five inches, in which Tresham sits.” *IBID.*, p. 162.

meticulous observation of what is shown on the panel. Furthermore, these two distinct images rely on the beholder's ability to make associations and connections between the likeness of the portrayed individual and the multiple signs surrounding him to form a narration. In both pictures, knowledge about the respective courtier is necessary to reach a meaningful conclusion. Yet, first and foremost, they both work with possible relations between the pictorial elements within the depiction. The beholder has to treat the panel like a pinboard, where the gaze can connect and reconnect elements in every act of observation.⁹⁶⁹ This encrypted and emblematic style of representation was consciously used by Tresham, who, like Hatton, was part of a highly intellectual circle and chose an appropriate arrangement for someone of his standing. Additionally, as a Catholic in Protestant England, Tresham used encrypted symbolism to honour his faith, most famously in his building projects the Triangular Lodge and Lyveden, which featured the same symbolism and numerical code as the emblem.⁹⁷⁰

In essence, a particular way of perceiving is imperative to understand Tresham's emblem. Encircled by worldly and spiritual objects and words, Tresham's figure has to be disconnected from and put into relation with these elements by the beholder. In the act of observation, the beholder negotiates Tresham's position in the middle of his faith. In comparison, Hatton's picture can be understood as a reflection of his courtly surroundings, which frame Hatton in a particular manner.⁹⁷¹ Here, the painted panel is an open display to be filled with knowledge, connections, and references. It consists of two images simultaneously, which allows the beholder to understand the world surrounding Hatton as a courtier in the queen's circle. Besides presenting more than one side, the painting forces the beholder to examine it from more than one perspective and derive more than one meaning from it.

⁹⁶⁹ Interestingly, a stringed instrument can also be seen in Tresham's circle, where it is believed to represent the courtly life of pleasures which Tresham declined with his contemplative manner. KILROY: "*Sir Thomas Tresham*", p. 164.

⁹⁷⁰ EBURNE, Andrew: "*The Passion of Sir Thomas Tresham. New Light on the Gardens and Lodge at Lyveden*", in: *Garden History* 36/1 (2008), pp. 114–134; WILLIAMS, Richard: "*A Catholic Sculpture in Elizabethan England. Sir Thomas Tresham's Reredos at Rushton Hall*", in: *Architectural History* 44 (2001), pp. 221–227.

⁹⁷¹ Hatton's biographers have uncovered links between Hatton and Catholicism. BROOKS: *Sir Christopher Hatton*, pp. 61–62; DEACON: *The Courtier & The Queen*, p. 12; VINES: *Neither Fire nor Steel*, pp. 118–120; NICOLAS: *Memoirs of the Life and Times of Sir Christopher Hatton*, p. 499. Still, the interpretation in this book is not that the two images are similar because they contain Catholic messages, as this is not clear in the case of the *Hatton Portrait*.

Since the painting reflects Hatton's courtly surroundings, it also functions as a commentary on the notion of time and the Elizabethan understanding of an individual's dependence on it. Hatton is positioned in the middle of the horoscope, and his persona relates not only to the moving stars around him but also to the gods, Kairos and Lachesis, who are behind him. Thus, he is portrayed as a courtier in the middle of the royal macrocosm. While the queen can be seen as the one stable factor in the court — the eternal time and everlasting moment — Hatton, as a courtier, was only a swift moment, and one of many that would come and go. His position was created by and dependant on several instances and graces, some of which are depicted on the panel, where he is framed by moments and discussions of his courtly position with two panels surrounding him. This complex network includes the queen, genealogy, property, dancing, classical knowledge, and fortune. Thus, the picture presents a multi-focused complex which had to be filled with knowledge by the intended courtly beholders of the painting.

Essentially, what is suggested here is an understanding of the *Hatton Portrait* as a panel that does not display a clear message and presents multiple possibilities for interpretation. Instead of having one strict layer of meaning, it was meant to be filled with associations and discursive knowledge by courtly beholders.⁹⁷² These pictorial elements are one part of a puzzle which beholders had to decipher. However, no ultimate and solely valid answer can be obtained from any one element or even from all of the elements in combination. The key to solving this theoretical problem lies in the very structure of the courtly culture under the reign of the virgin queen and, thus, in the role of the beholder.⁹⁷³

That said, Christopher Hatton's *Hatton Portrait* was meant to address a particular kind of beholder: An Elizabethan courtier who was familiar with the courtly fashions and discussions of the time. Additionally, it demands a certain kind of perception since such an object can only be perceived in motion by changing position and perspective to look at both sides. Interpreting the painting's two pictures is necessarily a physical act that requires beholders to move their bodies to adjust either the object's position or their own position to observe the painting as a whole. The act of its observation thus becomes a performance in itself and must be contextualised in the performative culture at the court. As shown in

⁹⁷² Jessica Buskirk has presented a similar reading of the late 15th-century Netherlandish art by Hugo van der Goes, which, according to Buskirk, required a specific mode of reception by a particular audience who had "the aesthetic pleasure of problem solving". BUSKIRK, Jessica: "*Hugo van der Goes's Adoration of the Sheperds: Between Astetic Idealism and Urban Netwroks in Late Medieval Flanders*", in: *Journal of Historians of Netherlandish Art* 6/1 (2014), pp. 1–40, p. 17.

⁹⁷³ BÜTTNER: "*Performative Rezeption*", pp. 66–68.

Chapter 1, physicality and movement were almost compulsory parts of courtly life in Elizabethan England. A courtier from this inner circle would have understood the object's demand for a special type of engagement and use of space by beholders.⁹⁷⁴ Next to these physical, performative requirements, the act of perceiving the painting also poses substantial intellectual challenges. The mythological figures on the panel need to be correctly identified, and additional knowledge of classical texts and languages is imperative.

The interplay between the *Hatton Portrait* and the beholder can be further understood in the context of courtly games. In the Elizabethan court as a whole, every form of exchange, entertainment, and communication with the queen was a playful, encoded style of expression.⁹⁷⁵ The ability to navigate the dichotomy between what is shown or said and what is actually meant to be seen in Elizabethan paintings was precisely what the audience needed to analyse Hatton's complex object. Thus, the observation constituted a playful dance around the double-sided painting for beholders as well as a dance between Hatton, as the portrayed, and his own personal riddle. Like Hatton, who proved himself through the act of dancing, beholders could prove themselves through their perception of the object, which represented the commissioner's status and ambition. The beholder was demanded to look at it closely and ultimately responsible for filling in the gaps opened up by the game of observation.

Double-sided pictures in late medieval and early modern Europe

Having characterised the audience of the *Hatton Portrait*, this section now addresses the extraordinary way in which the painting was crafted. While no comparable double-sided painting from the Elizabethan era has been found so far, this type of multi-perspectival portrait was not unusual in 16th-century Europe. Nevertheless, research on this kind of painting is still rare and has only sparsely evolved since the ground-breaking publication

⁹⁷⁴ Clim Wijnands addresses this topic of “moving bodies [and mobile images]” in WIJNANDS: “*Reflections of the Hidden Duchess and the Moon King*”, pp. 92–99. It should be noted that in 1533, the year of Elizabeth's birth, Hans Holbein had already painted the anamorphosis of the *Ambassadors*, which is only perceptible when viewing the panel from a certain angle. Since objects such as this were quite common in Europe before the 1550s, it can be suspected that this kind of perception had a tradition even before Elizabeth's reign. For more on the topic of anamorphic art, see HUNT, James and John SHARP: “*The Mathematics of the Channel Anamorphosis*”, in: *Journal of Math and the Arts* 3 (2009), pp. 19–31; DE ROSA, Agostino: “*Jean François Niceron. Perspective and Artificial Magic*”, in: *FME Transactions* 45/2 (2016), pp. 215–226.

⁹⁷⁵ In his article on Elizabethan poetry and poets, Richard Helgerson follows a similar approach, describing the poetry at court as a playful and restricted “poetic game”. HELGERSON, Richard: *Self-Crowned Laureates. Spenser, Jonson, Milton, and the Literary System*, Berkeley 1983, p. 59.

by Angelica Dülberg in 1990.⁹⁷⁶ In reconstructing the development of portraits with painted back sides, Dülberg has traced their existence back to the 15th century.⁹⁷⁷ In many cases, a double-sided image was actually one of two panels that had been painted on both sides and united by a hinge or leather strap to form a diptych. It was not uncommon for these panels to be separated years after their production and individually supplied with new frames, thus concealing that they had ever belonged together.

In terms of iconography, many of these double-sided panels featured a portrait on the front and a religious subject on the back, which transformed the whole diptych into a devotional image.⁹⁷⁸ Especially when the panels were smaller scale, the function of the diptych was often to create an intimate relationship between the object and the beholder. Therefore, they were commonly made as presents or memorabilia for the next of kin after a beloved person had died.⁹⁷⁹ It is probably for this reason that back sides frequently displayed vanitas symbols which evoked the concepts of death and mortality.⁹⁸⁰ Still, as Dülberg has stated, it is difficult to fully comprehend precisely how these portraits were displayed or received or what their intended function was.⁹⁸¹

Like diptychs, double-sided paintings were crafted to add another layer of meaning to regular single images and intertwine the two depictions.⁹⁸² Clim Wijnands has argued that this combination of several layers in multi-perspectival objects conveys another interrelated meaning which demands the beholder to actively participate in experiencing it.⁹⁸³ This often physical activation of the beholder can be seen as one reason for the prevalence of bifocality or double-sidedness in small, intimate, and easy-to-handle objects. A double-sided design would garner more attention from the beholder and encourage a close reading of the images. However, as this chapter shows, double-sided paintings do not address only personal or intimate topics and actually engage a wide range of interactions with an interested audience. Regardless, there must surely have been a reason for commissioning a double-sided painting specifically. Working with a panel on both sides was more difficult

⁹⁷⁶ DÜLBERG, Angelica: *Privatporträts. Geschichte und Ikonologie einer Gattung im 15. und 16. Jahrhundert*, Berlin 1990; WIJNANDS: “*Reflections of the Hidden Duchess and the Moon King*”; POPE-HENNESSY: *The Portrait in the Renaissance*, pp. 208–211.

⁹⁷⁷ DÜLBERG: *Privatporträts*, p. 66.

⁹⁷⁸ IBID., p. 67.

⁹⁷⁹ IBID., p. 88.

⁹⁸⁰ IBID., p. 67.

⁹⁸¹ IBID., p. 89.

⁹⁸² John Pope-Hennessy has called them “augmented” portraits in connection to the portrait medal, which is an interesting term to apply here. POPE-HENNESSY: *The Portrait in the Renaissance*, p. 208.

⁹⁸³ WIJNANDS: “*Reflections of the Hidden Duchess and the Moon King*”, p. 81.

and time consuming than creating a one-sided portrait, so commissioning one was undoubtedly a conscious decision.⁹⁸⁴

Another group of objects that are closely related to double-sided paintings are medals and coins. Especially in Renaissance Italy, these artefacts rapidly gained popularity with the rediscovery of antique and Roman traditions.⁹⁸⁵ Additionally, developments in printing and minting machinery through trade yielded new possibilities for coin and medal production.⁹⁸⁶ While these small, circular objects were intended primarily for circulation, coins and medals became powerful instruments for political propaganda as well.⁹⁸⁷ At the same time, they served as personal devices, especially in the case of the portrait medal. Almost without exception, medals consisted of a portrait on the front and an additional visual commentary, often an allegorical design, on the reverse side.⁹⁸⁸ Mental work and prior knowledge were often required to decipher the meaning behind the pairing of the portrait with the design on the back. In England, these medals were often produced in association with a remarkable event in a person's life or in English history, such as the Spanish Armada of 1588, which should be glorified and commemorated.⁹⁸⁹ The combination of the two sides was often enigmatic, with the back featuring allegories or symbols that required prior knowledge to be meaningfully connected to the portrait on the front. This mechanism of combining two images relates to double-sided paintings, especially in terms of the mode of perceiving these objects. The compact size of medals made them suitable to hold and study closely, just like Hatton's painting.⁹⁹⁰ Furthermore,

⁹⁸⁴ "Allein der technische und zeitliche Aufwand und der damit verbundene Kostenfaktor, eine große Tafel auch auf der Rückseite zu glätten, zu grundieren und zu bemalen, muss einen Grund gehabt haben. Wollte man auf heraldische Zeichen, Devisen und Inschriften nicht verzichten, konnten diese ebenso auf der Vorderseite einen Platz finden, wie zahlreiche Bildnisse beweisen." DÜLBERG: *Privatporträts*, p. 89.

⁹⁸⁵ HILL, George: *Medals of the Renaissance*, London 1978, pp. 83–85.

⁹⁸⁶ MÜLLENHOFF/SCHERER: *Denkmäler*, pp. 13–14.

⁹⁸⁷ SCHER, Stephen: "Introduction", in: SCHER, Stephen (Ed.): *The Currency of Fame. Portrait Medals of the Renaissance*, London 1994, pp. 13–30, p. 15.

⁹⁸⁸ HILL: *Medals of the Renaissance*, p. 16; POPE-HENNESSY: *The Portrait in the Renaissance*, p. 208.

⁹⁸⁹ In the case of the Spanish Armada, several pieces were produced in England as well as in the Low Countries. HILL: *Medals of the Renaissance*, pp. 150–152; GRUEBER, Herbert: "Introduction", in: THE BRITISH MUSEUM (Ed.): *Medallic Illustrations of the History of Great Britain and Ireland*, London 1979, pp. i–v, p. i.

⁹⁹⁰ "The medal combines tactile and visual pleasure with mental exercise, as one traces the surface of the relief and appreciates the variations in tone of the metal and the patina, while absorbing the data provided by the images and texts and attempting to unravel the mysteries often contained in the emblems and devices displayed on the reverse." SCHER: "Introduction", pp. 14–15.

they were popular objects for collecting amongst Elizabethans and were present at large estates.⁹⁹¹

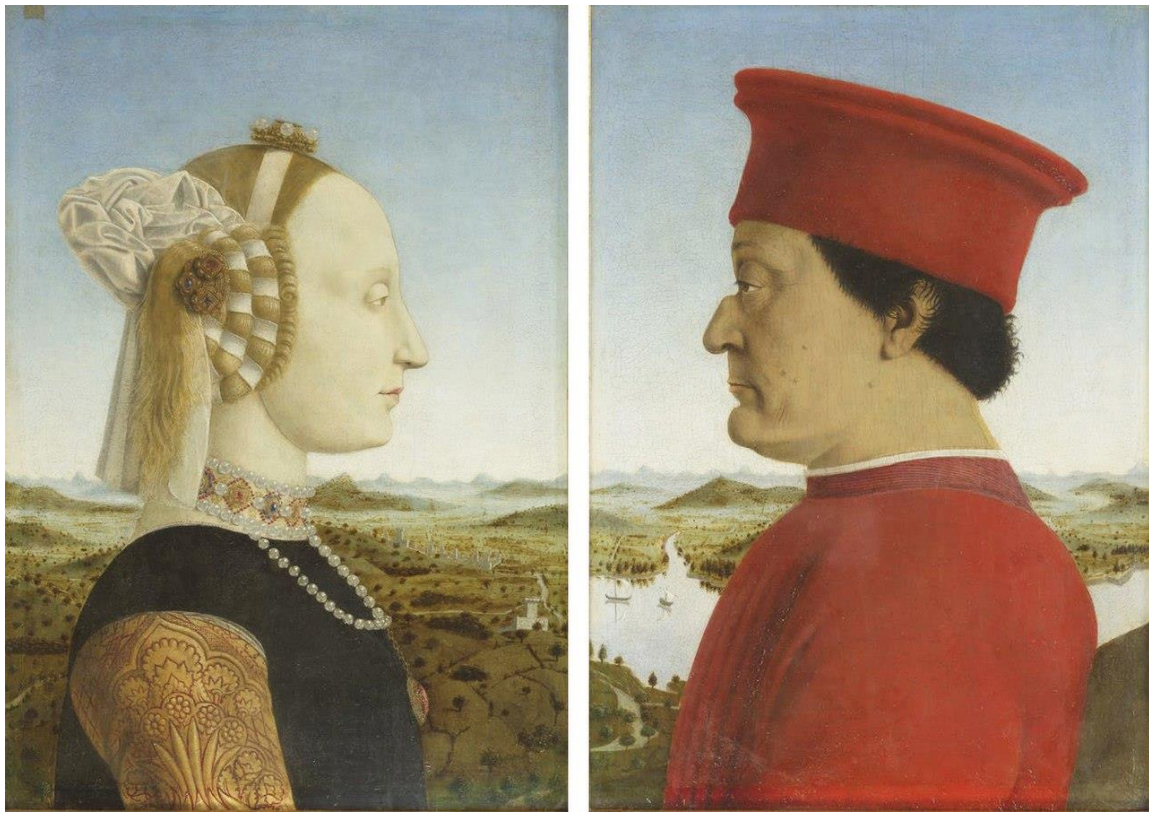


Figure 67: Piero della Francesca: *Diptych of Federico da Montefeltro and Battista Sforza*, c. 1473-1475, oil on wood, 47 cm x 33 cm, front, ©Uffizi Gallery, Florence,

Piero della Francesca's double-sided portraits of Frederico da Montefeltro and his wife, Battista Sforza, are illustrative examples of the relation between double-sided paintings and medals (**Fig. 67**).⁹⁹² These two portraits, which have been dated to around 1472, now exist as two panels measuring 47 by 33 centimetres each. However, they were originally made as a diptych. These portraits are better-known examples of double-sided paintings, and they demonstrate part of the range of functions fulfilled by these objects. On their front sides, the panels show the likenesses of the spouses in profile, which resembles the typical portrait style on medals and coins.⁹⁹³ Both portraits are painted to mirror their pendant image, thus creating a union. A triumphant carriage is depicted on the back side of each panel, in which

⁹⁹¹ Cecil collected coins. SUTTON: *The Decorative Program*, p. 44. The Earl of Pembroke is also known to have collected coins, gems, and medals. FOISTER: *Sixteenth Century English Portraiture*, pp. 169.

⁹⁹² Gilbert has made this link. GILBERT, Creighton: *Change in Piero della Francesca*, New York 1968, pp. 31–32. However, it relies less on the specific iconography and more on the subject of “death and survival” that he has identified in medals from the Italian 15th-century elite.

⁹⁹³ POPE-HENNESSY: *The Portrait in the Renaissance*, pp. 109–110.

the spouses appear a second time (**Fig. 68**).⁹⁹⁴ The carriages are again composed in relation to each other and are matching in their style and iconography, although they vary in their details. White horses draw Federico's carriage, while brown unicorns pull Battista's.

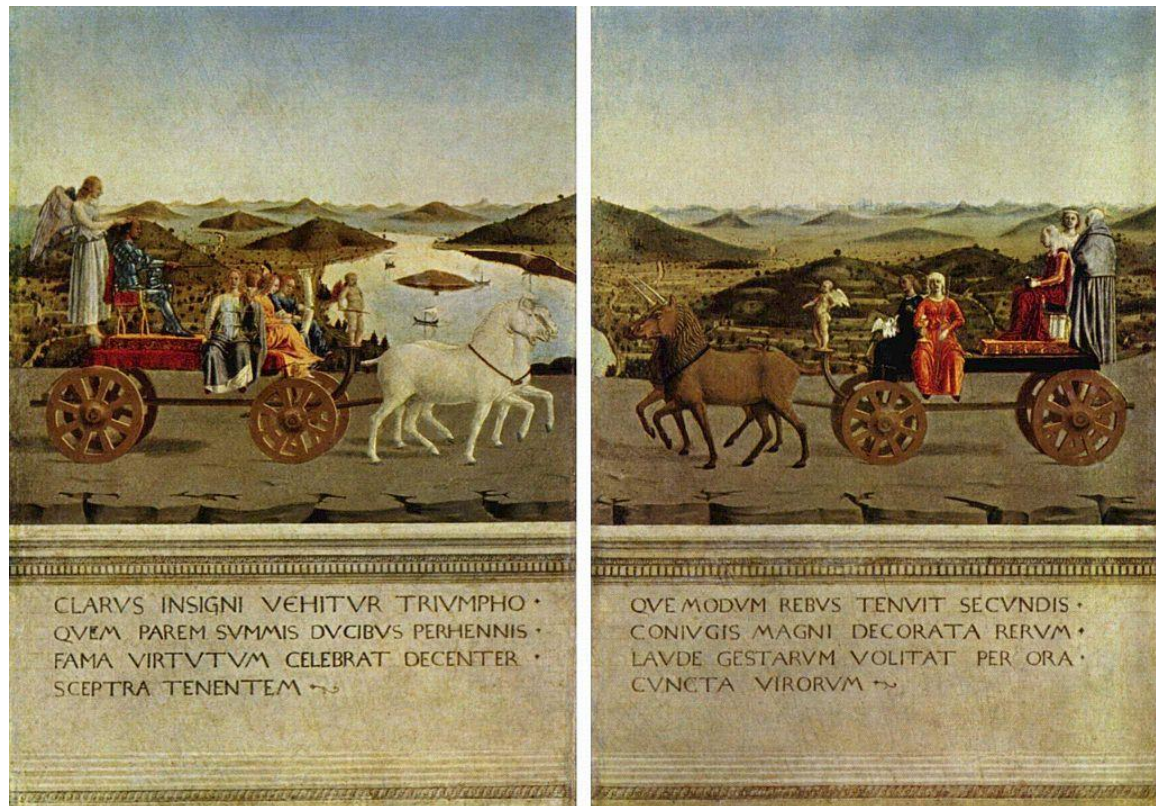


Figure 68: Piero della Francesca: *Diptych of Federico da Montefeltro and Battista Sforza*, c. 1473-1475, oil on wood, 47 cm x 33 cm, back, ©Uffizi Gallery, Florence.

These heavily allegorical images are positioned in the upper half of the panels, and, like in the *Hatton Portrait*, the lower third presents a Latin inscription.⁹⁹⁵ Here, the panels convey a sense of visually belonging together. Besides the responding coordination of the motifs on the front and back, the unity of the images is emphasised by the landscapes in the background. Notably, each individual panel gives an impression of incompleteness that is resolved by its pendant.

While further Italian examples exist, hardly any research has been done on English double-sided paintings, of which very few examples are known. More knowledge is needed regarding the popularity and amount of double-sided paintings on the British isle. However,

⁹⁹⁴ GILBERT: *Change in Piero della Francesca*, pp. 30–31.

⁹⁹⁵ The inscriptions praise the portrayed spouses individually but match in the style and tone of the text. GILBERT: *Change in Piero della Francesca*, pp. 30–31.

one well-known early example is the so-called Wilton Diptych from around 1400, which was made by an unknown painter and is now in the NPG.⁹⁹⁶ The striking iconography shows Richard II, the King of England from 1377 to 1399, in an earthly scene, while the right panel depicts the heavenly sphere. This diptych has been a popular object of discussion in medieval English research.⁹⁹⁷ The kneeling king, who can be identified by his personal signs on his robe, is accompanied by his two royal saints, Edward the Confessor and Edmund the Martyr. John the Baptist also stands in the background with the holy lamb. On the right panel, the Virgin Mary holds the Christ child, surrounded by a choir of angels. A wooden frame joins the two panels with a hinge.⁹⁹⁸

The iconography of this work has often been discussed, and possible sources for its design have been suggested.⁹⁹⁹ When folded together, the two panels form the inside, while the outside displays a coat of arms on the left and a white deer or hart on the right, both of which are signs referring to Richard as the commissioner.¹⁰⁰⁰ Here, the double-sidedness serves to strengthen the relationship between the commissioner, Richard, and the depicted devotional image, which hints to its religious function. Unlike Hatton's portrait, however, this work is a small-scale picture of 53 by 37 centimetres. Its foldability might have been intended to provide transportability, or the work may have been used as a foldable altarpiece around the size of a large manuscript.¹⁰⁰¹ The quality of the diptych stems from the references emerging on the inner panels to unite the representations through more than the physical hinge.¹⁰⁰² The figures on the different panels are positioned to correspond to

⁹⁹⁶ The name derives from the location of the diptych in the collection at Wilton House, the seat of the Earls of Pembroke, from the 18th century until its acquisition by the National Gallery London. GORDON, Dillian: "A Possible French Source for the Left Wing of the Wilton Diptych", in: *The Burlington Magazine* 157/1353 (2015), pp. 821–826, p. 13.

⁹⁹⁷ SULLIVAN, Ruth Wilkins: "The Wilton Diptych. Mysteries, Majesty, and a Complex Exchange of Faith and Power", in: *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* 129 (1997), pp. 1–18; GORDON, Dillian: "Small Worlds. The Orbs in the Westminster Retable and the Wilton Diptych", in: BOURDUA, Louise and Robert GIBBS (Ed.): *A Wider Trecento*, Leiden 2012, pp. 31–38. An image of the diptych can be found on the National Gallery's website: <https://www.nationalgallery.org.uk/paintings/english-or-french-the-wilton-diptych> (accessed 26.11.2023).

⁹⁹⁸ Several figures in the heavenly panel on the right are cut off by the frame. BUCKLOW, Spike: *The Riddle of the Image. The Secret Science of Medieval Art*, London 2014, p. 116.

⁹⁹⁹ GORDON: "A Possible French Source for the Left Wing of the Wilton Diptych"; MICHAEL, M.A.: "Transnationality. The Wilton Diptych as Text", in: LUXFORD, Julian M. (Ed.): *Contexts of Medieval Art. Images, Objects & Ideas*, Turnhout 2010, pp. 365–374, pp. 365–374.

¹⁰⁰⁰ SULLIVAN: "The Wilton Diptych", p. 1. According to Spike Bucklow, the artist designed the panels in close cooperation with Richard II himself. BUCKLOW: *The Riddle of the Image*, p. 111.

¹⁰⁰¹ The heavy damage to the outside probably occurred when it was pressed against other objects during transport. BUCKLOW: *The Riddle of the Image*, p. 111; GORDON, Dillian (Ed.): *Making and Meaning. The Wilton Diptych*, London 1993.

¹⁰⁰² Bucklow has further combined this assumption with an analysis of the pigments used in the painting. BUCKLOW: *The Riddle of the Image*, pp. 120–125.

each other. Each panel on its own suggests that there is an additional part of the depiction beyond what it shows.

Judging from these examples, the theory that the *Hatton Portrait* was part of a diptych faces two problems. First, its iconography and composition give no indication that a second part of the depiction exists.¹⁰⁰³ Since the composition centres Hatton in the middle of the panel, the iconography does not seem like it was made to have a pendant next to it. Unlike the diptych of Piero della Francesca or the Wilton Diptych, where the portrayed individuals face each other, the unity implied by the *Hatton Portrait* is not with another portrait beside it but with the beholder's gaze. The second problem concerns how the panel was crafted. All of the examples of diptychs discussed here are very compact objects with an average size of 47.6 by 33.43 centimetres. After the cropping, the dimensions of the *Hatton Portrait* are 96 by 72.3 centimetres, which is far larger. In fact, the panel itself is too grand and heavy to be lifted or held; if it had been joined with another panel, the total weight of the object would be even higher, and it would have been nearly impossible to pick up and handle.

In summary, it is more reasonable to associate the *Hatton Portrait* with single panels painted on both sides from the European 16th century. Identifying a body of similarly crafted objects is helpful to clarify how the portrait functioned and was handled. A particularly interesting object in this category is the *Portrait of Adam Wachendorff with a Putto Blowing Bubbles* by Cornelis Ketel, which is now in the Rijksmuseum Amsterdam (**Fig. 69**).¹⁰⁰⁴ The front side shows a portrait of a man in a black robe who is holding up a piece of paper. His desk is visible on the left side of the painting. This bearded man has been suggested to be Adam Wachendorff, a German merchant of the Hanse in London.¹⁰⁰⁵ This identification is based on the coat of arms visible on a small golden watch that rests upon the table next to the man. Inscriptions in the upper half of the painting specify that the portrait was made in 1574 when the sitter was 35 years old.

¹⁰⁰³ Angelica Dülberg has argued that the form and gesture in which the portrayed is displayed often demand a pendant on the other side: "wenn [...] Geste und Wendung ein Gegenüber forden". DÜLBERG: *Privatporträts*, p. 67. Generally, I follow the opinion of David Ganz, who has recognised the active part of folding pictures and their media-historical impact. See GANZ, David: "Gelenkstellen von Bild und Schrift. Diptychen, Doppelseiten und Bucheinbände", in: RIMMELE, Marius and David GANZ (Ed.): *Klappeneffekte. Faltbare Bildträger in der Vormoderne*, Berlin 2016, pp. 55–108, p. 99.

¹⁰⁰⁴ Cornelis Ketel: *Portrait of Adam Wachendorff with a Putto Blowing Bubbles*, 1574, oil on wood, 50.3 cm (diameter), Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam.

¹⁰⁰⁵ DONCHE: "Verwantschapsraadsels op Schilderijen", p. 254.

The back side of the painting shows a striking allegorical image of a putto standing on a patch of grass with plants. He holds a device for blowing bubbles in his hands, and dark clouds loom in the sky behind him. Under the upper frame, there is a Greek inscription which translates to “Man is a Bubble”, or *Homo Bulla* in Latin. Another Latin inscription is visible on the frame on the front.¹⁰⁰⁶ These inscriptions help beholders recognise that the iconography of the putto blowing bubbles derives from the *Homo Bulla* allegory, which centres on the idea that human life is as transient as a bubble.¹⁰⁰⁷ This concept circulated in a proverb in Renaissance Europe and was famously used by Erasmus von Rotterdam in his *Adagia*.¹⁰⁰⁸ Together, the two sides form a memento mori allegory: on the back, the bubble-blowing putto represents youth, while the front shows a portrait of a mortal man whose life is fleeting. The watch on the table can be seen as a reminder of the transience of life and is thus the one element which evokes the subject of mortality on the front side.¹⁰⁰⁹ Artists frequently used the *Homo Bulla* allegory in the early 16th and 17th centuries to acknowledge the brevity of life and the importance of using one’s short time on earth in a virtuous way.¹⁰¹⁰

This painting by Ketel is a small-scale, round object with a diameter of 50.3 centimetres. Above Wachendorff’s left shoulder, the initials CK can be seen against the brownish background. While few researchers have addressed this painting, Nicolas Galley has deemed it the oldest surviving painting by Cornelis Ketel and noted that it was made during the artist’s stay in England.¹⁰¹¹ In view of its round format, Dülberg has suggested that the painting might have been a “Kapselbildnis”, a type of round painting that would be stored

¹⁰⁰⁶ “SERMO DEI AETERNUS CAETERA OMNIA DADUA” (God’s word is eternal, everything else is ephemeral). DÜLBERG: *Privatporträts*, p. 247.

¹⁰⁰⁷ EBERT, Bernd: “*Homo Bulla. Zum Motiv der Seifenblase als Sinnbild der Vergänglichkeit*”, in: EBERT, Bernd and Moritz WULLEN (Ed.): *Der Ball ist rund. Kreis Kugel Kosmos*, Berlin 2006, pp. 88–95, p. 89.

¹⁰⁰⁸ STECHOW, Wolfgang: “*Homo Bulla*”, in: *The Art Bulletin* 20 (1938), pp. 227–228, p. 227. For more on the development of this motive, see EBERT: “*Homo Bulla*”; Cf. HEEZEN-STOLL, B. A.: *Cornelis Ketel, uytnemende schilder, van der Goude*, Delft 1987.

¹⁰⁰⁹ HEARN, Karen and To SCHULTING: “*A Man of the Wachendorff Family*”, in: HEARN, Karen (Ed.): *Dynasties. Painting in Tudor and Jacobean England 1530-1630*, Exhibition Catalogue, Tate Gallery, 12 October 1995 to 7 January 1996, Peterborough 1995, pp. 104–105, p. 104.

¹⁰¹⁰ HEEZEN-STOLL: *Cornelis Ketel*, pp. 8–9. A print made by the engraver Hendrik Goltzius in 1594 showing a youth blowing bubbles was long believed to have been the first work incorporating this allegory in one image. However, as Stechow has shown, Ketel’s work is an even earlier example. STECHOW: “*Homo Bulla*”, p. 228.

¹⁰¹¹ This localisation and the dating of the object to 1574 are very interesting for the contextualisation of Hatton’s portrait. Following the dating of Hatton’s portrait to around 1580, Ketel’s portrait of Adam Wachendorff must have been painted sometime before the *Hatton Portrait* was made. In addition, since both images were probably made in the London area, it seems that double-sided paintings were more prevalent in England at the time than has previously been suspected. GALLEY: “*Cornelis Ketel. A Painter Without a Brush*”, p. 96; STECHOW: “*Cornelis Ketel. Einzelbildnisse*”, p. 202; HEEZEN-STOLL: *Cornelis Ketel*, p. 7.

in a small round box to protect it. Certainly, the painting was not made to be hung on the wall given that it presents motives on both sides and is relatively small.¹⁰¹² The work functions similarly to Hatton's portrait, as it is an object that was painted on both sides and made to be picked up, closely inspected, and turned around for further observation. The iconography can also be connected with Hatton's image since it creates an interplay between a portrait and an allegorical discussion of time. In Ketel's round picture, one complex motive, the Homo Bulla, contrasts with the merchant's image at a certain age.¹⁰¹³ On the portrait side of Hatton's painting, his figure is situated in the larger context of an entire cosmos, which is matched with the display of various facets of courtly life and discussions on the back.

Objects with two sides, such as Hatton's and Ketel's, also bear a playful invitation to observe what the painting offers and engage in a close reading of it. While they deliver intellectually challenging messages, double-sided paintings can also leave room for playful



Figure 69 (left, recto; right, verso): Cornelis Ketel: *Portrait of Adam Wachendorff with a Putto Blowing Bubbles*, 1574, oil on wood, 50.3 cm (diameter), ©Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam.

¹⁰¹² DÜLBERG: *Privatporträts*, p. 247. While not enough is known about both objects to permit further speculation, Ketel is an interesting artist to consider for further research on this topic since he has a proven connection to Hatton. TOWN, Edward: "A Biographical Dictionary Of London Painters, 1547–1625", in: *The Volume of the Walpole Society 76* (2014), pp. 1–235, p. 6. See also Chapter 3, which discusses the portrait of Hatton supposedly made by Ketel.

¹⁰¹³ For Ketel's portrait, Stechow has suggested that the combination of a portrait with the allegory of the Homo Bulla can be found on a German medal from about 1634. STECHOW: "Homo Bulla", p. 228. This would, in any case, be later than Ketel's work. Still, the apparent connection between medals, coins, and double-sided paintings warrants further inspection in the future.

references and associations.¹⁰¹⁴ The combination of two images in one object can create a visual surplus primarily for entertainment purposes while still being physically and intellectually demanding.

A remarkable unknown painting which is likely from the late Elizabethan times offers an extreme example of the more humoristic approach of double-sided paintings. This object has been discussed solely by Malcolm Jones and seems to have disappeared from the surface of art historical observation following its auction at Christie's in 1998 (**Figs. 70 and 71**).¹⁰¹⁵ The painting, which Jones has dated to the early 17th century, is another rare example of an English image that was painted on both sides.¹⁰¹⁶ With dimensions of 48.3 by 38.1 centimetres, it is significantly smaller than the *Hatton Portrait*. On the front, a man and a woman stand close to each other. The woman's bosom can be easily seen through her transparent blouse. The inscription in the lower part of the picture reveals that the couple are husband and wife and hints at a humoristic, secretive character: "What behind this board douth lye / None Shall know but my wife and i."

The self-reflective message rhetorically forbids the beholder to look behind the panel or board. Together with the eroticised depiction of the woman, it literally seduces the beholder to turn the panel around and have a look at the reverse side. On the back, the painting is completed by an image of a cat with two tails, which fills the whole upper half of the painted panel. The lower half displays another inscription directed at the curious observer:

Now sir you sir that sir hath sir / tacken downe this bourd efaith sir / Yow see sir ad percave sir / that you are but a prying knave sir / behoeld a katt with two tailes plaine sir / kis between them for your paine sir / and then hang yp the bourd again sir.

¹⁰¹⁴ Here, I follow Marius Rimmele's idea for devotional images, which he has contextualised with religious foldable images, such as altarpieces, in the exchange between the mental observation of the image by the beholder and their piety. RIMMELE, Marius: "Transparenzen, variable Konstellationen, gefaltete Welten. Sytematisierende Überlegungen zur medienspezifischen Gestaltung von dreiteiligen Klappbildern", in: RIMMELE, Marius and David GANZ (Ed.): *Klappeffekte. Faltbare Bildträger in der Vormoderne*, Berlin 2016, pp. 13–55, pp. 25–26.

¹⁰¹⁵ Unknown: *Portrait of a Couple with a Two-Tailed Cat*, c. 1600, oil on panel, 48.3 cm x 38.1 cm, location unknown.

¹⁰¹⁶ JONES, Malcolm: "The Cat in the Badge. The Iconography of Late Medieval Bicaudal and Other Felines", in: BLICK, Sarah (Ed.): *Beyond Pilgrim Souvenirs and Secular Badge. Essays in Honour of Brian Spencer*, Oxford 2007, pp. 35–54, p. 151.



Figure 70: Unknown: *Portrait of a Couple with a Two-Tailed Cat*, c. 1600, oil on wood, 48.3 cm x 38.1 cm, location unknown, recto. Picture quote: JONES: “*The Cat in the Badge*”, p.153.



Figure 71: Unknown: *Portrait of a Couple with a Two-Tailed Cat*, c. 1600, oil on wood, 48.3 cm x 38.1 cm, location unknown, verso. Picture quote: JONES: “*The Cat in the Badge*”, p.152.

Here, what lies behind the man and his wife is revealed to be an almost offensive joke at the expense of the beholder, who is invited to kiss the cat’s ass.¹⁰¹⁷ Thus, the combination of these two painted sides in the same object produces a “trick picture” or “visual joke”, as Jones has called it.¹⁰¹⁸ Unlike the previously described objects, the intended effect of this picture combination is to cause laughter and amusement. Thus, it has a lighter and more entertaining function compared to the previous examples of Elizabethan paintings. Moreover, it demonstrates how double-sided paintings afford a special opportunity for interpretation. For beholders, the process of integrating the individual pictures and merging their contents into one message is similar to solving a puzzle. So far, each of the previously discussed double-sided objects engages beholders in becoming active and solving the riddle created by how the object was crafted. Specifically, beholders must find out what is shown

¹⁰¹⁷ In his main article on this object, Malcolm Jones argues that the motif of the two-tailed cat should be seen in relation to the lead badges that were found in London since the 15th century. Still, their exact context and meaning remain unclear. *IBID.*, pp. 167–188.

¹⁰¹⁸ JONES, Malcolm: “*Facete and Befitting Pictures. Humour in the Prints and Paintings of the English Renaissance, c.1550-c.1650*”, in: BODART, Diane and Francesca ALBERTI (Ed.): *Rire en images à la Renaissance*, Turnhout 2018, pp. 191–223, pp. 216–217.

on the other side of the panel and how the two sides come together.¹⁰¹⁹ In combination with the front side, the two-tailed cat painting delivers both a humoristic message and a didactic lesson for beholders who could not resist peeking at what they were forbidden to see.¹⁰²⁰

The examples above broaden the context of Hatton's portrait and further illustrate its relationship with beholders. They reveal the various connotations and interpretations of double-sided paintings, which may emphasise humour, support devotion, or serve as memorials. In Hatton's painting, the combination of the two sides creates a complex picture of Hatton's standing at the court, as he is surrounded by the multiple aspects of his courtly life and status with which he framed himself as a courtier. Here, the layers of courtly life, his loyalty to the queen, and representations of his status are intertwined. In essence, double-sided paintings fit perfectly with the Elizabethan intellectual culture because they simultaneously display two images which can contain further combinations of texts, figures, symbols, and other elements. Even though only a few examples are known from the Elizabethan and early Stuart times, it can be assumed that double-sided paintings were widespread in Elizabethan circles.

How and where was the *Hatton Portrait* presented?

The last section has argued that the *Hatton Portrait* has always been a single panel and was never part of a diptych. However, it is still unclear how a painting like the *Hatton Portrait* would have been presented. Considering the object itself as a source, the panel offers two main indications of how and where it might have been hung.¹⁰²¹ First, the direct and active manner in which beholders must perceive the painting's iconography would have demanded a space in which it could be carefully observed. Second, the double-sided design of the object would have required an open space for movement. Therefore, it must have been presented in a way that allowed beholders to either walk around it or turn it over.

Here, it is notable that the portrait was cut on what would be the right side when viewed from the portrait side. In the examples of double-sided images above, the presentation always involved a frame. For the diptychs, the frames were united by a hinge or similar mechanism. If this applied to this double-sided painting as well, it could explain why one

¹⁰¹⁹ WIJNANDS: "*Reflections of the Hidden Duchess and the Moon King*", p. 79.

¹⁰²⁰ This is one reason for suspecting that this cat painting was not made for the same circle that surrounded Hatton and was instead used in a non-courtly context.

¹⁰²¹ Susan Foister has shown that pictures were hung in frames on the wall but could also be "hanging by a ribbon against a piece of tapestry". FOISTER, Susan: "*Paintings and Other Works of Art in Sixteenth-Century English Inventories*", in: *The Burlington Magazine* 123/938 (1981), pp. 273–282, p. 278.

side was shortened. Removing the panel from a frame with such a mechanism might have damaged the panel and caused the right side to be cut. Given that the “L” of “LACHESIS” was damaged by the cutting, there must have been a reason for altering the panel that justified the risk of no longer understanding the word.

If the painting was displayed in a frame equipped with a hinge, the mechanism would have allowed the object to be shifted from one side to the other and thus paid tribute to the multi-perspectiveness of the object (**Fig. 72**). Furthermore, since the painting was made for close observation, it must have been presented at eye level for its 16th-century audience of Elizabethan courtiers, who were 1.65 metres tall on average.¹⁰²² The frame’s hinge could have been mounted on a wall or pillar to achieve such a presentation.¹⁰²³ This configuration would allow beholders to turn the painting from one side to the other and for each side to be seen when the object was positioned at a 90-degree angle with the wall. A performative

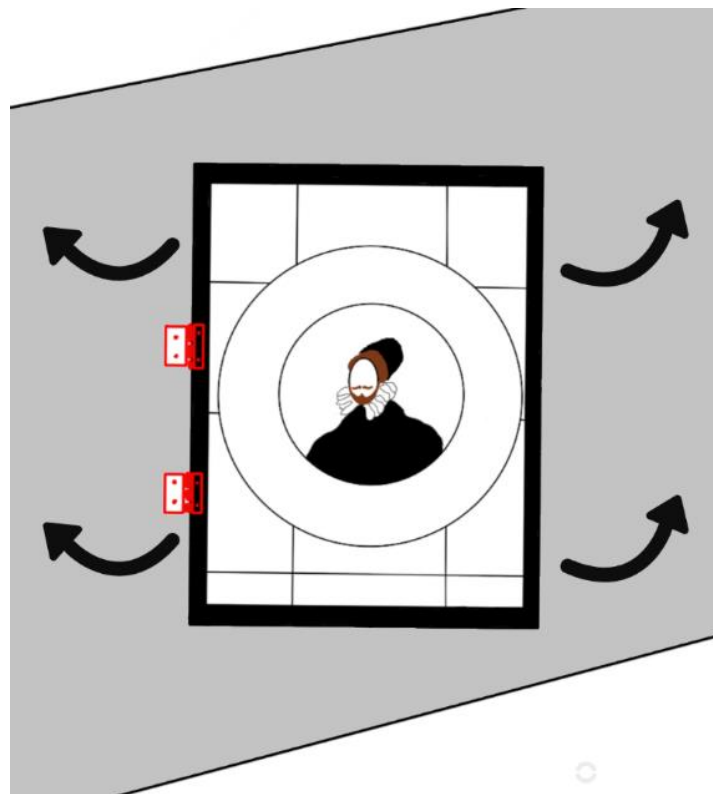


Figure 72: Illustration of the double-sided portrait in a frame with a hinge (red) allowing beholders to turn it over to see both sides.

¹⁰²² FLOUD, Roderick, Kenneth WACHTER and Annabel GREGORY: *Height, Health and History. Nutritional Status in the United Kingdom, 1750-1980*, Cambridge 1990, p. 22.

¹⁰²³ I am fully aware of Dülberg’s statement that most of these double-sided paintings were probably not meant to be hung on the wall and were actually part of a diptych, which meant they were positioned by the holding of the two panels. DÜLBERG: *Privatporträts*, p. 69. However, in this case, I argue that the size of the panel and its iconography speak to a singularly made panel which does not belong with a second image.

reception would be perfectly facilitated by this manner of display. Examples of how other Elizabethan courtiers displayed their collections indicate that it was not uncommon to have special constructions for presenting particular pictures. With respect to Robert Dudley's collection at Kenilworth, Elizabeth Goldring has reconstructed how curtains, which were possibly integrated directly into the frame, were used for "particularly special or valued pictures".¹⁰²⁴ Meanwhile, at Hardwick Castle, the seat of the Countess of Shrewsbury, portable images of Elizabeth I were recorded.¹⁰²⁵

The second question to explore here is where the *Hatton Portrait* could have been hung, and specifically in which kind of room or interior context it was presented. Susan Foister has conducted interesting research on Elizabethan interiors which impressively shows how paintings were not all hung in a specific room and could in fact be found in every kind of room around the house.¹⁰²⁶ The rooms of grand Elizabethan houses served different purposes, however, which can help to narrow down the possibilities of where the *Hatton Portrait* might have been displayed. Some rooms were for public entertainment occasions, whereas others were private spaces for use only by the family household.¹⁰²⁷ In view of the presented interpretation of the portrait, the painting would almost certainly have had a more public display, so the private rooms can be ruled out. Considering the fashions of the Elizabethan times, the first possibility to consider is a gallery.

In Elizabethan England, a gallery could serve several functions as a room. A long gallery, for example, was a location inside the house to take a walk and have private conversations. However, throughout the 16th century, it was also a room in which various pictures would be displayed, sometimes together with a distinct book collection.¹⁰²⁸ Unlike a study room, which was also used to store books and documents, a long gallery was a public space meant for display.¹⁰²⁹ Because they were used for exercise, long galleries in Elizabethan houses had almost no furniture. Instead, they were decorated with pictures that supported the

¹⁰²⁴ GOLDRING: *Robert Dudley*, p. 192.

¹⁰²⁵ HOWARD, Maurice: "Elizabeth I. A Sense of Place in Stone, Print and Paint", in: *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 14 (2004), pp. 261–268, p. 266.

¹⁰²⁶ Moreover, in her extensive study of 16th-century inventories, Susan Foister has stated that pictures were not necessarily kept in a gallery and could be kept in all sorts of rooms: "When galleries appear, they were not exclusively filled with portraits, though the gallery did provide a useful place for the display of portrait series." FOISTER: "*Paintings and Other Works of Art in Sixteenth-Century English Inventories*", p. 278.

¹⁰²⁷ COOPER: *Houses of the Gentry*, p. 273.

¹⁰²⁸ IBID., p. 302; STRUNCK, Christina: "*Concettismo and the Aesthetics of Display. The Interior Decoration of Roman Galleries and Quadrerie*", in: FEIGENBAUM, Gail (Ed.): *Display of Art in the Roman Palace, 1550-1750*, Los Angeles 2014, pp. 217–228, p. 217.

¹⁰²⁹ COOPER: *Houses of the Gentry*, p. 300. Chapter 7 discusses the study as a room.

owner's intended message when using the room. The popularity of the long gallery increased alongside the rise in portrait collecting, and it became the principal place for hanging those portraits.¹⁰³⁰

With the presentation of a range of portraits in the long gallery, the room also served to demonstrate the owner's power and status. Especially around 1575, it became common for courtiers to install long galleries in the houses they were building. Records show that Hatton's good friend Robert Dudley planned to have a long gallery in Kenilworth.¹⁰³¹ William Cecil's Theobalds also had a long gallery in addition to several other galleries.¹⁰³² It is known that Hatton had a long gallery installed in Holdenby between 1578 and 1583, which is the timeframe in which his portrait was likely made.¹⁰³³ As a 'semi-public room' which was accessible only to visitors welcomed to the estate, the long gallery would fit with the exclusive language of the portrait's iconography.¹⁰³⁴ Furthermore, since it was a room for exercising, it would be a suitable place to display an intellectually and physically demanding picture that required motion and an active body to be observed. Finally, displaying the *Hatton Portrait* in the long gallery would offer the benefit of arranging the painting between other pictures with which the intellectual beholder could make cross-references. One could imagine the portrait being displayed alongside other portraits, maybe of the Hatton family, Hatton's fellow courtiers, and the queen, to illustrate the royal circle on which it comments.¹⁰³⁵

Another possible room for display is the entrance hall. As shown, the picture references such a location in the text on the emblem side.¹⁰³⁶ However, the fact that the inscription is a quotation from the *Greek Anthologies* casts doubt on how seriously this statement should be taken. Regardless of whether the painting was hung in an entrance hall, the inscription as an adaptation and the inner reference to the dialogue with Kairos would remain the same. Hence, it is fair to consider it independent of the place where it was displayed, and it would not necessarily demand the entrance hall as a location. On the other hand, the entrance hall was the area where houseguests were greeted and where they would form their first impression of the interior. As a space, the hall was probably the most public room in the

¹⁰³⁰ GIROUARD: *Life in the English Country House*, p. 101.

¹⁰³¹ GOLDRING: *Robert Dudley*, p. 188.

¹⁰³² SUTTON: *Materializing Space*, p. 61. See Chapter 6.

¹⁰³³ GOLDRING: *Robert Dudley*, p. 188.

¹⁰³⁴ For more on the Elizabethan long gallery as a space, see SUTTON: *Materializing Space*, p. 66.

¹⁰³⁵ As shown in Part I, Hatton did commission at least one portrait of Elizabeth I. GOLDRING: *Robert Dudley*, p. 199.

¹⁰³⁶ See Chapter 10.

Elizabethan house.¹⁰³⁷ Since it was used by every person who entered or changed rooms on the floor, it was the centre and main area of movement within the estate.¹⁰³⁸ Yet, it also had a crucial symbolic function. Eric Mercer has explained that the entrances of grand Elizabethan estates were “of the tradition of making the entry imposing [...]”.¹⁰³⁹ By connecting the house’s entrance to the greater estate, the hall offered a singular opportunity to mark the interior’s function through the chosen decorations. Such decorations frequently included coats of arms and other forms of heraldry, which conveyed the presence of the estate’s owner, as well as classical ornaments highlighting the owner’s education.¹⁰⁴⁰

If the *Hatton Portrait* was presented in an entrance hall, where it would essentially greet visitors, its display would heavily target the aim of conveying Hatton’s presence to anyone who set foot in the house. It would demonstrate Hatton’s potential as the owner of the house and his intellectual abilities as the commissioner of the complex painting. Yet, even more, this room would frame the curious object in the manner of a frontispiece. In his *England and the Emblem*, Peter Daly stresses the double meaning of the term “frontispiece” as either the entrance of a building or the entrance of a book, which would be the title page.¹⁰⁴¹ He further shows a close connection between emblematic title pages and architectural allegories, such as arches of triumph for state entries.¹⁰⁴² In an entrance hall, the *Hatton Portrait* would greet visitors as the first large decorative object they would see, and it would interact with the entrance as a frontispiece. Such a display seems consistent with the object’s character.

At the same time, an entrance hall would provide the openness needed to properly perceive the painting, especially if it was constructed with a shifting mechanism. The portrait would also be displayed more singularly in an entrance hall, in which case it would be contextualised by the respective estate’s interior architecture rather than by other paintings, as in a gallery. It would surely be supported by other decorations, such as tapestries or special wooden décor in a vestibule.¹⁰⁴³ Unlike a gallery, an entrance hall would provide a

¹⁰³⁷ COOPER: *Houses of the Gentry*, p. 275.

¹⁰³⁸ IBID., pp. 275–276.

¹⁰³⁹ MERCER: *English Art 1553-1625*, p. 37.

¹⁰⁴⁰ COOPER: *Houses of the Gentry*, p. 275.

¹⁰⁴¹ DALY: “*England and the Emblem*”, pp. 27–28.

¹⁰⁴² IBID., p. 28.

¹⁰⁴³ In other houses, such as Sutton Place or Hengrave Hall, the entrance was also marked by architectural designs elevating it from a standard room. It conveyed a special emphasis on the domestic context and was “singled out for display”. MERCER: *English Art 1553-1625*, p. 37. Mercer has mentioned Brereton Hall in Cheshire, built in 1585, as the “most striking example”. This entrance was marked by twin towers joined by

unique place where the picture could greet the beholders as the main ‘protagonist’ of the room.¹⁰⁴⁴ Nevertheless, both a gallery and an entrance hall would offer distinct possibilities for beholders to interact with and perceive the painting.

Still, the question of which room held the painting cannot be answered definitively, and it further depends on which of Hatton’s houses it was located in. Tarnya Cooper has suggested that it must have hung either in Hatton’s London estate at Ely Place or at Holdenby, his family residence in Northamptonshire.¹⁰⁴⁵ Both assumptions are valid, leaving aside that Hatton owned several other estates, including Corfe Castle and Kirby Hall.¹⁰⁴⁶ However, to date, no archival evidence has been found regarding where the *Hatton Portrait* was displayed. While an inventory of the Hatton family exists from the 17th century, it describes the family’s properties at Kirby Hall and in London and does not address the living situation of Hatton in the 1580s. The family shifted their main seat from Holdenby to Kirby Hall after Hatton’s death since James I purchased Holdenby in 1607. Additionally, the inventory does not contain explicit information about paintings, or “tables”, as they were mostly called. Hence, it is impossible to determine exactly which portrait is listed.¹⁰⁴⁷ Even though a double-sided painting must have been an outstanding object in the collection, there is no reason to assume that this fact was significant when making an inventory.¹⁰⁴⁸ From the surviving archive of the Hatton family, the only possible reference to the *Hatton Portrait* is in FHAA0617 at the Northamptonshire Record Office, where a “table and frame” are listed in the hall at the house “at Westminster”, which was probably the Hatton family’s London residence.¹⁰⁴⁹ Here, the specific mention of the frame could indicate that the item was a larger picture whose frame had an important function, which would be consistent with the *Hatton Portrait*. Nonetheless, this documentation would only give insight into its whereabouts after Hatton’s death.

a pointed arch. The strategy of emphasising the entrance on the outside could have been applied to the inside as well.

¹⁰⁴⁴ More theoretical discussion of the role of display spaces, mainly after 1600, is carried out in STOICHITA: *Das selbstbewusste Bild*, pp. 125–133.

¹⁰⁴⁵ COOPER: *Houses of the Gentry*, p. 148.

¹⁰⁴⁶ See Chapter 3.

¹⁰⁴⁷ Finch-Hatton Papers: FHAA0617: *Inventory of Goods and Chattels of Sir Christopher Hatton*, Northamptonshire Record Office, 17th century; Finch-Hatton Papers: FHAA0618: *Inventory of Goods and Chattels of Sir Christopher Hatton which remained at his Westminster House at the Time of his Death*, Northamptonshire Record Office, 17th century.

¹⁰⁴⁸ As Dülberg has noted, the reverse sides were hardly mentioned in inventories, even when they were richly decorated. DÜLBERG: *Privatporträts*, p. 31. Before the mid-17th century, information about paintings was scarce in inventories. See BRACKEN: “*Collectors in England*”, p. 389.

¹⁰⁴⁹ References to easel paintings on wood “tables” are very common in inventories from that time. See FOISTER: “*Paintings and Other Works of Art in Sixteenth-Century English Inventories*”, p. 275.

Hatton had accumulated an enormous amount of debt by the end of his life, so his possessions were appraised and sold to allow his heir, William Newport, to settle some of Hatton's debts. This process is described in a document entitled *Notes on settlement of affairs of Sir Christopher Hatton, Lord Chancellor*, which can be dated to around 1597.¹⁰⁵⁰ In effect, by the time the Hatton inventories were generated in 1619, the picture had most likely been moved or given away.

Since the portrait was a highly representative and engaging object that was made to be seen and observed by Hatton's fellow courtiers, it must certainly have hung in a house that was frequented by Hatton's circle. At the same time, the house must have had a solid connection to Hatton's status and position as a courtier.¹⁰⁵¹ For this reason, it is very unlikely that the portrait was hung at Kirby Hall. Hatton rarely visited there, instead concentrating on building Holdenby shortly after purchasing it.¹⁰⁵² The same is true of Corfe Castle, which was the first important property given to Hatton by the queen but not one where he lodged frequently.¹⁰⁵³ In contrast, Hatton's London residence, Ely House, was the one place where the queen visited him more than once, and it can be seen as one of Hatton's main residences since his diplomatic obligations and life at the court were situated primarily in London. Additionally, it is known that he welcomed foreign diplomats and fellow courtiers at this place.¹⁰⁵⁴ Nevertheless, Holdenby seems to be an even more likely possibility, as he built the estate himself as a resurrection of his family's heritage and to demonstrate his ambition and grandeur. He constructed the mansion for domestic and representative reasons but with the main goal of someday hosting the queen there. As shown, Hatton shifted his family's celebrations to Holdenby, and his fellow Elizabethans came to marvel at the immensity of its scale.¹⁰⁵⁵

Returning to the object itself, the *Hatton Portrait* has been described as a testament to Hatton's position at the court as well as a memorial to himself and his life. Such monumental self-fashioning would be more consistent with Holdenby than with Ely Place.

¹⁰⁵⁰ Finch-Hatton Papers: FHAA3713a: *Notes on Settlement of Affairs of Sir Christopher Hatton, Lord Chancellor, after his Death, with Marginal Criticisms*, Northamptonshire Record Office, c. 1598. If the inventory described in this document is found, it can give the most reliable clue about how and where the portrait was presented.

¹⁰⁵¹ Maurice Howard has made a similar proposition when viewing Elizabethan images in the context of public occasions. HOWARD: "Elizabeth I", p. 261.

¹⁰⁵² See Chapter 3.

¹⁰⁵³ BROOKS: *Sir Christopher Hatton*, p. 116.

¹⁰⁵⁴ DEACON: *The Courtier & The Queen*, pp. 79–80.

¹⁰⁵⁵ See Chapter 3.

Holdenby was meant to be Hatton's great estate and the family home he never had. It was designed to be greater than any other courtier's home and the one house with which Hatton could impress the queen. Just like Holdenby, the *Hatton Portrait* seems to have had the core purpose of impressing beholders and showcasing Hatton's status as a courtier. Both the painting and the estate represented his status and belonging in the elite Elizabethan society. On a theoretical level, if the *Hatton Portrait* was made to be displayed in a specific place, the most probable answer is Holdenby.

The *Hatton Portrait* after Hatton's death

Finally, some words must be said about how the picture could have been lost without a trace until its rediscovery in the 20th century. The *Notes of Settlement* from the Hatton archive specify that Hatton's heir, his nephew William Newport-Hatton, sold several of Hatton's belongings to pay off some of Hatton's dues.¹⁰⁵⁶ Could it be that the portrait was given away during this time? It is unlikely that a portrait would be sold, but it could have been given to another diplomat as a gift from the indebted heir in an effort to reinstate himself in the favour of a court that his uncle could not leave without the shame of open liabilities.¹⁰⁵⁷ Considering the change of reign after Elizabeth's death in 1603 and the resulting shift in the atmosphere in England, it can be speculated that the portrait was not displayed with intent after James I became the king. Hatton was one of the men who helped with the trial against James's mother, Mary Stuart, in 1586, which connected him to her execution; thus, he might not have been a popular subject to be seen by the new king. A similar development occurred with the portraits of Queen Elizabeth recorded in the inventories of Robert Cecil's estates, as they were taken down after James's accession and replaced with portraits of Mary Stuart.¹⁰⁵⁸ The Hattons, like the Cecils, were a family that depended on the goodwill of the crown, and they would have prepared the interior to host and impress the monarchy, not baffle them. Hence, it could be that the *Hatton Portrait* was hidden for a long time and forgotten about over the generations. This scenario would explain the extended lack of documentation of the portrait, which was practically non-existent until the early 20th century.

¹⁰⁵⁶ Finch-Hatton Papers: FHAA3713a: *Notes on Settlement of Affairs of Sir Christopher Hatton, Lord Chancellor, after his Death, with Marginal Criticisms*, Northamptonshire Record Office, c. 1598.

¹⁰⁵⁷ On paintings as gifts, see Chapter 6.

¹⁰⁵⁸ BRACKEN: "*Robert Cecil as Art Collector*", p. 129.

Conclusion: Image and Secrecy in Elizabethan England

Sir Christopher Hatton and another knight made challenge whoe should present the truest picture of hir Majestie to the Queene. One caused a flattering picture to be drawne; the other presented a glas, wherein the Queene sawe hir selfe, the truest picture that might be.¹⁰⁵⁹

This anecdote about the courtier Christopher Hatton accepting the challenge of giving Queen Elizabeth I a picture that captured her appearance as closely as possible gives some insight into the context of paintings in the Elizabethan culture. On the one hand, the anecdote suggests that presenting a “truest picture” of the depicted person could also mean finding curious ways of deploying objects as images; on the other hand, it shows how pictures were bound into a complex of ceremonies and life at the court in the Elizabethan elite circle. Paintings could be used as gifts for the queen or a superior, as carefully chosen decorations in public or private rooms, or as *divertissements* for the courtly circle. As objects with which entertainment, puzzles, and conversations were made, paintings could function as part of a playful game. This study has shown how Elizabethan paintings, as objects that challenged and invited beholders to actively observe them, were more than just representations of status or a way to commemorate achievements.

This book started from a curiosity about a portrait that had not been thoroughly researched before. The double-sided *Hatton Portrait* is as much a curiosity piece today as it was 500 years ago. Its specific double-sided construction was the inspiration to explore how such a portrait might have been used during the reign of Elizabeth I. This inquiry included questions about the context of courtly portraits and the courtiers who commissioned or received those images. It became clear that a study concerning this large field which simultaneously concentrated on one painting needed to strike a balance by explaining the surroundings of Elizabethan culture apart from Hatton and his individual life. While William Cecil, Lord Burghley was a counterpart to Hatton in terms of character, reputation, and career, he was, unlike Hatton, a man who was portrayed so frequently that historians still do not know the exact number of portraits made of him. This distinction, along with the fact that Cecil seemed to have a completely different style of displaying himself, qualified him to be the second protagonist of this study on Elizabethan self-fashioning. Additionally, in Cecil’s circle, there was another unsolved mystery of a painting, the *Cecil Riddle*, which lacked context and a detailed analysis. These two objects thus became the

¹⁰⁵⁹ Quoted after STRONG, Roy: *Portraits of Queen Elizabeth I*, Oxford 1963, p. 17.

centre of this research. Together, they offered the opportunity to discuss the various aspects of Elizabethan paintings in the context of the court and courtesy discourse. While both images were pieces of ‘secrecy’ at the beginning of this study — and, to some extent, still are — it became apparent that they were intentionally designed to be concealing and always remain objects of speculation and puzzlement.

This study has not only delivered a thorough analysis of two understudied Elizabethan paintings but also described the context of both objects by considering them as sources of their socio-cultural environment. The applied theoretical framework of Renaissance self-fashioning helped to understand the two paintings in the interaction between multi-layered iconographies and a highly intellectualised audience. Another important subject of their discussion was where and how such pictures might have been displayed and how they were handled. The lack of archival documentation of the paintings’ stories limited the analysis to a deductive method, which nevertheless delivered valuable results and further insight into each object. Admittedly, all of the information this study offers to answer the objects’ questions will probably always have some degree of uncertainty, as many of the necessary sources have been lost forever. Still, others may be found in the future. This study does not claim to present definite answers but rather to act as a collection of all that is known about these objects so far and to demonstrate what can be concluded from the provided context of the Elizabethan courtly discourse.

The contents of this book have examined the Elizabethan epoch as part of the European early modern times by closely considering two of the queen’s courtiers. The lives of Christopher Hatton and William Cecil provide examples of developments in the visual culture of cryptic, hidden, and highly intellectual artistic outcomes of their time. Their connection reveals two very different kinds of courtier within the same courtly circle. The discussion of William Cecil has exposed how his seemingly pattern-like portraits convey his dynastic ambition. As a public figure in an official post, Cecil, like the queen herself, must have been aware of his diplomatic importance and, accordingly, his own image and reputation throughout the country. However, the direct connections to him could have been worked out and proved to be very personal, domestic, and unofficial portraits. Here, the cryptic and enclosed part of the portraits became apparent in how they seem to demand a substantial amount of contextual knowledge from the beholder. Whoever was looking at the pictures needed to know about aspects of Cecil’s private life and social context and

have access to the rooms in which these portraits were shown to understand the messages inscribed in the iconography.

The *Cecil Riddle*, which was undoubtedly presented to and commissioned for Cecil, addresses his courtly network and the topics that were discussed within it. As shown, the concepts of genealogy, heraldry, and riddles emerge in distinct iconography that is peripheral yet very personal to Cecil. Judging from this picture, a riddle was as much a visual offer to inspect as it was a problem to solve. The painting's overall depiction of a genealogical riddle which was known all over Europe as well as its personal framework for Cecil demand prior knowledge and intellectual transfers from the audience in order to be understood. In this way, this Elizabethan *Cecil Riddle* functioned as both a commentary on the courtly society and a stage for the commissioner and dedicatee of the riddle to fashion themselves in this society's discussions of family, dynasty, and legality.

In contrast to Cecil, Christopher Hatton did not represent the ideal minister and was instead known as an active and skilled dancer at the court. Thus, it seems fitting that his enigmatic double-sided painting requires a physical mode of perception. As shown, activities such as jousting, fencing, and dancing played a considerable role in Hatton's life and mainly shaped his reputation amongst contemporaries and for generations to come. Here, the riddle of the *Hatton Portrait* mainly concerns its state of being crafted as a double-sided object. In this form, it would force the beholder to move around the object or move the object around, depending on how it was displayed. In any case, some form of physical action in addition to intellectual effort would be required to perceive it properly. The picture presents pictorial elements that require deep knowledge of courtesy and humanistic topics, including heraldry, emblems, and a complex dialogic structure. Like the *Cecil Riddle*, the *Hatton Portrait* posed a challenge for courtly beholders. Nevertheless, as a personal portrait, it had a different message. The painting clearly and directly refers to Hatton, whereas such a personal reference is concealed in the *Cecil Riddle*. Still, both pictures develop a pictorial language that allows for a variety of interpretations, and both were made to be seen and talked about during close observation.

In this study, these two objects have served as examples illustrating the discursive developments between early modern Europe and the Elizabethan court. One object demonstrates Christopher Hatton's status within the cosmos of the queen and reflects that cosmos through its iconography and design as a double-sided object. The other object highlights the importance of dynasty and genealogy in Europe at the time, including in the

Elizabethan court and for William Cecil personally. All of these different layers are not visible at first sight because they are concealed by a riddle. The two courtly paintings address the respective individuals in the Elizabethan cosmos, the impermanence of their positions, and their standing in society. The secrecy of these pictures, which necessitates some kind of concealment, required the courtly audience to remain intellectually engaged with the picture, examine it from multiple perspectives, and have knowledge about the depicted.

Finally, the presented analysis can hopefully provide a case study to encourage future research to consider and thoroughly investigate unusual or curious objects from the early modern times. One recommended object for future research is *Anamorphosis, called Mary, Queen of Scots (Anamorphosis)*, a distinct object from around 1580 that fits the systematic characterisations in many ways. Like Hatton's object, this work demands an active beholder who will move around, change their point of view, and observe it closely. The panel, which is currently in the National Galleries of Scotland, is rather handy and measures 33 by 24.8 centimetres.¹⁰⁶⁰ When viewed from one angle, the panel shows the portrait of a dark-haired woman in a black dress with a prominent white ruff (**Figs. 73 and 74**). Her red lips and rosy cheeks are the only traces of vivid colour in the otherwise monochromatic composition. The background appears to be a deep green and blends in with the woman's hair and dress. Overall, this dark tone contrasts with and further emphasises the white and coloured areas. However, when the panel is observed from another angle, the woman's head and circular collar transform into a skull, which shares only the eyes and lips with the woman's face. This so-called flip image was called a 'tabula scalata' in Renaissance times. Though considered a "popular seventeenth-century pictorial",¹⁰⁶¹ there is very little research on this object group and even less about its early representatives from the 16th century. In a fundamental article on this topic, Allan Shickman states that the *tabula* as a "turning picture" originated in the Elizabethan times.¹⁰⁶² Shakespeare mentions such objects in several of his works, including *Richard II*, *Romeo and Juliette*, and *Cleopatra*,

¹⁰⁶⁰ Unknown, *Anamorphosis, called Mary Queen of Scots*, c. 1580, oil on panel, 33 cm x 24.8 cm, Scottish National Portrait Gallery.

¹⁰⁶¹ GLAUBITZ, Nicola: "Playbooks as Imaginary Theatre. Visuality and Description in Early Modern English Drama", in: BODOLA, Ronja and Guido ISEKENMEIER (Ed.): *Literary Visualities. Visual Descriptions, Readerly Visualisations, Textual Visibilities*, Berlin, Boston 2017, pp. 21–49, p. 61.

¹⁰⁶² SHICKMAN, Allan: "'Turning Pictures' in Shakespeare's England", in: *The Art Bulletin* 59/1 (1977), pp. 67–70.

always in reference to their hidden meaning. Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy* from 1621 also mentions this object group as not only double but also triple pictures.¹⁰⁶³

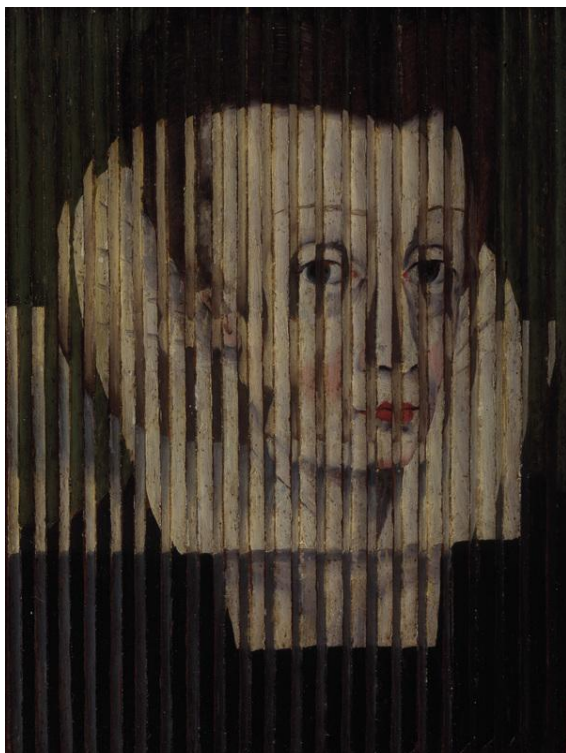


Figure 73: Unknown: *Anamorphosis, called Mary, Queen of Scots*, c. 1580, oil on wood, 41.5 cm x 34.1 cm x 5.5 cm, Portrait of the Woman, ©National Galleries, Scotland.

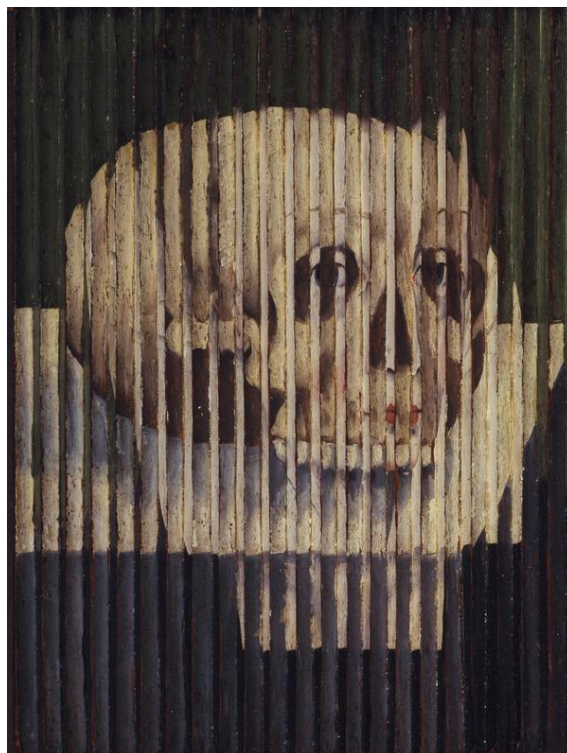


Figure 74: Unknown: *Anamorphosis, called Mary, Queen of Scots*, c. 1580, oil on wood, 41.5 cm x 34.1 cm x 5.5 cm, Portrait of the Skull, ©National Galleries, Scotland.

While it is unclear if the portrayed woman is actually the infamous Scottish Queen Mary Stuart, the object's working mechanism is remarkable and deserves further attention.¹⁰⁶⁴ It functions by dividing the two pictures — the woman's head and the skull — into vertical strips which are further adjusted on different sides of a reeded carrier. This vertical fractionation requires a change of position from right to left or left to right, which is a similarly active physical reception as that of the *Hatton Portrait*. As stated above, both objects require a “mobile spectator”.¹⁰⁶⁵ In their extraordinary fusion of two pictures into one, these two objects set the condition that both sides cannot be seen at the same time, and beholders must actively change their position, thus changing their place and letting time

¹⁰⁶³ IBID., p. 69.

¹⁰⁶⁴ Tarnya Cooper has questioned the identification of the woman as Mary while only briefly describing the picture. COOPER: “*Memento Mori Portraiture*”, pp. 316–317.

¹⁰⁶⁵ GLAUBITZ: “*Playbooks as Imaginary Theatre*”, p. 63.

pass to see the other side. The ‘whole picture’, so to speak, is never perceptible. In this way, both objects also imply a hidden, if not secretive, meaning. By necessarily concealing one part of their depiction when observed, they demonstrate their own (non-)visibility, and they require the beholder to play along with their rules and be a spectator and an active participant simultaneously.

In the case of the *Anamorphosis*, it is essential to note that the two pictures are not as independent from each other as the pictures in the *Hatton Portrait*. They share the same complete scale on the single picture surface and are congruent in more than one scale. Certain elements of their colour and composition must align to enable the transformation of each into the other. This alignment is where the two pictures are fusible. There is a point of overlap in the picture where beholders can see both images at once; here, the visual scene can go in either direction — the queen or the skull. This object offers more than one possibility and angle for observation, and it is demanding in its physical construction and iconography.¹⁰⁶⁶ In this aspect, the *Anamorphosis* is equal to the two presented case studies. Especially in connection with the *Hatton Portrait*, future research on the *Anamorphosis* could demonstrate how pictures crafted in unusual ways were more common than their now-sparse existence might suggest.

In summary, this study has aimed to expand the understanding of Elizabethan paintings by contextualising two understudied objects within the English courtesy discourse. The ideal of the courtier, in all his forms and facets, has proven to be as ambivalent as the courtly paintings. The pictorial language addressed a courtly audience who understood and discussed these references in their ambiguity. As shown by the connection of the two case studies to other objects, this form of understanding an image applied not only within the Elizabethan court but also to continental pictures. The development of the English courtly painting has to be seen in relation to European courts, and vice versa. A consideration of their role within the English cosmos as well as the broader European context is still missing from research on English paintings. Hopefully, the findings of this book can serve as an example for research on early modern courtly painting and its distinctive form under the virgin queen.

¹⁰⁶⁶ This short analysis can hopefully be inspiring for further research on this particular object and on the object group as a whole, which could enhance understandings of English Renaissance picture-making and of European visual culture overall.

Additionally, many of the queen's glamorous favourites are still neglected in art historical research but can offer valuable starting points for pursuing a deeper understanding of this epoch. One example is Thomas Heneage, another courtier connected to Hatton and Cecil. While Heneage did not play an important part in the present study, his name repeatedly came up during the research process, though no art historical sources on him have been found yet. Equally, in many ways, Cecil's mischievous son-in-law Robert De Vere, Earl of Oxford, would be an interest subject for art historians to examine as a courtier.¹⁰⁶⁷ While the initial situation for research on this era is often not ideal, and many sources have gone missing throughout the years, there are also many secrets still to be uncovered in the museums and archives which hold treasures from the Elizabethan era. Just as Elizabethan courtly paintings needed an audience to decipher them, these forgotten objects need brave minds to accept the challenge and investigate their stories.

¹⁰⁶⁷ See Chapters 5 and 6.

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Appendix

I. Genealogical Riddle from 1504

Een harde lasteghe vraghe daeranne dat men bekennen ende wel saude leeren reknen successien van hoyrrien van versterften.

Ein jonckman quam voor een chasteel gaende ende ter valbruggen vant hii staende drie rudders wit ghecleet.

Hij ghinc voort up den wal. Daer vant hii drie rudders zwart ghecleet.

Voort ghinc tot in de sale, daer hii vant drie rudders root ghecleet.

Ende van daer ghinc hij voort toot in de eetcamere. Daer vant hij sittende een scoone joncvrauwe die eenen ouden man hadde ligghende in haren scoet.

Doen vrawchde har den jonghen man wye die drie rudders waren di hiit wit ghecleet vant staende ter valbrugghen. Zoe andwoorde: "Heere dat sijn mijn drie oems van der vaderlicker zijden."

Voort vraechde hy haer wye die drie rudders waren zwart ghecleet die hij vonden hadde up den wal. Zo seyde: "Dat ziin mijn drie oems van der moederlicker ziiden."

Noch vraechdy haer way die drie rudders waren root ghecleet die hij vonden hadde on de zale. Zo sprack ende seyde:

"Dat sijn alle drie mijne kindre. Ende dese oude man die hier in mijnen scoet leeght es vader van hem neghenen, al van goeden wetterlicken ghetrauden bedde zonder eeneghe zibbe te scuerne."

De jonghe man verwonderde in de zake, vraechde haer hoe oft in wat manieren dat ditte bycommen mochte.

Zo verandwoorde ende seyde hem weder aldus:

"Dat de oude man die daer lach in haren scoet in tiiden voorleden in huwelike nam een weduwe die bij haren eersten man hadde eenen zone. Ende bij dese weduwen hadde dese oude man in huwelicke de voornomden drie rudders ghecleet met witten. Ende die overleet dese weduwe die bij haren eersten man hadde een dochtere, ende daerbij hadde dese oude man de voornomden drie rudders met zwarten. Ende dese weduwe overleet. Doe quam der weduwen zone bij haren eersten man, ende der achterste weduwen

dochter bij haren eersten man, ende trauden deen den andren in huwerlicke, ende hadden tegader een dochter, dat dem ic.

Ende doe quam dese oude man die dander twee weduwen gheadt hadde ende traude my.

Ende ic bem ziin derde wijf, ende by mij heeft hij de voors. drie rudders ghecleet met rooden, ende dar ziin mijn kinderen.

Aldus zo magh ic met rechten wel zwegghen dat de voornomden drie rudders ghecleet met witten ziin mijn ooms van der vaderlicker zijden, want het waren mijns vaders broeders.

[Hier maakt onze kopiist een uitschuivertje: hij vergat ongetwijfeld de zin over te schrijven, waarin met "rechte mag gezegd worden" dat de drie ridders in het zwart gekleed haar ooms van moederlijke zijde zijn, want haar moeders broers.]

Ende dat ander drie ziin mijn kinderen root ghecleet, ende dese oude man es vader van hem allen, alzo ghij hier hoort, al van goeden wettelicke ghetrauden bedde zonder eeneghe maeghzipbe te scuerne ghelijc Ic U hier tevooren zeyde".

De voornomden jonghe man moeste wel kennen dadt warachtich was. Hii dancte der joncvrouwen dat zo hem zo dueghdelic berecht hadde ende ghinc honen zijne straten.¹⁰⁶⁸

II. Dutch Inscriptions in the Ketel riddle-painting

A. The old man: "Dit subtijl geraetsel Eerlijc en schoõ[n] / Geue ick te geraden Elcke[n] persoon / 1576"

B. Woman leans on the sign: "Nu Elck wilt hem Versinne[n] / op mijn verclaren / Dees Twee mette[n] purper/sij[n] mijn Ooms • hier op let / Want het beyde mijns VADERS Broeders waren / Die Twee int Root sijn mij[n]smoeders Broeders • wel geset / Dã[n]der Twee in Tgeel • sijn Natuerlijck en ombesmet / Mijn Eygen kinderen • en haer alder VADERE / Leet hier in mijne[n]schoot • getrout na GODTS Wet / Nochtans geen Maechschap gecrooct • hola nz nade_{re} / Elck soeckt nv selff voorts • Als een Wijs Beradere"

¹⁰⁶⁸ Quoted directly from DONCHE: "Een genealogisch raadsel uit 1504", pp. 272–273.

C. The eldest brothers point to sign: “Tis Vremt te Verstane • In dese Figueren / Dat ons geslacht • nyet en is aen een gehout / Nochtans die ons VADER is • Inder Natueren [finger points] / Heeft ons Nichte voor de Kercke ghe trout / Dwelck ons nyet leet en is • noch haer en Berout”

D. The middle brothers’ sign: “Het waer ons oick Leet • waert achter gebleuen / Ons Nichte en waer onsen VADER ghegeuen / Nochtans in dit Leuen • sy hem niet en bestaet / Al zijn wy haer Neuen • naden Recht~e[n] graet”

E. The youngest brothers: “NOTA / Ons alder VADER doude Mā / Daerō sijn wijse Bevroeders / Heeft gehadt • denckt hoet / blijcken can / Alle beyde ons Grootmoeders / Nochtans alle 4.ons Broeders / Sij[n] ons Moeders Ooms by de/sen / Hoe kant dan sonder ons VA / DERS Maechschap Wesen / FINIS.”¹⁰⁶⁹

III. Dutch Inscriptions in van Schoten’s *Riddle of Nijmegen*

The woman’s text: “Merckt wel en siet op dit verclaren mij, / De twee in Root mijns vaders broeders ijn, / De twee in Groen sijn mihn moeders broeders, / De twee in t Wit mijn kinders. Ick moeder / Heb van dese ses den vader tot mijn man, Dat smaegschaps graet mij niet beletten kann.”

The text of the older sons dressed in red: “Twaer ons leet soot waer achter bleuen / Onse nicht en waer onsen vader gegeuen, / Want sij en is niet onses vaders nicht, / Twelck niemant en sal geraden licht.”

The text of two men in green: “Het is wonder te mercken in deser figuren / Want hij is onsen vader inder naturen, / Ende heeft onse nicht getrout, / Nochtans ons des niet en berout.”

The text of the two young boys in white: “Onser aller vader is den ouden man, / Onser tweer moder is die joffrou dan, / Maer segt mij hoe het doch kan komen, / Dat ons broeders zijn ons moders omen.”¹⁰⁷⁰

¹⁰⁶⁹ Thank you to Lyndan Warner for providing me with her transcript of these inscriptions, without which I could not have enciphered them.

¹⁰⁷⁰ This inscription has been done in accordance to the one given in DONCHE: “*Een genealogisch raadsel uit 1619*”, p. 444.

IV. English Translation of the Inscriptions in van Schoten's *Riddle of Nijmegen*

The woman's text: "Mark well what I have to say: The two dressed in red are my father's brothers. The two in green are my mother's brothers. The two in white are my own children. And I [their] mother have the father of these six men for my husband! The kinship [consanguinity] did not prevent [our marriage]."

The text of the older sons dressed in red: "It's true that it might harm to remain secret, that our niece was given [in marriage] to our father, because she is not our father's niece, although no one would easily guess it."

The text of two men in green: "It is a wonder to note in this picture, because he is our father by nature and he married our niece. But still, we do not regret it."

The text of the two young boys in white: "The old man is father to all of us. The young lady is mother to the two of us. But tell us, how could it happen, that our brothers are our mother's uncles?"¹⁰⁷¹

V. French Riddle Inscriptions

[Les Gentilhommes]

- | | |
|---|-----------------------------------|
| 1 <i>Qui sont ces deux vieillards, Mesdames</i> | Who are these two old men, Madams |
| <i>En estes vous filles ou femmes?</i> | Are you their daughters or wives? |
| 2 <i>Et dittes nous de qui sont Nez</i> | And tell us who bore |
| <i>Les deux enfans que vous tenez</i> | the two infants whom you hold |

[Les Dames]

- | | |
|--|--------------------------------------|
| 3 <i>Messieurs ces Vieillards sont nos Peres</i> | Sirs, these old men are our fathers |
| <i>Ils sont les Maris de nos Meres</i> | They are the husbands of our mothers |
| 4 <i>Maintenant ils sont nos Maris</i> | Now they are our husbands |
| <i>Et les Peres de ces Petits</i> | and the fathers of these little ones |

Over the old men, lines explaining the print are added to the scene:

[Les Vieillards]

¹⁰⁷¹ I am quoting the English translation of the inscriptions by Cornelia Niekus Moore in ROES: "The Riddle of Nijmegen", pp. 109–110.

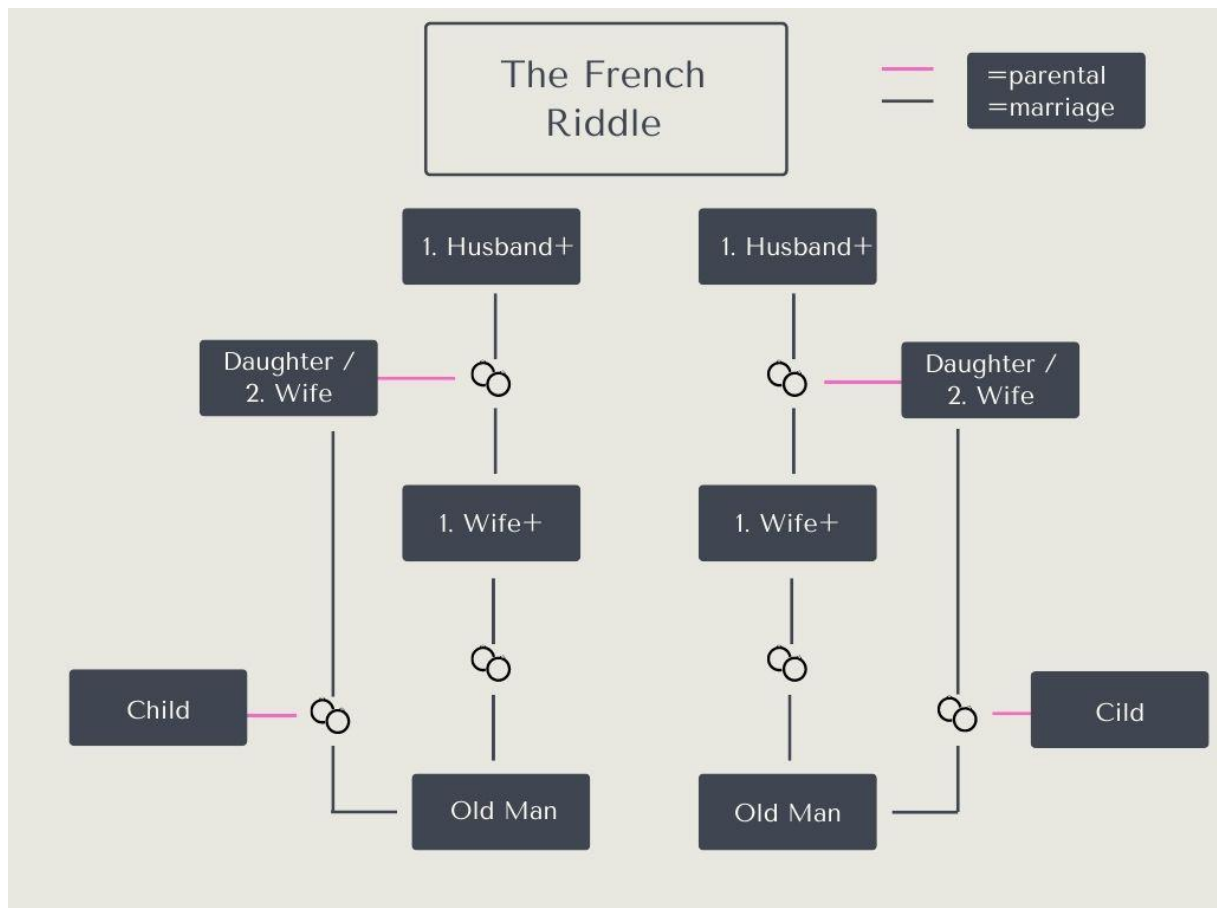
5 *Cette Enigme est assez Antique*
Et si quelqu'un de vous l'explique

This riddle is quite ancient
 and if one of you can explain it

6 *Il merite d'auoir vn prix*
Entre les delicats Esprits

He deserves to be awarded
 a place among the fine minds¹⁰⁷²

VI. Solution to the French Genealogical Riddle



¹⁰⁷² I am indebted to Malcolm Jones, who brought this print to my attention and also provided me with a first transcript and translation of the inscriptions.

Illustration Credits

ALCIATO, Andrea: *Emblematum liber*, ed. by Wolfgang HARMS and Michael SCHILLING, Hildesheim, Zürich, New York 2008 (1531).

Fig. 50 (p. 14-15).

AUERBACH, Erna and C. Kingsley ADAMS: *Paintings and Sculpture at Hatfield House, London 1971.*

Fig. 2 (Colour Plate II), Fig. 3 (Colour Plate I).

Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris.

Fig. 12, Fig. 41.

British Museum, London.

Fig. 27, Fig. 66.

Elisa von Minnigerode.

Fig. 16, Fig. 17, Fig. 18, Fig. 56, Fig. 72, Appendix VI.

Harvard Art Museums/Fogg Museum, Gift of Robert Rantoul Endicott.

Fig. 14, Fig. 15.

FOX-DAVIES, Arthur Charles: *The Book of Public Arms. A Complete Encyclopedia of All Royal, Territorial, Municipal, Corporate, Official, and Impersonal Arms*, London 1915.

Fig. 20 (p. 127), Fig. 22 (p.137), Fig. 24 (p. 158), Fig. 26 (p. 359).

HARINGTON, John: *Ludovico Ariosto's Orlando Furioso. Translated into English Heroical Verse*, ed. by Robert MCNULTY, Oxford 1972 (1591).

Fig. 57 (Plate 34), Fig. 58 (Plate 35).

Hatfield House, Hatfield, Courtesy of the Marquess of Salisbury.

Fig. 9, Fig. 10, Fig. 11, Fig. 19, Fig. 21, Fig. 23, Fig. 25, Fig. 28, Fig. 30.

JONES, Malcolm: *The Print in Early Modern England. An Historical Oversight*, London 2010.

Fig. 29 (p. 270).

JONES, Malcolm: "The Cat in the Badge. The Iconography of Late Medieval Bicaudal and Other Felines", in: BLICK, Sarah (Ed.): *Beyond Pilgrim Souvenirs and Secular Badge. Essays in Honour of Brian Spencer*, Oxford 2007, pp. 35–54.

Fig. 70 (p. 153), Fig. 71 (p. 152).

Knole House, Sevenoaks.

Fig. 13.

National Galleries, Scotland.

Fig. 73, Fig. 74.

National Gallery, London.

Fig. 78, Fig. 79.

National Portrait Gallery, London.

Fig. 1, Fig. 4, Fig. 8, Fig. 46, Fig. 65.

Northampton Museum and Art Gallery.

Fig. 31, Fig. 32, Fig. 33, Fig. 34, Fig. 35, Fig. 36, Fig. 37, Fig. 38, Fig. 39, Fig. 40, Fig. 42, Fig. 43, Fig. 44, Fig. 45, Fig. 47, Fig. 48, Fig. 49, Fig. 51, Fig. 53, Fig. 54, Fig. 55, Fig. 60, Fig. 61.

Palazzo Barberini, Gallerie Nazionale, Rome.

Fig. 59.

Parham Park, West Sussex.

Fig. 52.

Philadelphia Museum of Art, Pennsylvania.

Fig. 64.

Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam.

Fig. 69.

RIPA, Cesare: *Iconologia*, ed. by Sonia MAFFEI, Torino 2012 (1611).

Fig. 62 (p. 562).

Uffizi Gallery, Florence.

Fig. 67, Fig. 68.

Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

Fig. 5, Fig. 6, Fig. 7.

WHITNEY, Geoffrey: *A Choice of Emblemes*, ed. by Henry GREEN, Aldershot 1989 (1586).

Fig. 63 (p. 172).