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Patronage and Portable Portraits: Early English Miniatures: 1520-1544

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PATRONAGE AND PORTABLE PORTRAITS: EARLY
ENGLISH MINIATURES: 1520-1544

by

Ashley Owens

A THESIS

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PATRONAGE AND PORTABLE PORTRAITS: EARLY ENGLISH
MINIATURES: 1520-1544

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University of Nebraska, 2019

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This thesis examines function and patronage of early sixteenth-century portrait miniatures by Lucas Horenbout (d. 1544) and Hans Holbein the Younger (1497/8-1543). Portrait miniatures, a unique form of portraiture emerging in the sixteenth century, have a long tradition in England, but hold an ambiguous place within art history because of their size, variety, and multifaceted function. Scholarship on the topic of early English portrait miniatures defines and discusses the tradition as it applies to the Elizabethan miniatures of Nicholas Hilliard (1547-1619), the first major English-born artist. Therefore, the miniatures prior to Hilliard have been studied as predecessors to his works but not within their own historical context. The general prevailing concept is that, as with Hilliard, the early sixteenth-century English miniatures began and remained royal objects through the second half of the century when their use expanded outside of court. This is not the case. As early as the 1530s portrait miniatures were created for a variety of patrons and uses.

This thesis strives to prove that it is possible to study miniatures based on their physical and visual properties and to remove the predominant focus on the limited textual sources. Stylistically this collection of portrait miniatures is varied and has been approached by scholarship mainly through vested interests of museum collections in terms of technical analysis and judgments of quality. Art historical scholarship has emphasized the general stylistic differences between the portrait miniatures of Lucas

Horenbout and Hans Holbein the Younger, the two major court portraitists of this period. Through this interpretation, Holbein's works are praised as the work of a Northern Renaissance master, and Horenbout's disregarded as fixed within the old medieval style of manuscript illumination. However, this analysis of early portrait miniatures has limited the understanding of the careers and works of these two early miniaturists and their historical contexts. I will consider the stylistic differences between Lucas Horenbout and Hans Holbein the Younger as a deliberate choice that met the needs of their patrons and that their different sources of patronage had a significant impact on their approaches to portrait miniatures.

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INTRODUCTION

Portrait miniatures, a unique form of portraiture emerging in the sixteenth century, have a long tradition in England, but hold an ambiguous place within art history because while they were portraits depicting the individual likeness of a loved one or monarch, they are also often worn in ornamented cases as jewelry. The general view of scholars is that early sixteenth-century English miniatures began and remained as royal objects until the second half of the century when their use expanded outside of court.¹ However, this is not the case. Early on portrait miniatures were created for a variety of patrons and uses. I will argue that the compositional and stylistic differences found in the miniatures of Lucas Horenbout and Hans Holbein the Younger are connected to function and patronage, an approach that provides a more contextual and comprehensive understanding of the tradition.

Before exploring the function and patronage of miniatures, it is useful to define a miniature and briefly summarize its history. Early English miniatures, the primary focus of this thesis, measure on average three inches tall and typically were painted in watercolor on vellum and attached to a repurposed playing card made of paper. These miniatures are often placed in a case or box and kept within private chambers or worn in jeweled cases attached to an individual's dress. Therefore, portrait miniatures, because of their small scale, the techniques and materials used in their creation, and their multifaceted purpose, are considered generally a separate form of portraiture with its own

¹ Katherine Coombs, "English Limning: The Portrait Miniature in Tudor and Stuart England," in *Treasures of the Royal Courts: Tudors, Stuarts and Russian Tsars*, ed. Olga Dmitrieva and T. V. Murdoch (London: Victoria & Albert Publications, 2013), 44–49; John Murdoch, "The Craft of the Miniaturist," in *The English Miniature* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981), 2–5; Patricia Fumerton, "'Secret' Arts: Elizabethan Miniatures and Sonnets," *Representations*, no. 15 (1986): 9–10, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2928392>.

tradition.² Therefore they have been studied separately and considered less important than their larger counterparts.

Miniatures originated in Europe around 1460 with Jean Fouquet's self-portrait. Although their origins are fifteenth-century France, this tradition does not seem to have been popular in either England or France until the 1520s. The dates of early miniatures are often still contested, but most art historians seem to agree that the genre developed in both those countries simultaneously; it is not clear how much artistic contact existed between the two courts.³ In the beginning of the sixteenth century, few miniatures appear to have been made and little information exists on how they were framed or kept. As they are fragile, they may have been given some form of frame or case for protection. One of the few surviving frames left from the reign of Henry VIII (1491-1547) is a turned ivory case which holds Hans Holbein the Younger's *Portrait of Anne of Cleves*; the container from the late sixteenth century post-dating the miniature (**Illustration 1**).

In the Elizabethan period (1558-1604), more cases and documentation survive indicating how these miniatures were kept in luxurious settings and either stored in private or worn, but they are still concealed and only displayed at the discretion of the owner.⁴ Beginning in the 1560s, these portraits begin to be worn in open frames, with no lid covering the portrait likeness on the inside. This setting was popular for about a decade and then the new custom was to place the miniatures in gold and jeweled

² Coombs, "English Limning: The Portrait Miniature in Tudor and Stuart England," 45; Murdoch, "The Craft of the Miniaturist," 2.

³ Karen Hearn, *Dynasties: Painting in Tudor and Jacobean England 1530-1630* (London: Tate Publishing, 1995), 117; Graham Reynolds, *English Portrait Miniatures* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 2.

⁴ Roy C Strong and V. J. Murrell, *Artists of the Tudor Court: The Portrait Miniature Rediscovered, 1520-1620* (New York: Alpine Fine Arts Collection, 1984), 48-49; Susan Foister and Tim Batchelor, *Holbein in England* (London: Tate Publishing, 2006), 102; Katherine Coombs, *The Portrait Miniature in England* (London: V & A Publications, 2005), 20-21.

enameled lockets. This setting lasts into the early seventeenth century and went out of fashion in the 1630s. During the eighteenth century, miniatures continue to be widely produced by a variety of new miniaturists, but the older styles of the previous centuries were commonly placed in collection cabinets with other miniatures by antiquarians.⁵

Early portrait miniatures from this early period of collecting in the late seventeenth century begin to be understood as a particularly English art form and become associated with the art of the English Renaissance of the Elizabethan era and continue to maintain this status in modern scholarship. This nationalistic status fails to take into consideration the sixteenth-century miniatures' international origins with Flemish and Germanic artists, and their use outside the court. This conception of "English" miniatures stems instead from their royal and courtly functions and creates a picture of these works as rare objects from a lost golden age. This conception also arises from the interpretation of miniature making as exclusive to English court artists who passed down their knowledge and technique from master to pupil.⁶

The technique used to make portrait miniatures was referred to as limning in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.⁷ This term refers to the earlier technique of illustrating illuminated manuscripts from which this method of portraiture derived. Some of the earliest recorded miniature painters in England, such as Lucas Horenbout, utilized Netherlandish manuscript illumination traditions from the Bruges-Ghent school. The manuscript illumination style that predominantly influenced early English miniatures was

⁵ Roy Strong, "From Manuscript to Miniature," in *The English Miniature*, ed. John Murdoch (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981), 84; Fumerton, "'Secret' Arts," 62.

⁶ This can be seen in most scholarship as discussed in Chapter II but Katherine Coombs describes this fairly well. Coombs, "English Limning: The Portrait Miniature in Tudor and Stuart England," 47.

⁷ The word limning derives from the medieval Latin word *luminare* which means to illuminate. Coombs, *The Portrait Miniature in England*, 7.

the elegant and lavish style of the Ghent-Bruges school, the style of manuscript illumination coming from workshops primarily located in those two Flemish cities.⁸

The techniques of portrait miniature limning and manuscript illumination require a similar skillset in working with powdered pigments on parchment, and in the case of portrait miniatures, vellum in small size. Illuminators were skilled in careful minute brushwork with opaque colors.⁹ Although the portrait miniatures may have used a different binding agent, limning inherited some technical and stylistic similarities from book and document illumination.¹⁰ Similarities are visible in the treatment of flesh tones, in which early portrait miniaturists like Horenbout utilized warm pink hues with transparent hatching to represent his figures.¹¹ This technique was similarly used in figural illustrations within manuscripts. Portrait miniaturists also wielded gold paint and other pigments in a manner similar to the Ghent-Bruges school illuminators to create illusionistic and tromp-l'oeil effects on jewelry and gemstones as well as on inscriptions. The naturalistic likenesses, vibrant blue backgrounds, and gold writing within these illuminated manuscripts are also found prominently in early English portrait miniatures.¹² The key difference is that portrait miniatures exist not within the context of a text but exist independently and are supported on card and kept as a portrait to be admired as a likeness as a gift or memento.

⁸Manuscript illustrations from the Bruges-Ghent school often feature naturalistic scenes of people and landscapes that are surrounded by highly decorative borders. Ibid., 16.

⁹ Murdoch, "The Craft of the Miniaturist," 2–5.

¹⁰ Most scholars agree that both miniatures and manuscript illumination use the same technique but describe different binding agents. Ibid., 2–6; Thomas Kren and Maryan Ainsworth, "Illuminators and Painters: Artistic Exchanges and Interrelationships," in *Illuminating the Renaissance: The Triumph of Flemish Manuscript Painting in Europe*, ed. Thomas Kren and Scot McKendrick (Los Angeles: Getty Publications, 2003), 36–37.

¹¹ Murdoch, "The Craft of the Miniaturist," 3–6.

¹² Coombs, *The Portrait Miniature in England*, 16–19; Torben Holck Colding, *Aspects of Miniature Painting: Its Origins and Development*. (Copenhagen: F. E Bording, 1958), 22–29.

Often scholarship has approached the development of the portrait miniature as having become a secularized outgrowth of medieval manuscript painting, evolving into a form that fits the needs of Renaissance humanism with its emphasis on the individual. However, the artistic trends affecting this desire for depicting likenesses--as well as figural scenes and landscape with increasing attention to light, shadow and perspective reminiscent of the natural world--can be found in sixteenth-century manuscript pages as well.¹³

Manuscript illumination does not stagnate after the medieval period but evolved with painting and other artistic trends to meet the needs of patrons. Manuscript texts and illuminated official documents increasingly contained the likeness of the patron or monarch. More importantly, it is not until miniatures became popular within the courtly sphere in the early sixteenth century that there appears to be a new emphasis given to these internal manuscript portraits. The context surrounding the work, the illuminated text and intricate border decorations and symbols are increasingly removed until a simple gold roundel enclosing the likeness remains. Even though illumination is typically considered a dying art by the sixteenth century after the advent of the printing press, that technique was still valued as a traditional courtly means of decoration and for official documents. The gradual separation of manuscript illuminations into an independent genre indicates that the latter began to take on separate meanings similar to that of large-scale formal portraiture in a form that was luxurious, easily portable, and perfect for European diplomacy.¹⁴

¹³ Kren and Ainsworth, "Illuminators and Painters: Artistic Exchanges and Interrelationships," 35–37; Colding, *Aspects of Miniature Painting*, 16–29.

¹⁴ Coombs, *The Portrait Miniature in England*, 16–18; Reynolds, *English Portrait Miniatures*, 2–4; Hearn, *Dynasties*, 118.

In addition to medieval manuscript illumination, Renaissance portrait medals and larger scale oil portraits influenced the development of the portrait miniature.¹⁵ All of these genres have different functions that informed why a patron or artist may have chosen them. Miniatures differ from large scale portraits in more than just size. Oil paintings were rectangular and gazed upon from a distance. They were not intended to be held. Portraits painted in oil were often painted with deeper modeling and shadowing, because they were seen from a greater distance, hanging on walls. Miniatures on the other hand take on a small circular or oval form, are intended to be held, and are best viewed close-up. The manner in which figures are composed places emphasis on the details of the face, and the artist designs the space presented in the miniature to be appropriate for the way they were viewed.¹⁶ Unlike larger oil paintings, portrait miniatures are not displayed with the same allegory and majesty typically associated with some Renaissance portraiture. Rather a sense of intimacy is associated with miniatures because they typically show an individual's countenance as opposed to a full-length portrait with symbols indicating rank and status. Miniatures were especially useful within a courtly context because they were more easily exchanged than larger oil paintings. Portrait miniatures offered a form of portraiture that could be shared and enjoyed and exchanged between European monarchs as a part of political negotiations and marriage arrangements. Portrait miniatures were considered equally valuable to those larger portraits in oil.¹⁷

¹⁵ Reynolds, *English Portrait Miniatures*, 1–4; Coombs, *The Portrait Miniature in England*, 16–19.

¹⁶ Colding, *Aspects of Miniature Painting*, 21–31.

¹⁷ Fumerton, "'Secret' Arts," 58–60; Coombs, "English Limning: The Portrait Miniature in Tudor and Stuart England," 45.

Miniature portraits are also reminiscent of another portrait type, the Renaissance portrait medal, which may have played a part in their appeal. Medals developed in fifteenth-century Italy and appeared in Northern Europe in the early sixteenth century.¹⁸ Medals combined many of the key aspects of Renaissance culture in memorializing important individuals in a way that rivaled ancient antiquity. Graham Reynolds, a prominent art historian in the study of English miniatures, compares early portrait miniatures to medals for their circular shape and emphasis on the outline of the sitter's face.¹⁹ Portrait miniature sitters are hardly ever depicted in profile unless there was a specific classicizing intent for that pose. This suggests that the gaze was a particularly important aspect to portrait miniatures. Both miniatures and medals were sometimes worn or suspended from an individual's dress. Portrait medals are also similar to specific aspects of miniatures, such as those of Nicholas Hilliard, which use writing, symbolism and emblems to convey information about an individual.²⁰ Hilliard's *Portrait of a Man Clasping a Hand from a Cloud* offers an example of an emblematic portrait miniature from his oeuvre (**Illustration 2**). The early portrait miniatures of Horenbout and Holbein (**Illustration 6 and Illustration 12**) maintain the emphasis on the individual and, like portrait medals, share the intimacy of being held close. Medals favor a more tactile and lasting quality, readily touched, while portrait miniatures are vibrant and colorful but fragile. Although less touchable, miniatures could delight the eye with their detailed and more lifelike depiction of a loved one or monarch.

¹⁸ Stephen K Scher, *The Currency of Fame: Portrait Medals of the Renaissance* (New York: H.N. Abrams in association with the Frick Collection, 1994), 23.

¹⁹ Reynolds, *English Portrait Miniatures*, 1–4.

²⁰ However, Hilliard changed the shape of his miniatures to an oval possibly to distance them from portrait medals, even though he created medals of both Queen Elizabeth I and later James I. Portrait medals are also typically in profile, while most miniatures depict the sitters in frontal view. Strong, "From Manuscript to Miniature," 52–53.

Portrait medals may have a more official aesthetic value coming from their origins in Roman coinage, and they are struck or cast and can be reproduced.²¹ Their formal associations with classical antiquity give the medals weight and meaning. Portrait miniatures take on meanings more strongly associated with a courtly elegance found in manuscript illumination and hand-painted luxury, as opposed to humanistic elegance associated with classical imagery. Miniatures were individually painted often with expensive pigments made from rare minerals like ultramarine, from lapis lazuli²² Heavily associated with court culture and aesthetics, portrait miniatures altered and evolved over time as they expanded to include non-courtly patrons and moved farther away from the medal tradition.

Scholarship on early English portrait miniatures defines and discusses the tradition as it applies to the Elizabethan miniatures of Nicholas Hilliard. Its central focus is on the artists, their skills and techniques. Hilliard takes center stage as the first major English-born artist. His *Treatise Concerning the Arte of Limning*, written between 1598 and 1601, defines the art of creating miniatures as he understood it during the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. Hilliard's description of miniatures separates them from all other forms of art, especially large-scale oil painting and other labor-intensive decorative arts including ephemeral stage sets for courtly events.²³ Art of this kind had been highly valued earlier in the century under Henry VIII and continued to play a large role in Elizabeth's reign, but Hilliard actively attempts to elevate himself from this kind of salaried court artist work. Nicholas Hilliard's description of his own

²¹ Scher, *The Currency of Fame*, 13–14, 28, 358–60; Colding, *Aspects of Miniature Painting*, 22–23; Mark Jones, *The Art of the Medal* (London: British Museum Publications Limited, 1979), 69–71.

²² Nicholas Hilliard, T. G. S. Cain, and R. K. G. Thornton, *A Treatise Concerning the Arte of Limning* (Manchester: Carcanet press, 1992), 38.

²³ *Ibid.*, 16, 43.

work and technique and his definition of a miniaturist has been taken out of context and anachronistically applied to the earlier sixteenth-century miniature artists. The next chapter will discuss the consequences of this focus within modern scholarship.

CHAPTER I: HISTORIOGRAPHY OF PORTRAIT MINIATURES

The majority of scholarly arguments regarding British and American portrait miniatures have until recently been centered around private or museum collections.²⁴ As a result, these miniatures have been shielded from many of the theoretical shifts that have taken place in the academic realm of art historical research. This focus on specific collections has resulted in connoisseurship studies comprising much of the scholarship on portrait miniatures to date. Miniatures are typically discussed in terms of description, attribution and technique with the goal of creating national schools of individual and mostly male artist-geniuses.²⁵ Ultimately, this scholarship lacks consideration of the production, presentation and patronage of early portrait miniatures.

Connoisseurship's influence on portrait miniatures can be directly traced to Nicholas Hilliard and his *Treatise Concerning the Arte of Limning*.²⁶ Scholarship attempting to create a national tradition of English art typically identifies Hilliard as the creator of the English miniature. Often the examples by foreign-born, but England-resident artists Hans Holbein the Younger, Susanna and Lucas Horenbout, and Levina Teerlinc--who created miniatures in the decades before Hilliard--are placed in short chapters or a few pages before introducing him.²⁷ Because none of the Dutch or German

²⁴ For this chapter I will be including American portrait miniatures as eighteenth-century miniatures and later have stylistic commonalities stemming from similar origins. Including American portrait miniatures also allows for discussion of more diverse approaches in scholarship.

²⁵ Lisa Tickner, "Feminism, Art History, and Sexual Difference," *Genders* 3 (Fall 1988): 93-94.

²⁶ Hilliard's original text from c. 1600 is published in this volume with a parallel modernized text edited by Cain and Thornton. Nicholas Hilliard, in *A Treatise Concerning the Arte of Limning*, ed. R. K. R. Thornton and T. G. S. Cain (Ashington; Manchester: Mid Northumberland Arts Group; Carcanet Press, 1992).

²⁷ This can be seen in Jim Murrell, *The Way Howe to Lymne: Tudor Miniatures Observed* (London: Victoria and Albert Musuem, 1983). The title of the chapter concerning Holbein, the Horenbouts and Teerlinc is "The Origins and Development of the Portrait Miniature." This suggests that these other artists did not create miniatures of the style most interesting to scholars but they established what the genre is and so they must be included as predecessors. Scholarship on Hans Holbein the Younger's miniatures is negligible

artists in Britain left a description of their methods, Hilliard's manuscript and his position as court artist to Queen Elizabeth I tie his style to that of the famously patriotic Queen and ensures that the “English” art of limning and creating miniatures began with Hilliard not Holbein.

“It is sweet and cleanly to use, and it is a thing apart from all other painting or drawings and tendeth not to common men’s use, either for furnishing of houses, or any patterns for tapestries....”²⁸ Hilliard in this quote from his *Treatise* elevates the status of the miniature artist. He sets miniatures executed in watercolor apart from other forms of (oil) painting which were practiced by painters’ guild members, general painters and decorative artists in the sixteenth-century, and he does so in order to create a more gentlemanly art. Hilliard considers his technique admirably suited to “be viewed in hand,” underscoring its physical intimacy with its elite patrons’ bodies.²⁹ Hilliard similarly equates miniatures with jewelry, describing at length precious stones and their corresponding pigments. He notes in a much-repeated anecdote that the Queen shared his distaste for the “hard shadows” of large-scale Italian painting. His art, as he describes it, depended on line and techniques which could depict “the true lustre of pearl and precious stone.”³⁰ Aside from Elizabeth, Hilliard does not provide any context for his painting, nor any information about his patronage.³¹ Scholarship that starts with Hilliard and his concept of a gentlemanly art continues to connect this jewel-like medium with royalty,

and mainly places his work within his own oeuvre and not an overarching development of the portrait miniature.

²⁸ Hilliard, in *A Treatise Concerning the Arte of Limning*, 16, 43.

²⁹ Hilliard, in *A Treatise Concerning the Arte of Limning*, 16, 67.

³⁰ Hilliard, in *A Treatise Concerning the Arte of Limning*, 15, 43.

³¹As pointed out by Jessen Kelly, “The Material Efficacy of the Elizabethan Jeweled Miniature: A Gellian Experiment,” in *Art's Agency and Art History*, ed. Robin Osborne and Jeremy Tanner (Oxford: Blackwell, 2007), 114.

the court and their style. The function of the miniature, like other Elizabethan art, is to serve the monarchy or reinforce ties to it. This association dispenses with the large number of non-courtly sitters and perhaps patrons for miniatures.

Hilliard's miniatures, endorsed by the queen, have shaped art historical approaches to miniatures, and have stood as masterpieces overshadowing consideration of the styles of earlier or later artists.³² His treatise on technique has supported a focus on the physical and material aspects of miniatures, including the most recent scholarship of the last decades.³³ Hilliard connects miniatures to royalty, and English national identity, which becomes a theme of how scholarship approaches the tradition itself. Not surprisingly, Hilliard's consequent role in determining the value of miniatures in the art market and among collectors has had a significant impact on scholarship. Connoisseurs and art historians can distinguish his hand and thereby tie miniatures to an enlightened artist and those who follow in his tradition.

One of the earliest examples of this methodology is that of H.A. Kennedy and Charles Holme, *Early English Portrait Miniatures in the Collection of the Duke of*

³² This is not to say that other miniature artists are completely absent from the literature, but a majority of scholars center their argument on Hilliard's miniatures, reiterating his ideas about the closeness, the flatness and the vibrancy of his colors. Their argument is about miniatures in general, but they only rely on his miniatures as evidence. See also below in the discussion of H. A. Kennedy, and Charles Holme, *Early English Portrait Miniatures in the Collection of the Duke of Buccleuch*. An example of a recent scholar basing her entire approach to miniatures based on Nicholas Hilliard's work is Karin Leonhard, "Painted Gems. The Color Worlds of Portrait Miniature Painting in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century Britain," *Early Science and Medicine* 20, no. 4-6 (2015).

³³ This focus on physical aspects of miniatures can be seen in publications such as Katherine Coombs, and Museum Victoria and Albert, *The Portrait Miniature in England* (London: V & A Publications, 2005), Kelly, "The Material Efficacy of the Elizabethan Jeweled Miniature;" Leonhard, "Painted Gems." and Wendy Katz, "Portraits and the Production of the Civil Self in Seventeenth-Century Boston," *Winterthur Portfolio* 39, no. 2/3 (2004): 101-28, <https://doi.org/10.1086/433196>.

Buccleuch from 1898.³⁴ Kennedy, the primary author, evaluates the collection of the Duke of Buccleuch in conjunction with the Victoria and Albert Museum, a museum dedicated to decorative art. As a connoisseur, his aim is to spot clues by which he can identify a particular artist's hand through comparison with other known works.³⁵ For example, in evaluating a miniature thought to be Hans Holbein the Younger's self-portrait, Kennedy compares it to a work in the Wallace Collection and another miniature he had described in Lord Abergavenny's collection, and finds that "the difference between them is so significant it is difficult to claim they are from the same hand."³⁶ This decision is based on consideration of differences like flesh tones and pigments, and the relative "flatness" of the figures.³⁷ Like many connoisseurs, Kennedy connects style with an internal artistic genius, but he refrains from critiquing works that do not fit a stylistic ideal as backward, simply categorizing them within his created artist's persona. Typically, there is no discussion of function or meaning, and no discussion of the sitters beyond their names and ranks. This focus on only attribution, condition and provenance of the work continues today in museum catalogues.

Since the late nineteenth century, museum publications have dominated the scholarship on English portrait miniatures, predominantly the Victoria and Albert

³⁴ Kennedy and Holme, *Early English Portrait Miniatures*. Another early publication that still refers to the Victoria and Albert Museum as the South Kensington museum is J. J. Foster, *British Miniature Painters and Their Works* (London: S. Low, Marston, 1898).

³⁵ Connoisseurship as a search for identifying clues or "conjectural knowledge" comes from Carlo Ginzburg, "Morelli, Freud and Sherlock Holmes: Clues and Scientific Method," *History Workshop Journal* 9, no. 1 (1980).

³⁶ Kennedy and Holme, *Early English Portrait Miniatures*, 3.

³⁷ Kennedy and Holme, *Early English Portrait Miniatures*, 4. Interestingly, Kennedy attempts to reverse what he says is the typical criticism on the change of style between Holbein the Younger and Hilliard, which he finds wrongly rejects Hilliard's "alleged flatness of effects due to his slight modeling of the features." He politely states: "it is recognized that each artist perfected the method in which he found he could give the most adequate expression to his artistic conventions." This approach is still one which modern art historians struggle to include within their publications.

Museum, which has the largest collection of miniatures in England. The initial emphasis on biography and connoisseurship continued in their catalogs through the 1940s and 1950s. Graham Reynolds and Erna Auerbach wrote biographies of Nicholas Hilliard and surveys of English sixteenth- and seventeenth-century portraiture.³⁸ Reynolds, a curator at the V & A from 1959 to 1965, published several catalogues on miniatures.³⁹ Auerbach was a German art historian who fled to England during WWII and published numerous articles addressing attributions of portrait miniatures in journals such as *The Connoisseur* and *The Burlington Magazine*.⁴⁰ Auerbach is significant because she wrote a short article on the woman artist, Levina Teerlinc, who hitherto had not been included in scholarship.⁴¹ Catalogues are still often the main secondary research for art historians.⁴²

The most significant and prolific scholar on English portraiture, in particular English miniatures from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, is Sir Roy Strong.⁴³ Strong was Director of the V & A between 1974 and 1987.⁴⁴ His museum position points to connoisseurship as his method and to the reason for his prominence.⁴⁵ Through his position, he had access to a large number of miniatures for examination and comparison.

³⁸ Erna Auerbach, *Nicholas Hilliard* (Boston, Mass.: Boston Book & Art Shop, 1964), Erna Auerbach, *Tudor Artists: A Study of Painters in the Royal Service and of Portraiture on Illuminated Documents from the Accession of Henry VIII to the Death of Elizabeth I* (London: Athlone, 1954), Graham Reynolds, *Nicholas Hilliard and Isaac Oliver: An Exhibition to Commemorate the 400th Anniversary of the Birth of Nicholas Hilliard* (London: Victoria and Albert Museum, 1947).

³⁹ Sorensen, Lee, ed. "Reynolds, Graham ." Dictionary of Art Historians (website).
<http://www.arthistorians.info/reynoldsg>

⁴⁰ Sorensen, Lee, ed. "Auerbach, Erna." Dictionary of Art Historians (website).
<http://www.arthistorians.info/auerbach>

⁴¹ Auerbach, *Tudor Artists: A Study of Painters in the Royal Service and of Portraiture on Illuminated Documents from the Accession of Henry VIII to the Death of Elizabeth I*.

⁴² Two examples of publications from the 1980s: Mary Edmond, *Hilliard and Oliver: The Lives and Works of Two Great Miniaturists* (London: Hale, 1983), Roy Strong, *The English Renaissance Miniature* (London, England: Thames and Hudson, 1984).

⁴³ Strong, *The English Renaissance Miniature*.

⁴⁴ Sorensen, Lee, ed. "Strong, Roy C.." Dictionary of Art Historians (website).
<http://www.arthistorians.info/strongr>

⁴⁵ Strong, *The English Renaissance Miniature*, 6.

Strong's primary objective was to combine the connoisseur's catalogue and the artist's biography. Despite decades of art historical approaches that had developed by the 1980s when he was publishing, he still discusses English miniatures and their provenance in the older Anglo-American museum mode of connoisseurship.

Strong's *English Renaissance Miniature* creates a family tree with Hilliard at the root. Artists passed the legacy of the "secret" art of Hilliard who, despite his *Treatise*, had not written down all the trade secrets. Strong suggests the exclusivity of the technique was part of the miniature's courtly appeal. Strong constructs a chronology of artists that he refers to as a "technical dynasty with its branches spreading ever outwards."⁴⁶ He includes Susanna Horenbout and Levina Teerlinc, but he does not attribute any miniatures to Horenbout.⁴⁷ But Nicholas Hilliard dominates the book and Strong's "broader historical context" amounts to the politics of royal portraiture and the role of the miniature artist within the court.⁴⁸ Despite his acknowledgement that Hilliard did work with patrons outside that milieu, Strong discusses miniatures as courtly materials signaling royal favor, much as Hilliard had indicated.⁴⁹

One feminist art historian, who directly responds to Roy Strong and the continued use of connoisseurship to study sixteenth-and seventeenth-century miniatures is Susan James, in her book *The Feminine Dynamic in English Art*.⁵⁰ James vigorously attempts to reestablish women as deeply involved in commissioning, consuming and creating art

⁴⁶ Strong, *The English Renaissance Miniature*, 7-9.

⁴⁷ Strong, *The English Renaissance Miniature*, 44, 54-64.

⁴⁸ Strong, *The English Renaissance Miniature*, 6, 81, 65, 74, 136.

⁴⁹ Strong, *The English Renaissance Miniature*, 7-9. On page 9, Strong discusses miniatures as courtly "aesthetic expressions of the ruling house."

⁵⁰ Susan James, *The Feminine Dynamic in English Art, 1485-1603: Women as Consumers, Patrons and Painters* (London: Routledge, 2016).

during the Tudor period (1485-1603).⁵¹ James breaks new ground in attempting to undertake this topic, but she does so outside the methods or field of art history. James' methodology is mainly historical, drawing from primary sources such as wills and public documents. Her subject is primarily art and artists, but her arguments lack the visual analysis that could have greatly improved the validity of her claims. James adamantly contends that women had more control over their self-presentation in the sixteenth century than ever before in English history, but without fully using visual imagery tied to her primary documentary evidence, her claim remains unproven.⁵²

Her discussion of portraiture is that of a social feminist historian; she focuses on patronage and how art was utilized in Tudor society.⁵³ However, she does adhere to connoisseurship by reattributing several major art works to female or unknown artists.⁵⁴ James also perpetuates the biographical element of the connoisseurship approach. She devotes chapters to the lives and works of major female artists, Levina Teerlinc and Susanna Horenbout, and attempts to elevate them to the same idealized artist-as-genius status given to major male artists.⁵⁵ James provides worthy avenues for art historians to pursue on questions concerning the patronage and presentation of women, but she perpetuates many of the same problematic approaches found in earlier scholarship. Her book lacks substantial visual analysis and evidence of women's control of representation

⁵¹ James, *The Feminine Dynamic in English Art, 1485-1603: Women as Consumers, Patrons and Painters*, 1.

⁵² James, *The Feminine Dynamic in English Art*, 1. James makes this claim on the first page of the book and then discusses women's use of objects as personal symbols in her second chapter: Painting as Presentation. She makes the claim that women use objects within paintings as signifiers of societal messages but does not actually give examples found in specific paintings or explain what messages the objects signify.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ James, *The Feminine Dynamic in English Art*, 270-72. Here she claims that an early work attributed to Lucas Horenbout is actually Susanna because it has her monogram but does not explain the monogram which no art historian has previously mentioned.

⁵⁵ James, *The Feminine Dynamic in English Art*. Chapter 6 is devoted to Susanna Horenbout and 7 to Levina Teerlinc.

and could be considered a failed feminist approach to the topic of English portrait miniatures.

Museum or collection-based publications continue to dominate scholarship on portrait miniatures, but in recent decades university and academic writers have become more interested in material culture and with it jewelry and the so-called minor arts, and social historical approaches to miniatures have been introduced.⁵⁶ One such feminist and material culture approach is Robin Jaffe Frank's book, *Love and Loss*, which concentrates on the English tradition in the American context in the eighteenth century, thus removing miniatures from the sphere of royal or courtly propaganda.⁵⁷ Published in conjunction with an exhibition that Frank organized for the Yale University Art Gallery, the book has the connoisseur's attention to the individual object and artist. However, Frank's essay explores "the strong ties between the history of the miniature and American private life."⁵⁸ She stresses the function of miniatures and their personal associations for wearers and she connects large-scale trends in American colonial society to changing family dynamics and to examples of specific miniatures.⁵⁹ Frank also discusses how the patrons' private emotions contributed to the miniatures' formal compositions. This approach allows for insightful analysis of the differences between men's and women's presentations, which corresponded not only to societal gender

⁵⁶Works in a similar style to Strong in the last ten years include ones by Katherine Coombs, the current curator of English miniatures in the Victoria and Albert Museum, and by Jim Murrell, a conservationist the V&A. Katherine Coombs, "English Limning: The Portrait Miniature in Tudor and Early Stuart England," in *Treasures of the Royal Courts: Tudors, Stuarts & the Russian Tsars*, ed. Olga Dmitrieva and Tessa Murdoch (London: V & A Publishing, 2013), Coombs, and Victoria and Albert, *The Portrait Miniature in England*, Edmond, Hilliard and Oliver: *The Lives and Works of Two Great Miniaturists*, Murrell, *The Way Howe to Lyme: Tudor Miniatures Observed*.

⁵⁷ Robin Jaffe Frank, *Love and Loss: American Portrait and Mourning Miniatures* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000).

⁵⁸ Frank, *Love and Loss*, vii-viii.

⁵⁹ Frank, *Love and Loss*, 5-7, 37-41. Frank discusses how the changes in American family kinship affected how miniatures are inherited.

expectations but also to practical differences in how the miniatures would have been worn, exchanged and seen.⁶⁰

Frank included more documents than did scholars in earlier periods, but the emphasis on how miniatures functioned for wearers and patrons in everyday life, attending to their size and shape and placement, offers an important approach that expands earlier ones focusing on style and the artist. So too could Frank's strategy of looking at miniatures as "secret" in ways other than Strong intended, as a means of self-presentation even for non-aristocratic people that intentionally hid meanings from the public. Frank's approach to material culture is important because it attends to the function of these miniatures as physical objects with visually expressed meanings.

Patricia Fumerton goes further in exploring the potential of combining material culture and textual sources in a new historicist approach.⁶¹ Fumerton's article is one of the few examples of scholarship that approaches Tudor and Stuart miniatures without connoisseurship as the predominant method. She focuses less on individual great artists than on understanding the social and political culture creating these miniatures. Fumerton gathers information about what the physical objects can reveal about how they were used, and she extends that to how scholarship can interpret the paintings contained within the objects. Miniatures become the "text" she analyzes to understand the layers of public and private elements in these objects and their function within society. In addition, Fumerton

⁶⁰ Frank, *Love and Loss*, 23-34.

⁶¹ Patricia Fumerton, "'Secret' Arts: Elizabethan Miniatures and Sonnets," *Representations*, no. 15 (1986), <https://dx.doi.org/10.2307/2928392>.

provides many anecdotes and letters that give insights into the meanings of the miniatures from the people who owned them.⁶²

Fumerton discusses miniatures as courtly objects with some focus on Queen Elizabeth, and includes other female courtiers in her discussion.⁶³ She describes these courtly miniatures as dualistic, half revealing, half concealing, and flirting between public and private. She convincingly compares miniatures with their boxes and the jeweled cases to the architectural layout of Elizabethan houses and sonnets, where the most intimate areas are found after moving through layers of artifice.⁶⁴ She specifically connects this understanding of miniatures to Nicholas Hilliard's style with its use of symbols and emblems.⁶⁵ Although outside the scope of her main argument, she describes the succeeding style of Isaac Oliver (1565-1617) as closer to English Renaissance drama, thereby providing a good foundation on which her methodology could be expanded.⁶⁶

Other material culture approaches to American eighteenth-century miniatures stress class rather than gender to indicate how, like other portraits, they retained a public, not just a private function. Anne Verplanck covers the same period as Frank, but limits her scope to one city where she finds a large market for miniatures.⁶⁷ Verplanck, a social art historian, foregrounds how social and economic change in Philadelphia affected each class. She focuses on the dominant mercantile class, the ones buying miniatures, arguing

⁶² Fumerton, "'Secret' Arts," 57-64. Fumerton begins her article with an excerpt from a Scottish ambassador's letter about the viewing of miniatures which is an excellent entryway into her discussion about the viewing of miniatures in a dualistic public and private way.

⁶³ Fumerton, "'Secret' Arts."

⁶⁴ Fumerton, "'Secret' Arts," 63-64. Another excellent anecdote she gives is about Lady Derby and the societal understandings behind the positioning of the miniature on the courtly body.

⁶⁵ Fumerton, "'Secret' Arts," 64-68.

⁶⁶ Fumerton, "'Secret' Arts," 88-89.

⁶⁷ Anne Verplanck, "The Social Meanings of Portrait Miniatures in Philadelphia, 1760-1820," in *American Material Culture: The Shape of the Field*, ed. Ann Smart Martin and J. Ritchie Garrison (Winterthur, Del.; Knoxville, Tenn.: Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum; Distributed by University of Tennessee Press, 1997).

that they were “reliant on miniatures for presenting a unified group identity.”⁶⁸

Miniatures offered a form of holding on to control for an elite in a society with an expanding merchant class. She refers to miniatures as a system of signs, citing Dick Hebdidge and Ian Hodder, thereby indicating her dual interest in semiotics and cultural studies, both of which identify sign-production with hegemonic classes.⁶⁹ Verplanck concentrates on the highly regularized depictions of individuals in miniatures as a sign of group identity.

Marcia Pointon attempts to reevaluate the marginalized role of miniatures in art historical studies based on their dual nature as jeweled objects and as a minor form of portraiture in watercolor.⁷⁰ Pointon continues the trend of more recent scholarship by analyzing the function of miniatures within the social and economic relationships of the eighteenth century. Pointon argues that miniatures are private objects that, once placed in their jeweled containers, become part of the social and economic exchange networks of society. Their personal value and economic value become fused together.⁷¹ Pointon however maintains that this fusion is gendered and that for a woman wearing a miniature of her husband is a sign of both allegiance to the fashion of the period and to her husband who has legal rights over her person.⁷²

To conclude, I will offer a few remarks on the question of why sixteenth- and seventeenth-century miniatures have yet to be approached successfully by art historians employing newer methods outside of the dominant realm of connoisseurship. The answer

⁶⁸ Verplanck, "The Social Meanings of Portrait Miniatures," 210.

⁶⁹ Verplanck, "The Social Meanings of Portrait Miniatures," 222.

⁷⁰ Marcia Pointon, "'Surrounded with Brilliants': Miniature Portraits in Eighteenth-Century England," *The Art Bulletin* 83, no. 1 (2001), <https://dx.doi.org/10.2307/3177190>.

⁷¹ Pointon, "'Surrounded with Brilliants", 56.

⁷² Pointon, "'Surrounded with Brilliants", 51.

probably lies in the fact that research on early miniatures is archival, thus time consuming and difficult to compile the large amount of data necessary for other methodological approaches. This difficulty has led many art historians instead to focus on the work of Hilliard because his *Treatise* provided a ready source for analysis. Aside from it, there is no clear text for understanding the work of other artists in that period.

Miniatures hold a unique position in art history which has mostly neglected them, because they are considered of minor importance compared to oil paintings, and because they are small, jeweled objects which make them feminine and private, and with limited textual evidence and too many unknown sitters. Still, art historians have proven that it is possible to study miniatures using a material culture approach based on their physical and visual properties. Material culture and new historicist approaches have proven to be most successful at connecting miniatures to their larger historical contexts, notwithstanding the limited background information on specific artworks.

CHAPTER II: EARLY SIXTEENTH CENTURY MINIATURES: LUCAS HOURENBOUT

The style of Nicholas Hilliard and the ideas he professed in his *Treatise Concerning the Arte of Limning* have made him the measure by which miniatures have been defined. Hilliard's *Treatise* emphasizes his miniature style as a separate gentlemanly art produced for court elite and especially for Queen Elizabeth I. His concept of portrait miniatures has emphasized them as objects, as royal jewels for the English court. Hilliard's writing connects his style and the miniatures to royalty and English national identity, which has shaped the understanding of artistic styles of earlier and later artists. Hilliard is regarded as the creator of the canonical English miniature when, in reality, this artistic form derives from a variety of international sources that were not simply the stepping stones to Hilliard's art. Early sixteenth-century miniatures have been misconstrued by scholarship in this way. These miniatures are not "a thing apart from all other painting and drawing," as Hilliard defines the art of limning.⁷³ Instead, these miniatures were examples of the kinds of artistic projects court artists were asked to create. They were viewed in the same manner as painting decorative pieces for lavish events or making designs for other objects at court.⁷⁴ The early miniatures and styles of the Horenbout family and Hans Holbein the Younger provide insights into the foundation of this tradition and the unique experience of foreign artists in England in the sixteenth century.

⁷³ Hilliard, Cain, and Thornton, *A Treatise Concerning the Arte of Limning*, 16, 43. This is a quote often used by scholars to define the medium. Even if not directly quoted, art historians typically turn to Hilliard's definition of miniatures. Coombs, *The Portrait Miniature in England*, 7; Murdoch, "The Craft of the Miniaturist," 1; Strong, "From Manuscript to Miniature," 25.

⁷⁴ Kren and Ainsworth, "Illuminators and Painters," 36; Strong, "From Manuscript to Miniature," 27. Susan Foister, *Holbein and England* (London: Yale University Press, 2004), 12–23.

Artists creating miniatures in the early sixteenth century were not viewed at the time as singular artist geniuses participating in a continuous lineage from master to apprentice in highly specialized fields. Scholarship has incorrectly utilized Hilliard's definition to link portrait miniatures to a prestigious lineage originating in a manuscript tradition.⁷⁵ From the way Hilliard himself is characterized by scholarship--as a great English artist inheriting a traditional art form that he elevates to its heights within the illustrious Elizabethan court--it would be expected that Hilliard would dismiss his old-fashioned predecessors, yet this is not the case. Hilliard praises Henry VIII for bringing in talented foreign artists, especially Hans Holbein.

Here must I needs insert a word or two in honour and praise of the renowned and mighty King Henery the eighth, a prince of exquisite judgement and royal bounty, so that of cunning strangers even the best resorted unto him and removed from other courts to his; amongst whom came the most excellent painter and limning, Hans Holbein, the greatest master truly in both those arts after life that ever was: so cunning in both together, and the neatest, and therewithal a good inventor: so complete for all three as I never heard of any better than he. Yet had the King in wages for limning divers others; but Holbein's manner of limning I have ever imitated, and hold it for the best, by reason that of truth all the rare sciences, especially the arts of carving, painting, goldsmiths, embroiders, together with the most of all the liberal sciences, came first unto us from the strangers, and generally they are the best and most in number.⁷⁶

Here Hilliard praises Henry VIII for bringing in numerous skilled foreign painters, including Holbein whom he claims is the best master in these arts "after life." That phrase is often removed from the entire passage in discussions and is used to explain that, although Hilliard admired Holbein, he defined his own style in opposition to

⁷⁵ Roy C. Strong, *The English Renaissance Miniature* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1984), 8–9; Murdoch, "The Craft of the Miniaturist," 5–8.

⁷⁶ Nicholas Hilliard et al., *A Treatise Concerning the Arte of Limning* (Manchester; Ashington: Carcanet Press ; Mid Northumberland Arts Group, 1992), 49.

Holbein's. However, in his *Treatise*, Hilliard does emphasize the importance of drawing as a part of his training even though it is not apparent in his approach to miniatures.

Hilliard did not make use of a preliminary drawing for his miniatures, as Holbein did, and his style is much more decorative and has more similarities to Horenbout's and Teerlinc's work than to Holbein's. This quotation is also used to show that his mastery of the art of limning came from studying Holbein's work, as opposed to the miniatures of Lucas Horenbout or even his contemporary Levina Teerlinc.⁷⁷ Holbein is often given special status as an early miniature artist because of his already confirmed placement within the art historical canon as a great Northern Renaissance artist and portrayer of English royalty. Therefore, scholarship emphasizes this connection and lineage to show that Hilliard had studied the works of the Renaissance master before him.⁷⁸ This entire passage demonstrates that Hilliard viewed early sixteenth-century artists as talented foreign court artists brought in by Henry VIII to create a sophisticated and glorified English court equal to other European courts.

During the reign of Henry VII and VIII (1457-1547), England strived to match the opulence of other major courts of Continental Europe. To do so, numerous foreign artists and craftsmen were hired, the majority of whom came from the Low Country region, modern day Belgium, Luxembourg and the Netherlands.⁷⁹ Northern European artistic styles and trends had a substantial influence on English art and thus portrait miniatures are not an inherently English art form.⁸⁰ Instead Jean Clouet, possibly a native of the Low Countries who emigrated to France, also created miniatures at the court of Francis I

⁷⁷ Strong, *The English Renaissance Miniature*, 68; Murdoch, "The Craft of the Miniaturist," 4-4.

⁷⁸ Murdoch, "The Craft of the Miniaturist," 4-5.

⁷⁹ Strong, "From Manuscript to Miniature," 26.

⁸⁰ Coombs, "English Limning: The Portrait Miniature in Tudor and Stuart England," 47.

(1485-1540). Portrait miniatures in the 1520s become an international trend characterized by mingling of ideas and techniques within royal courts. The manuscript illumination style predominantly found in early English miniatures was the courtly and elegant style of the Ghent-Bruges school.⁸¹ One major family associated with the Ghent-Bruges school are the Horenbouts who play a prominent role in early portrait miniatures.⁸²

Lucas Horenbout is the artist likely responsible for the portrait miniatures of Henry VIII and his court. Lucas was hired as a court painter, and although there are not many indications in documents as to the work Henry VIII hired him to produce, they do state that he was the King's painter from 1525-1544, which makes him the most likely artist of the earliest portrait miniatures in England. Much about Lucas Horenbout and his family is unknown but what we do know comes from records of their work and employment. These documents provide art historians with a few details to form a picture of their careers in the Netherlands and in England.⁸³ What is clear is that Susanna, Lucas and Gerald Horenbout, their father, all having experience with manuscript illumination, emigrated to England during the 1520s and are the most likely creators of miniatures during this period. However, most art historians, credit them only to Lucas Horenbout, while others argue that these works may have been by his sister, Susanna. The issue of attribution is still a concern for art historians addressing these unsigned early portrait miniatures and therefore I must briefly address it before moving on.⁸⁴

⁸¹ John K Rowlands, *Holbein: The Paintings of Hans Holbein the Younger: Complete Edition* (Oxford: Phaidon, 1985), 89–91; Hearn, *Dynasties*, 117; Reynolds, *English Portrait Miniatures*, 2.

⁸² Strong, "From Manuscript to Miniature," 28–29.

⁸³ Strong, *The English Renaissance Miniature*, 39; Graham Reynolds, *The Sixteenth and Seventeenth-Century Miniatures in the Collection of Her Majesty The Queen* (London: Royal Collection, 1999), 45–49.

⁸⁴ Coombs, *The Portrait Miniature in England*, 15.

Most of the artworks now attributed to Lucas Horenbout were for decades attributed as early works by Hans Holbein the Younger. As archival documentation resurfaced, those attributions have changed, and the Horenbout family has been acknowledged and generally accepted by scholarship to be the artists for the majority of the early portrait miniatures. Scholars of portrait miniatures claim that the twenty or so miniatures we have from this early period were created by Lucas Horenbout because his status as King's Painter likely allowed him the prestigious task and access to Henry VIII for portrait sittings.⁸⁵ Lucas' documented status makes him the more likely candidate over Susanna or Gerard Horenbout, his father who was only in England for a short period of time. In addition, art historians find a consistent style present in these early miniatures that they attribute to Lucas Horenbout. Susan James in *The Feminine Dynamic* argues that Susanna could have been responsible for the early miniatures of Henry VIII.⁸⁶ Documentation cannot prove if a Horenbout sibling created these earlier miniatures and it cannot provide certainty as to which sibling it was. The information available on Susanna Horenbout concerning her life in England is mainly centered around her personal life and financial situation as opposed to her professional life as a painter. Therefore, the attribution is left to connoisseurship-based analysis which is limited and based on a small sample size.⁸⁷

⁸⁵Kate Heard et al., *The Northern Renaissance: Dürer to Holbein* (London: Royal Collection Publ, 2011), 68; Reynolds, *The Sixteenth and Seventeenth-Century Miniatures*, 45–49.

⁸⁶ James, *The Feminine Dynamic in English Art, 1485-1603*, 272. Susan James claims that Susanna's monogram can be seen on one of the portrait miniatures of Henry VIII with no evidence as to how art historians prove that is her monogram. She also attributes the miniature to Susanna based on small characteristics such as the shape of the chin and nostrils.

⁸⁷ Ibid., 270–79. Campbell and Foister's article analyses the documental evidence regarding the Horenbouts. Lorne Campbell and Susan Foister, "Gerard, Lucas and Susanna Horenbout," *The Burlington Magazine* 128, no. 1003 (1986): 721–27.

For the purposes of this paper, I will accept the attribution made by previous scholarship that these are the works of Lucas Horenbout with assistance. After being given the status of King's painter and citizenship, Lucas was permitted to hire assistants whose work could offer an explanation for the slight changes noticed by connoisseurs.⁸⁸ The evidence that Lucas Horenbout likely had followers and apprentices, working in a similar style, is often ignored by art historians mainly due to the vested interest of museums to attribute one artist's name to a work. We do not know how involved his apprentices would have been in creating miniatures. These objects are small and would not require as much time as larger projects such as creating designs for various court objects and scene décor which could have required assistants, but the repeated composition of the miniatures does leave some room for speculation. For example, in the case of his miniatures of Henry VIII (**Illustration 4-6**), there is a set of seven nearly identical depictions from 1526-27.⁸⁹ Lucas Horenbout may have created the initial design for the figure based on his sittings with Henry VIII and the rest of the royal family but then had assistance in creating copies. These early miniatures seem to have been popular and were desired for gift exchange within the court between family members and friends, but also for diplomacy and exchange with other European courts, therefore several of the same type of image were created.⁹⁰

The only information connecting Lucas and Susanna Horenbout to these artworks is their possible training in manuscript illumination from their father, Gerard Horenbout. From records, art historians conclude that Gerard Horenbout, the father of Lucas and Susanna, had been a Master Painter in Ghent in 1487, and possibly ran a workshop that

⁸⁸ Campbell and Foister, "Gerard, Lucas and Susanna Horenbout," 722.

⁸⁹ Reynolds, *The Sixteenth and Seventeenth-Century Miniatures in the Collection of Her Majesty*, 45–49.

⁹⁰ Foister, *Holbein and England*, 18–20.

specialized in manuscript illumination along with making other designs for decorative arts.⁹¹ Gerard is associated mainly with his work for Margaret of Austria, the Governor of the Hapsburg Netherlands. Records indicate he received payment for designs for church windows, tapestries or embroidery, and for a manuscript known as the *Sforza Hours* that was begun by Giovanni Pietro Birago and commissioned by Bona Sforza, Duchess of Milan.⁹² It was repaired and finished by Gerard Horenbout from 1517-1521 (**Illustration 3**). From Ghent records indicate that Gerard hired journeymen and apprentices with skills in manuscript illumination, and he may have run a large workshop which specialized in illumination, but it is not clear to what extent Gerard was involved in the actual illuminating. It is possible he was involved in other tasks within the workshop, such as design or management.⁹³

However, Gerard Horenbout was normally referred to as a painter, and was only referred to as an illuminator in a few documents, one of which was by Albrecht Dürer who referred to Gerard as a master illuminist.⁹⁴ This evidence illustrates that Gerard Horenbout was at least involved in working with a variety of projects, including illumination, in a workshop setting for a wealthy patroness. Horenbout's profession likely had a direct connection with how Lucas and Susanna came to understand manuscript illumination, which is now considered by art historians a skill required for the creation of portrait miniatures. This information also provides insights into the type of career the Horenbouts expected to continue in England.

⁹¹ Campbell and Foister, "Gerard, Lucas and Susanna Horenbout," 719–21; Coombs, *The Portrait Miniature in England*, 15.

⁹² Kren and Ainsworth, "Illuminators and Painters," 428.

⁹³ Campbell and Foister, "Gerard, Lucas and Susanna Horenbout," 719–21.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 721.

In the mid to late 1520s, Lucas and Susanna Horenbout emigrated to England likely searching for opportunities there. Scholars such as Graham Reynolds, the curator of the V & A from 1959 to 1965, have suggested that the Horenbouts could have emigrated to England to escape religious persecution.⁹⁵ However, the cities and surrounding area where the Horenbouts worked did not experience the onslaught of the Reformation and its impact early enough to likely influence the Horenbout's decision to leave the Continent.⁹⁶ It is likely that the Horenbouts were brought to England by Henry VIII because there was a demand at court for skilled foreign artists to create a sophisticated and decorated court on par with other extravagant continental European courts.

English court documents in 1525 list Lucas Horenbout as a "pictor maker" but not specifically an illuminator. However, Richard James, likely an English artist, was listed in the same collection of documents as a "lymner of books." These records indicate that had Lucas primarily been involved in book illumination he would have been described in a similar way.⁹⁷ Therefore Lucas appears to have been hired as a general painter to the king's court. A few documents offer insights into the kind of work Horenbout was hired to produce. He was paid £33 6s annually, as were the King's musicians and falconers, an amount similar to most artists at court and slightly higher than Hans Holbein who received, £7.10s quarterly or £28.40s per year.⁹⁸ In the 1530s Lucas may have been involved in decorative and design projects similar to those of his father, including a fire

⁹⁵ Reynolds, *English Portrait Miniatures*, 3.

⁹⁶ Craig Harbison, *The Mirror of the Artist: Northern Renaissance Art in Its Historical Context* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2006), 110–11.

⁹⁷ Campbell and Foister, "Gerard, Lucas and Susanna Horenbout," 722; Coombs, *The Portrait Miniature in England*, 15.

⁹⁸ Susan Foister, "Holbein, Hans, the Younger," in *Oxford Dictionary of Biography* (Oxford University Press, 2004); Campbell and Foister, "Gerard, Lucas and Susanna Horenbout."

screen as a New Year's Gift in 1539. Inventories and records from Whitehall Palace do not specify artist names or valuations, but they do list by description portraits, devotional images, and decorated cabinets for an assortment of projects, which required a large number of artists and craftsmen.⁹⁹ Lucas was given the official title of king's painter from 1534 to 1544 when he died.¹⁰⁰

According to Susan Foister, documentation indicates that Lucas was declared a denizen, giving him certain rights as a foreigner in London. He also received a tenement in Charing Cross and a license to hire four foreign journeymen.¹⁰¹ In 1531 and 1532, he received licenses to export barley, presumably to craft into beer which was typical of court artists at the time.¹⁰² Although documentation offers little information concerning the work and life of Lucas Horenbout, it is possible that he was a prominent court painter who was engaged in numerous projects and activities to meet the expectations of the King, and who earned a stable income.

Gift exchange both within the English court and with European courts was a political affair. Within court culture, especially for a theatrical one such as the English court, it was traditional and expected behavior for the monarch to bestow gifts as a sign of favor to a particular courtier.¹⁰³ These gifts were typically valuable but also contained symbolism and messages within them. In 1526, Marguerite d'Alencon sent Henry VIII two expensive portraits to persuade him on behalf of her brother, Francois I, King of

⁹⁹ Holbein in England Foister- 17-18

¹⁰⁰ Strong, "From Manuscript to Miniature," 31; Campbell and Foister, "Gerard, Lucas and Susanna Horenbout," 722.

¹⁰¹ Campbell and Foister, "Gerard, Lucas and Susanna Horenbout," 722.

¹⁰² Susan Foister, *Holbein, Hans, the Younger (1497/8–1543), Artist* (Oxford University Press, 2009), <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-13478>.

¹⁰³ Foister, *Holbein and England*, 18–21; Alison Sim, *Pleasures & Pastimes in Tudor England* (Stroud, Gloucestershire: Sutton Publishing, 1999), 78–80, <http://site.ebrary.com/id/11012172>; James, *The Feminine Dynamic in English Art, 1485-1603*, 308–10.

France, to intercede with Charles V, the Holy Roman Emperor, to release his two sons being held hostage in Spain.¹⁰⁴ Although it is unclear whether these portraits were miniatures, the description given by a Venetian diplomat, Gasparo Spinelli, provides a glimpse into how portraiture exchanged between monarchs would be received. According to Gasparo who wrote home to his brother, the portraits were sensational. He explains how excited and pleased he was to see the portraits, so much that he wished to describe “the form and quality of these gifts; thus adding to the satisfaction experienced by myself individually; but your imagination must supply the defects of my language.”¹⁰⁵ He describes the object:

Picture yourself in the first place the shape of a round glass fire-screen, rather larger than those sold on St. Mark’s Square, and of the sort which open; but the cover is fastened on one side being of the most delicately wrought gold and on opening it one fold contains the portrait of the most Christian King painted on paper.¹⁰⁶

There is some contention between scholars over the translation of this passage and specifically the phrase referring to the object as a “spechi da fuoco” which was translated in the nineteenth century as a fire screen.¹⁰⁷ Susan James uses this to dismiss the possibility that these works could be miniatures, as a fire screen is typically one to two feet tall and therefore too large to be a portrait miniature.¹⁰⁸ However, the idea that a French artist, possibly Jean Clouet, was able to make an object gilded and fastened together indicates something equivalent to a painted portrait diptych. Such diptychs

¹⁰⁴ James, *The Feminine Dynamic in English Art*, 266–68; Foister, *Holbein and England*, 18–19.

¹⁰⁵ Rawdon Brown, ed., *Calendar of State Papers and Manuscripts, Relating to English Affairs: Existing in the Archives and Collections of Venice and in the Other Libraries of Northern Italy*, vol. 3 (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1869), 624, <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/venice/vol3/pp620-626>.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ James, *The Feminine Dynamic in English Art, 1485-1603*, 266–68.

existed in the possessions of Catherine of Aragon (Queen, 1509-1533), who owned one with Henry VIII and the Princess, Mary I (1516-1558), but none survive.¹⁰⁹ The literal translation of "spechi da fuoco" is "fire mirror" which fails to provide clarification of its meaning. However, the term may indicate a fire glass that was intended to raise fire from the sun.¹¹⁰ Perhaps a better description would be a small concave glass or mirror that was possibly used in the manner of the modern magnifying glass. Katherine Coombs suggests that early miniatures were commonly placed in turned ivory cases (**Illustration 1**) because English glass making was too rough for these delicate objects; Venetian glass making was more advanced.¹¹¹ Therefore, in rare cases small pieces of glass may have been imported to protect and possibly enhance the viewing of these small objects. However, it is also possible that this style of portraiture, which opens and reveals a beautiful likeness surrounded by gold, offered a prototype for the miniature.¹¹²

This scenario shows the desire by monarchs for such beautifully crafted objects to persuade diplomatic cooperation. Henry VIII may have reciprocated this costly gift from France with portraits of himself and his daughter Mary, portraits that may or may not have been miniatures.¹¹³ Although it is not certain that this particular gift was the spark that began a miniature tradition in England, it is likely that gifts of this kind spurred a continuous need for artists to create equally splendid objects in order to reciprocate diplomatic gifts. It was also necessary for the English court to maintain a reputation as

¹⁰⁹ Foister, *Holbein and England*, 19.

¹¹⁰ Coombs, *The Portrait Miniature in England*, 19.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² Foister, *Holbein and England*, 18–19. Susan Foister seems hesitant to say that these portraits were any more than prototypes.

¹¹³ Hearn, *Dynasties*, 118; Foister, *Holbein and England*, 18.

equal in skill and sophistication to France or any other foreign power. According to David Starkey, England in terms of power and influence was greatly outclassed by the French king, Francois I, and the Spanish Holy Roman Emperor, Charles V. Francois I was Henry VIII's main rival and he often imitated the French king in his effort to establish himself as an equal.¹¹⁴ Francois I displayed his power through an ambitious building program, sought out foreign artists and commissioned numerous formal portraits. Henry VIII also pursued these endeavors to be viewed on equal terms of strength and grandeur. The year Horenbout's miniatures of Henry VIII were made, 1527, was an important year in which England was in extended negotiations with France which resulted in the Treaty of Amiens, a pledge of eternal peace between France and England, and presumably an ideal occasion for gift-giving.¹¹⁵

In addition to this political and dynastic context, portraits are also recorded within more private or personal contexts. Several "tablets" of gold with pictures on them are listed in the possessions of Henry VIII's later wife, Jane Seymour (Queen, 1536-1537), and Princess Mary owned "a Rounde Tablet black enameled with the King's picture and Queen jane's" which may describe an enameled portrait, cameo or portrait miniature.¹¹⁶ Such descriptions of the objects are not precise enough to offer an identification of what they were, but records indicate the placement of the portraits on a variety of crafted objects and that they were kept personally by the royal family. Although how these portraits functioned is not clear, these records establish a desire for portraits within the

¹¹⁴ David Starkey, *Henry VIII: A European Court in England* (London: Collins & Brown, 1991), 12.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 12-13; James, *The Feminine Dynamic in English Art*, 263-65.

¹¹⁶ Foister, *Holbein and England*, 19.

English court for political exchange and personal use and especially by royalty for personal delight or display.¹¹⁷

Art historical scholarship often addresses the general stylistic differences between the portrait miniatures of Lucas Horenbout and Hans Holbein the Younger. This discussion usually concludes with a quality judgement in favor of Holbein's detailed and precise portrait style and a dismissal of Horenbout as a "good" portraitist.¹¹⁸ Scholarship favors Hans Holbein because of the modern value of specificity and detail shown through a filtered idealism, at which Holbein was especially skilled. Holbein meets these canonical standards for a Renaissance master. The result: Horenbout is cast off as the lesser court artist with a background in manuscript illumination, a traditional medieval art in no way connected with Renaissance virtuosity.¹¹⁹

However, documentation and historical context support another view of Horenbout. I argue that Horenbout's portrait style was a stylistic choice that met the needs of his royal patrons. In addition, the difference in patronage between Hans Holbein the Younger and Lucas Horenbout made a significant impact on their approaches to portrait miniatures. As Lucas Horenbout was a court artist and held the position of king's painter, it is not surprising that the earliest miniatures attributed to him represent members of royalty. These miniatures include several depictions of King Henry VIII and

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ Strong, "From Manuscript to Miniature," 32. "Horenbolte was never a great portraitist. His work is purely derivative within the Flemish tradition and he adhered to an unchanging formula."

¹¹⁹ Jeanne Nuechterlein, *Translating Nature into Art Holbein, The Reformation, and Renaissance Rhetoric* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2011), 150–51; Strong, *The English Renaissance Miniature*, 45. Although she does not explicitly discuss Holbein's work as meeting modern values, her discussion of Holbein as creating ideal illusions comes from our own understanding of the ideal. Roy Strong states "Hans Holbein was, of course, a far greater artist than Horenbolte, one of international stature, and his appearance within our genealogical tree of limners is at first glance disturbing."

his first wife, Catherine of Aragon (Queen, 1509-1533), and his daughter Mary I.¹²⁰ Each miniature depicts the King, Queen and Princess very formally with significant specificity in their likenesses and costumes. The depictions of Henry VIII are unique in that from the approximately twenty-two works attributed to Horenbout, a set of seven very similar miniatures of the monarch date from around 1526 and 1527.¹²¹ It is significant that Horenbout and his workshop created so many miniatures of Henry VIII. Although Hans Holbein the Younger began creating miniatures upon his return to England in 1531/2, no surviving portrait miniatures of Henry VIII remain that are attributed to Holbein.¹²² The King may have preferred Horenbout's traditional and elegant style with its strong outlines and color reminiscent of manuscript illumination befitting this innovative form of portraiture.

Scholars have noted a formulaic approach within Horenbout's early miniatures.¹²³ The early miniatures are typically circular with blue backgrounds and gold inscriptions on either side of the sitter's head. The inscriptions often denote the sitter's name, title and age. The sitter, whose head and shoulders are in three-quarter view, faces front with the sitter's face directed to the left or right. These portrait miniatures were likely made as gifts for courtiers or for foreign courts as a sign of good will and favor, which would explain why several copies of the same image were made with small differences. In the series of miniatures depicting Henry VIII, each differs in costume, inscription and size, and some depict Henry with or without a beard. However formulaic these miniatures

¹²⁰ Strong, *The English Renaissance Miniature*, 34.

¹²¹ Reynolds, *The Sixteenth and Seventeenth-Century Miniatures in the Collection of Her Majesty*, 45–49.

¹²² *Ibid.*, 49.

¹²³ Strong, *The English Renaissance Miniature*, 34; Strong, "From Manuscript to Miniature," 32; Coombs, *The Portrait Miniature in England*, 23; Foister, *Holbein and England*, 19.

appear, they provide insights into the development and function of the miniature as a genre.¹²⁴

One of the earliest miniatures of Henry VIII, dating ca. 1525-1527 and currently in the Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge (**Illustration 4**), is unique for its rectangular shape and red border surrounding the inner round portrait with blue background. The red border includes gold angels that hover in the corners and hold ropes that connect gold script at top and bottom with the initials HK, likely standing for Henry and his Queen Katherine of Aragon. Such early portrait miniatures attributed to Horenbout continue the earlier elegant linear style of manuscript illumination with clear outlines around the figure, rich color, and gold inscriptions. The decoration around the image serves to elevate the centerpiece with Henry VIII's likeness, executed with soft forms and light. No harsh edges or chiaroscuro are employed as one may expect from a larger scale portrait. Instead, the entire portrait emphasizes curved line work and the lovely small details of Henry VIII's costume. The lack of expression, rosebud lips, and slightly baggy eyes indicate less about Henry VIII's countenance than the characteristics of Horenbout's style, as they can be seen in most of his portrait miniatures.¹²⁵ This simple likeness offers an effective symbol of the monarchy.

It has been suggested that this work was originally attached to an official document.¹²⁶ A similar depiction of Henry VIII can be seen on a letters patent for Thomas Forster, a comptroller of the King's Works, or building projects, granting him various

¹²⁴ Foister, *Holbein and England*, 18–19; Reynolds, *The Sixteenth and Seventeenth-Century Miniatures in the Collection of Her Majesty*, 45–49.

¹²⁵ Strong, "From Manuscript to Miniature," 32.

¹²⁶ Reynolds, *The Sixteenth and Seventeenth-Century Miniatures in the Collection of Her Majesty*, 47; Coombs, *The Portrait Miniature in England*, 15–18.

properties in London (**Illustration 5**).¹²⁷ This letters patent is an official document written in Latin. It features a similarly depicted Henry VIII in roundel form surrounded by a considerably larger square green rectangular border decorated with an intricately designed gold lower case H. The letter is formed from layers of acanthus leaves with two rings of cameos at center on either side.¹²⁸ This design shows both classical inspiration and, more importantly, that early portrait miniatures may have derived from the illumination of official secular documents, and the two practices may have existed simultaneously. The placement of an official formal miniature portrait on documents was common and underscores a more political motivation to these objects. They become symbols of a powerful governing body and less of a descriptive likeness of a gentleman.¹²⁹

The final progression of Henry VIII 's portrait miniatures can be seen in an example from the Royal Collection (**Illustration 6**). The technique used for this miniature, and two similar ones in the same collection, is the same, watercolor on vellum. Here the vellum has been cleanly cut and placed on a card. The likeness is very similar to that in the two miniatures discussed here, but it has been removed from any additional context and includes a neutral blue background, which is typical of the genre of portrait miniatures. These miniatures were probably enjoyed as a new form of portraiture and based on the replicated design, were exchanged with other courts. These skillfully hand-crafted portraits were intended to be symbols of the monarchy, visualizations of the sophistication of the English court, and messages of both to be sent abroad.

¹²⁷ Campbell and Foister, "Gerard, Lucas and Susanna Horenbout," 722.

¹²⁸ Coombs, *The Portrait Miniature in England*, 19; Reynolds, *The Sixteenth and Seventeenth-Century Miniatures in the Collection of Her Majesty*, 47.

¹²⁹ Starkey, *Henry VIII*, 54–55; Foister, *Holbein and England*, 18–19.

This concept of monarchy, court, and message abroad can be applied to the majority of Horenbout's portrait miniatures and can be best understood with his *Portrait of Princess Mary*, a miniature about 1 1/8 inches in diameter currently in the National Portrait Gallery in London (**Illustration 7**). Horenbout's format of portraying likenesses on a circular blue background continues here, as just seen in his depictions of Henry VIII. However, instead of gold inscriptions, the only text provided is the word "The Emperor" written on her brooch below the neckline of her dress. This portrait was likely made for Mary's marriage negotiations between Henry VIII and the Holy Roman Emperor, Charles V.¹³⁰ This portrait provides a specific example of how miniatures were likely used in diplomatic negotiations between the governing powers of Europe. Later portraits painted by Hans Holbein for potential suitors, often for the King's own marriage negotiations, were typically full or half-length oil paintings intended to give a more descriptive likeness of the sitter.¹³¹ However, this portrait miniature of Mary does not appear to have been intended as a gift that would offer Charles V a sense of the likeness of his possible betrothed. Rather, it may have been a symbolic gift between two monarchs making a political arrangement.

Removed from Horenbout's portraits of royalty, however, the miniatures show significant differences in his style. The portrait miniature of Henry VIII's illegitimate son, Henry Fitzroy, Duke of Richmond (**Illustration 8**), is unique. About 1.73 inches in diameter, it depicts an individual who was technically part of the royal family, and given the grand title of duke, but remained in the background of the English court because of

¹³⁰ Strong, "From Manuscript to Miniature," 33; Foister, *Holbein and England*, 19.

¹³¹ Foister, *Holbein and England*, 203–4.

his illegitimate status.¹³² Painted around 1533-34, this later portrait by Horenbout is unusual in many respects. It does not show a gentleman with finery and symbols of status, rather it appears to commemorate a man on his sickbed dying of tuberculosis.¹³³ The gold inscriptions identify his name and rank and serve as the only reminder of his status. It also provides his age of 15.¹³⁴ More of Fitzroy's torso is also depicted than is typical of Horenbout's miniatures so it is possibly a sign that it was a more private portrait. There is more frequent use of shadows and modeling which gives a sense of weight and shape to the sitter including his arms, which was not present in Horenbout's depictions of Henry VIII and his daughter. Horenbout in this portrait miniature seems to have been concerned with depicting a more natural but casual and intimate portrait of Henry Fitzroy.

Fitzroy is depicted very informally and wears what is likely a night chemise and nightcap. His eyes and face have been described as sunken, a sign of his progressing tuberculosis.¹³⁵ Thus it has often been described as a form of sickbed portrait, which did not become a popular subgenre until the eighteenth century. It is possible this portrait was intended to offer a commemorative likeness of Fitzroy in light of his impending passing. However, Fitzroy's unusual attire also has been explained as a private work intended for his wife whom he married the same year it was painted.¹³⁶ Regardless, the portrait denotes a sense of intimacy often associated with the portrait miniature tradition, one however that does not appear in public depictions of monarchs.

¹³² Heard et al., *The Northern Renaissance*, 69; Reynolds, *The Sixteenth and Seventeenth-Century Miniatures in the Collection of Her Majesty*, 48–49.

¹³³ Ibid.

¹³⁴ Heard et al., *The Northern Renaissance*, 69.

¹³⁵ Reynolds, *The Sixteenth and Seventeenth-Century Miniatures in the Collection of Her Majesty*, 48–49.

¹³⁶ Heard et al., *The Northern Renaissance*, 48–49.

The *Portrait Miniature of a Gentleman, possibly Charles Brandon Duke of Suffolk*, that dates to around 1533 (**Illustration 9**) is another example of a portrait miniature attributed to Lucas Horenbout of a non-royal patron, one that shows a significantly greater use of light, shade, and shadow to model the figure.¹³⁷ The portrait also indicates considerably more attention to details and the gentleman's facial features. The gold inscriptions inform the viewer of his age as 48 years. The light comes from the left and leaves the right side of the face in shadow. The details of his face are equally matched to those of his costume. Horenbout has carefully painted the patterns of the embroidered collar and clearly differentiated them texturally from the fur waistcoat and its detailing. This level of attentive design is not present in Horenbout's earlier miniatures of royalty. Although the increased attention to naturalistic detail may have been a development of Horenbout's style over time, a large enough sampling of his later work has not survived to make that argument.¹³⁸

Instead, the explanation may be found in the work's patronage. This level of specificity may not have been an element of portraiture that was important for Horenbout's royal patrons, but it was for whoever commissioned this work of an unknown courtier. Recognizable details would have delighted the patron and his loved ones as a more private gift to be shared. Royal portraits would not need this level of specificity to express status and elegant stateliness. Instead, the focus was on traditional elegance and the presence of a royal figure related to a document or gift. For a courtier, rank, wealth, and thus status may have been expressed through the specific delineation of expensive clothing.

¹³⁷ Strong and Murrell, *Artists of the Tudor Court*, 38.

¹³⁸ Strong, "From Manuscript to Miniature," 32. Roy Strong attributes the change in style to Horenbout being exposed to the work of Holbein.

Overall, the miniatures of Lucas Horenbout provide insights to the transition of the portrait miniature tradition from manuscript illumination to a new genre of portraiture. These early miniatures do not simply represent the humble origins of the genre. Rather, they present the diverse ways the genre could be used from its onset for both royal and non-royal patrons. Horenbout's miniatures offer a glimpse into the social and political ways that painting created by court artists represented courtly, social and political maneuvers.

CHAPTER III: EARLY SIXTEENTH-CENTURY MINIATURES: HANS HOLBEIN THE YOUNGER

Hans Holbein the Younger and Lucas Horenbout have significantly different career paths which made an impact on their approach to portrait miniatures. Hans Holbein the Younger's career was heavily influenced by the Reformation. Originally from Augsburg, Germany, Holbein moved to Basel, Switzerland around 1515, and became established there as a successful master in the painter's guild, *Zum Himmel*.¹³⁹ In Basel, Holbein became an adept artist and designer in a variety of mediums including altarpieces and decorative work for church facades, council chambers and noblemen's houses.¹⁴⁰ He painted relatively fewer portraits than he would come to paint in England, but he made an important contact, Desiderius Erasmus, the renowned humanist who became Holbein's influential patron.¹⁴¹ However, as Protestantism gradually gained a foothold, the resulting ecclesiastical disputes often questioned the role of religious art, and that art's destruction created a difficult environment for artists who saw commissions decrease. When Holbein left for his first trip to England in 1526, he carried a letter of recommendation from Erasmus to give to his colleague and friend, Thomas More in London. In his letter, Erasmus explains the reason for Holbein's relocation: "He who brings you this letter is the man who has painted my portrait...Here the arts are cold; he goes to England in order to scrape together a few angelots."¹⁴² From these sentences it can be surmised that Holbein struggled to find enough work, due to the repercussions of

¹³⁹ John North, *The Ambassadors' Secret: Holbein and the World of the Renaissance* (London: Hambledon and London, 2004), 13–14.

¹⁴⁰ Oskar Bätschmann and Pascal Griener, *Hans Holbein* (London: Reaktion, 1999), 7–10.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 155.

¹⁴² Wolfgang Stechow, *Northern Renaissance Art, 1400–1600: Sources and Documents* (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1995), 131.

the Reformation in Basel, prompting him to seek a more fortunate situation elsewhere. In England through his acquaintanceship with Erasmus, Holbein made an important connection with Sir Thomas More, Lord Chancellor of England.¹⁴³

England in the 1520s lagged behind the continent in developing a sophisticated artistic tradition and market.¹⁴⁴ Sir Thomas More expressed this concern in his letter to Erasmus: “Your painter, dearest Erasmus, is a wonderful man; but I fear he won’t find England as fruitful as he had hoped. Yet I will do my best to see that he does not find it absolutely barren.”¹⁴⁵ More stayed true to his word and invited Holbein to lodge at Chelsea, his estate, and commissioned a portrait of both himself and a large portrait of his family. More also began to connect Holbein with other prominent members of court. More found Holbein work with his brother-in-law, John Rastell, one of the officials involved with managing the decorations of a theater in Greenwich Palace, and with Sir Henry Guildford, the Comptroller of the Royal Household and the person overlooking the entire decorating project there.¹⁴⁶ These projects were the beginning of Holbein gathering connections and establishing himself in England.

The town of Basel had given Holbein two years leave before he was required to return due to the maximum terms of absence given to a citizen. The town of Basel also had recently ruled that no citizen could enter the employment of a foreign prince.¹⁴⁷ It seems that Holbein stayed four years in England then returned to Basel in 1532 to settle

¹⁴³ H. Langdon, *Holbein* (Oxford, 1976), 8.

¹⁴⁴ Susan Foister, Ashok Roy, and Martin Wyld, *Holbein’s Ambassadors* (London: National Gallery Pub., 2004), 12.

¹⁴⁵ H. Langdon, 1976, 8-9.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid. Foister, *Holbein and England*, 11, mentions this, but the *Oxford National Dictionary of Biography* went into more detail about the project. H. Clough Cecil, “Rastell, John (C. 1475-1536), Lawyer and Printer,” *Oxford National Dictionary of Biography* (2004). Thomas More painted a portrait of Thomas More in 1527 that is now located in the Frick Gallery in New York.

¹⁴⁷ Foister, *Holbein and England*, 10, 12.

his account. Because patronage in Basel was still limited, Holbein returned to England hoping for better prospects and stayed there until his death in 1543.¹⁴⁸ However, the England Holbein returned to was very different from the England of 1526; tensions were rising over Henry VIII's desire to divorce Catharine of Aragon. In a few short years, England would break with the Church of Rome. Moreover, many of Holbein's patrons from his first visit were no longer available or influential. Several were dead and Sir Thomas More had resigned from his position in court by May of 1532.¹⁴⁹ These changes led Holbein to continue his search for patronage.¹⁵⁰

Documentation concerning Holbein's years in England upon his return provides a loose sense of his activities involving commissions, both within and outside the royal court.¹⁵¹ Around 1537/38, Holbein first entered the service of Henry VIII as a salaried painter. He was paid quarterly with a total salary of about £30 a year, an amount slightly short of Lucas Horenbout's salary but was still higher than most court painters of the time.¹⁵² As court painter, Holbein was to be available to the King whenever called upon, but that position did not prohibit Holbein from taking commissions outside of court, and as a foreigner in London he could do so legally. Holbein's previous connections, and his impressive portraits such as *The Ambassadors* commissioned during this period, allowed him to secure a position in a period when it was difficult for foreign artists to establish a career in London. This situation was caused by what might be characterized as the xenophobic attitude in England at the time. Native English artists actively excluded

¹⁴⁸ Richard Foster and Pamela Tudor-Craig, *The Secret Life of Paintings* (New York: St. Martin Press, 1987), 75.

¹⁴⁹ Foister, *Holbein in England*, 12.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid*, 75-76.

¹⁵¹ Susan Foister, "Holbein, Hans, the Younger."

¹⁵² *Ibid*.

foreign painters from guilds and hoarded their commissions.¹⁵³ Holbein, as a foreign artist, was not allowed to construct a workshop, a commonplace asset of experienced artists throughout Europe, but especially in Northern Europe where Holbein originated.¹⁵⁴

Once he received denizenship in 1541, Holbein could have established a workshop, but according to Susan Foister, the backlash and protests would have been substantial.¹⁵⁵ Denizenship offered certain rights to foreign artists in 1541 when legislation became stricter and required Holbein to abandon his previous alien status, after more than ten years working in England.¹⁵⁶ Foister concludes that Holbein probably acquired studio space within Thomas More's estate during his first visit, and during his second visit presumably found a studio near the palace, outside the immediate city, with a few assistants who helped him fulfill commissions and produce copies of his portraits.¹⁵⁷

After his return to England in 1531/2, Holbein took on a variety of jobs at court including painting portraits of two French ambassadors and other courtiers. In keeping with Northern Renaissance court expectations, he also painted and gilded statues, and designed a table fountain that served as a New Year's Gift from King Henry VIII to Anne Boleyn (**Illustration 10**).¹⁵⁸ This varied work implies that although many of Holbein's patrons were no longer influential, he had already established himself in court and was able to secure commissions readily after his return from Basel. His most well-known and important task in court, however, was to paint portraits of Henry VIII's prospective

¹⁵³ Ibid.

¹⁵⁴ Lesley Lewis, *The Thomas More Family Group Portraits after Holbein* (Leominster: Gracewing, 1998), 1.

¹⁵⁵ Foister, *Holbein and England*.

¹⁵⁶ Susan Foister, "Holbein, Hans, the Younger"; Foister, *Holbein and England*, 12.

¹⁵⁷ Foister, *Holbein and England*, 65–67; Susan Foister, "Holbein, Hans, the Younger."

¹⁵⁸ Susan Foister, "Holbein, Hans, the Younger"; Foister, *Holbein and England*, 22.

brides.¹⁵⁹ From 1538 to 1539, the effort to find the king his fourth wife constituted Holbein's main task and he recorded their physical appearances in portraiture. Henry VIII likely entrusted Holbein for these commissions because of the high level of physical description and specificity his works included. The best results were not always achieved, as was the case concerning Anne of Cleves, whom the king found lacking in comparison to Holbein's portrait.¹⁶⁰ Holbein's portraits are not simple recordings of physical appearances, but translations of those appearances coupled with conventions of display and formal portraiture that needed to be balanced with a person's likeness.¹⁶¹

As skilled portraitists, Hans Holbein the Younger and Lucas Horenbout considered their sitters and patrons in their approaches to portrait miniatures. Often, as was the case with most Northern European portrait artists, they had a standard formula, but that method had to be adjusted and negotiated with the concerns of each sitter and what message he or she wished to convey. The format and presentation of the sitters had to fit the function the portraits were designed to fulfill. Unfortunately, no descriptions of portraits commissioned from this period describe the way in which they would have been used or displayed leaving art historians to infer this from the images themselves.¹⁶²

Stylistically Holbein's portrait miniatures have been described as nearly identical in approach to his large-scale portraits. One of the hallmarks of his style is the ability to depict figures in the same descriptive, balanced and modeled way in which he painted larger works using oil paint on panel.¹⁶³ In the process, Holbein may have used drawings

¹⁵⁹ Foister, *Holbein and England*, 22.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

¹⁶¹ Nuechterlein, *Translating Nature into Art*, 147–59.

¹⁶² Foister, *Holbein and England*, 227.

¹⁶³ Ibid., 254–55; Colding, *Aspects of Miniature Painting*, 21–22; Coombs, *The Portrait Miniature in England*, 24.

from portrait sittings and scaled them down freehand or by using a device.¹⁶⁴ However, only one drawing survives of a patron in a similar pose to the finished miniature and it is not exactly the same. It is not clear what Holbein's process was and if he prepared drawings for miniatures or directly painted from life, or if his portrait miniatures were scaled down versions of large-scale portraits or vice versa.¹⁶⁵

Holbein's style is similar in both his half- and full-length oil paintings and his portrait miniatures. Often explained as a preoccupation with mass, form and specific physical details, his style provides personal details and gestures, but presents sitters seemingly neutral or with natural grace free of affectation.¹⁶⁶ Holbein's process was one in which he took the original "text" of the sitter's physical features and adjusted, reinterpreted, and combined it with other sources.¹⁶⁷ It is impossible to know what Holbein saw before him and what was invented or changed to amplify the sitter's personality or status. However, this resulting "naturalism" seems to be Holbein's goal and achievement.

In his half-length portrait from around 1533 of Derich Born (**Illustration 11**), a wealthy German merchant, the sitter looks directly at the viewer.¹⁶⁸ Born is depicted as a very proud gentleman in fine clothes, and he confronts the viewer through his direct gaze as if daring viewers to question the achievements of himself or the skillful artist who painted him. He leans on a parapet with a tree and landscape behind him. The parapet is inscribed with the painter's boastful claim in Latin, "If you added a voice, this would be

¹⁶⁴ Strong, *The English Renaissance Miniature*, 51; Foister, *Holbein and England*, 254–55; Susan Foister, "Holbein, Hans, the Younger."

¹⁶⁵ Susan Foister, "Holbein, Hans, the Younger."

¹⁶⁶ Foister, *Holbein and England*, 256–62. Nuechterlein, *Translating Nature into Art*, 147–57.

¹⁶⁷ Nuechterlein, *Translating Nature into Art*, 158.

¹⁶⁸ Foister, *Holbein and England*, 206–8.

Derich his very self. You would be in doubt whether the painter or his father made him. Der Born aged 23, the year 1533.”¹⁶⁹ This quotation very boldly states Holbein’s desire to create a portrait in the same way one would create another being, so realistically that if given life or a voice it would mirror the actual Derich Born. Painted the same year as *The Ambassadors*, this portrait may be Holbein’s attempt to show his level of skill in this very different genre and to establish his career as a brilliant portraitist. The portrait confirms that a naturalistically painted depiction was a goal he strived to achieve. It possibly matched the patron’s own desire to be painted with such specificity that Holbein’s achievements became a statement of the patron’s status, wealth, and taste.

According to many art historians, particularly Susan Foister, one of the most remarkable elements of Holbein’s style and skill was his ability to infuse his miniatures with the same attention to detail, balance and a quiet dignified presence that he gave larger oil portraits.¹⁷⁰ Miniatures, however, present a different focus and limit an artist’s scope in terms of display. This genre’s technique, watercolor on vellum as opposed to oil paint on panel, produces a very different effect and quality. According to Karl van Mander, writing in his *Book of Painters* in 1604, a “Master Lucas”, likely Lucas Horenbout, taught Holbein the art of limning which “he pursued to such an extent, that in a short time he as far excelled Lukas in drawing, arrangement, understanding, and execution, as the sun surpasses the moon in brightness.”¹⁷¹ Although van Mander wrote in the early seventeenth century and is not a completely reliable source for Holbein’s artistic training, art historians find his claim somewhat convincing.¹⁷² Crediting Lucas

¹⁶⁹ Heard et al., *The Northern Renaissance*, 166–67.

¹⁷⁰ Foister, *Holbein and England*, 256–60.

¹⁷¹ Strong, *The English Renaissance Miniature*, 33.

¹⁷² Rowlands, *Holbein*, 89.

Horenbout with introducing this skill to Holbein offers a tradition continuing from the great manuscript illuminators of the Ghent-Bruges school to Holbein. Art historians understand Holbein as the artist who revolutionized Horenbout's simple decorative forms with a Renaissance master's concern for individuality including fully modeled figures and crisp contours.¹⁷³ This exaggeration of the difference between the two artists has been continued in scholarship even though Holbein continues the traditional approach to miniatures, and does not reinvent portrait miniature conventions or even challenge them. Holbein maintains the same shape, blue background, size and composition as Horenbout. He does not create miniature oil paintings with illusionistic backgrounds or paint full length figures in the same way later seventeenth-century miniaturists will. Horenbout's miniatures of non-royals have the modeling usually attributed only to Holbein. Holbein like other artists adapted portrait miniatures to his own personal style and altered it to meet the function of the portrait and the expectations of the patron.

Despite being contemporaries and sharing a similar technique, Holbein and Horenbout approach miniatures differently depending on their own styles and backgrounds, but also on the differences in their patrons. As previously discussed, Horenbout's patronage consisted mostly of royalty, a fact that entailed different functions and expectations for their miniatures than for his miniatures for courtiers. However, Holbein expands miniatures to an even wider pool of patrons including the wife of a wealthy merchant and several unknown sitters. It is often difficult to identify Holbein's patrons because doing so requires art historians to depend completely on the works themselves.¹⁷⁴ Horenbout's miniatures use a formula that includes sitters' heads and a

¹⁷³ Strong, "From Manuscript to Miniature," 36–37.

¹⁷⁴ Foister, *Holbein and England*, 10.

small portion of the torso. By contrast, Holbein nearly always includes the sitter's hands and often depicts sitters holding an object as a display or symbol of some kind.¹⁷⁵ Unlike Horenbout, the majority of Holbein's surviving miniatures have patrons who are not royalty, with the exception of the *Portrait of Anne of Cleves* (**Illustration 12**).

Holbein's miniature *Portrait of Anne of Cleves* is one of two portraits Holbein painted as a part of his assignment from Henry VIII to record the appearance of his prospective bride. One, painted on vellum supported with canvas support, measures about 2 feet high and 19 in wide, and is housed in the Louvre in Paris.¹⁷⁶ The second is a portrait miniature on vellum about 1.75 in./4.45 cm in diameter.¹⁷⁷ After the death of Jane Seymour in 1539, the effort to find the King of England a fourth wife began and included negotiations between Henry VIII's advisors and the Duke of Cleves from the Lower Rhine, an area that today includes Germany and the Netherlands. Holbein was asked to paint a truthful image without flattery after two ambassadors had returned from Germany with portraits that were rejected by Henry VIII because they did not offer a full view of Anne's face.¹⁷⁸ Holbein was entrusted to return from Düren in the Duchy of Cleves with a more suitable portrait of Anne who offered a match strongly encouraged by the King's chief minister, Thomas Cromwell. Anne offered an ideal Protestant partner from the continent. Holbein's portraits were apparently well received as the match was finalized and she arrived in England in January 1540. However, Henry was not pleased with his new bride stating, "She is nothing so fair as she hath been reported." The marriage was

¹⁷⁵ Strong, "From Manuscript to Miniature," 36; Nuechterlein, *Translating Nature into Art*, 147–48.

¹⁷⁶ Foister, *Holbein and England*, 204–5.

¹⁷⁷ Foister and Batchelor, *Holbein in England*, 102.

¹⁷⁸ Foister, *Holbein and England*, 203.

annulled a few months later in July, the month Cromwell was executed.¹⁷⁹ Perhaps Holbein idealized her features to please sitter or patron; in any event, the result was unfortunate. Anne of Cleves was given a generous marriage settlement that included several properties making her one of the wealthiest and independent women in England at the time.¹⁸⁰

Both portraits of Anne of Cleves are very similar with only a few differences. The Louvre painting includes more of her body below her waist; the miniature includes head and upper body only. Both would have been portable yet still formal portraits as the occasion demanded. Anne is depicted fully frontal in both, as requested by the King, she is dressed in an opulent red gown detailed with a gold trim and jewels and an exquisitely detailed jeweled headdress. Both the miniature and larger portrait are elegant and use expensive pigments, including ultramarine for the bright blue background of the portrait miniature. Holbein utilized the same expensive pigments in one other portrait, a portrait of Henry VIII. Both portraits were designed as royal objects for King and court.

According to Susan Foister, the miniature portrait of Anne of Cleve was likely painted from a sketch Holbein made for the larger portrait then scaled down with adjustments. One of the adjustments reduced the headdress and upper body proportions within the portrait miniature to minimize the headdress distracting from the face.¹⁸¹ The color palette also changed to match the brightness of the miniature's conventional blue background. Holbein adapted the head and shoulders composition Horenbout developed and altered it to be fully frontal, which produced an even more formal effect. Anne of

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., 203–5.

¹⁸⁰ Coombs, *The Portrait Miniature in England*, 23. Ibid.

¹⁸¹ Ibid. This also minimized the headdress that English audiences did not like, according to Susan Foister and reports from the time.

Cleves stares directly out at the viewer, her face expressionless. She neither invites nor challenges the viewer, but simply accepts the exchange of gazes. In terms of light and shadow, Holbein depicts her in one bright spotlight and even illumination, with a good deal of attention paid to the face; space is unimportant although there is some effort to combat this effect in the curves of her gold collar hangs down to the bottom of the miniature. This suggests a more intimate portrayal emphasizing the face as opposed to the wealth displayed through clothes.

Holbein's *Portrait of Anne of Cleves* is in many respects one of Holbein's most elegant and linear works and it is unique within his portrait miniature oeuvre. It demonstrates that Holbein adjusted his typically highly descriptive approach in order to create a formal portrait with specific requirements from both Henry VIII as well as the Duke of Cleves. This difference from his other miniatures demonstrates that it was produced with a very specific function and with concern for satisfying all involved in the marriage negotiations. These considerations resulted in a more formal and conventional approach than seen in his other portrait miniatures.

The *Portrait of Mrs. Jane Small* (born Pemberton), offers a compelling contrast to Holbein's depiction of Anne of Cleves (**Illustration 13**).¹⁸² Jane Small was the wife of Nicolas Small, a wealthy London merchant with some influential court ties. Socially merchants were considered to enjoy an elevated position and Holbein likely stood on familiar terms with Small as a supplier of some of his more expensive materials he may

¹⁸²Coombs, *The Portrait Miniature in England*, 23. This identification changed around 1998 when art historians reevaluated the coat of arms painted on a piece of vellum associated with this portrait. It was previously considered odd because Mrs. Pemberton was the wife of a gentleman of an estate far outside of London. It's been reinterpreted as Mrs. Jane Small whose maiden name was originally Pemberton.

have needed for court projects.¹⁸³ Jane Small was neither a courtier nor the daughter of a German duke, but she was still fairly well off. The difference in her social position corresponds directly with a different intended use and expectation for this miniature as opposed to the previous miniatures discussed by Holbein and Horenbout.

The *Portrait of Mrs. Jane Small* is a miniature measuring about 2 inches in diameter with a conventional blue background painted of less expensive azurite instead of ultramarine.¹⁸⁴ She is depicted in half-length with her hands holding an evergreen sprig and wears a carnation. Both may symbolize her recent engagement or marriage.¹⁸⁵ Unlike Horenbout's portrait miniatures and the miniature of Anne of Cleves, her hands are included and offer the viewer a sense of her manner and presence. She wears a modest and relatively simple gown with nicely detailed embroidered cuffs and collar. The gold inscription states her age as 23.¹⁸⁶ In general, Holbein's depiction shows a carefully composed likeness on par with his large-scale oil paintings, but it is simplified to adhere to the conventions of the portrait miniature with a plain blue background instead of an interior or landscape. He has depicted her with the same specificity and detail for which he is known. She is shown, not as an idealized gentlewoman masked by status, but modestly looking down in quiet contemplation. Hers is an uncharacteristic pose for English portraiture of this period.

Portraits can be shown frontally with the sitter staring straight ahead or in three-quarter view with the head turned somewhat to the side. Holbein often depicts his sitters in the latter manner including in the large group portrait of *Sir Thomas More and His*

¹⁸³ Foister, *Holbein and England*, 36.

¹⁸⁴ This suggests that the use of ultramarine was a specifically used for

¹⁸⁵ Foister, *Holbein and England*, 256.

¹⁸⁶ Foister and Batchelor, *Holbein in England*, 49.

Family (Illustration 14) and the portrait miniature, *Portrait of an Unknown Man*, currently in the Netherlands Royal Collection. The unknown man was likely a member of a merchant family in the London Steelyard (**Illustration 15**). The Steelyard was a trading community at the edge of the Thames where Hanseatic merchants from Germany were entitled to trade cloth and other goods.¹⁸⁷ This portrait demonstrates that Holbein depicted both men and women of a variety of social standings in his portrait miniatures.¹⁸⁸ The three-quarter view and downward gaze is a device Holbein likely used in miniatures to distance the sitter from the gaze of the viewer and to create a sense of the sitter's natural manner; the three-quarter view was standard in Northern Renaissance portraits of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. That view enables the viewer to look without confronting the gaze of the sitter who, in this example, turns to the right and looks down, averting his gaze even more. This portrayal of a member of the merchant class, like that of the large oil portrait of Derich Born corresponds to miniatures' simultaneous function as a more personal or privately-owned object of a merchant family outside royalty. Miniatures like the *Portrait of Mrs. Jane Small*, and the unknown man, may have been inexpensive portraits for friends or family members. As such, the function would be a lovely realistic likeness of a loved one.

Hans Holbein the Younger's portrait miniatures provide a glimpse into the career of this successful Northern Renaissance artist who successfully established himself in the court of King Henry VIII. Because his experience is more documented than that of Lucas Horenbout, information about Holbein provides insights into the expected artistic projects

¹⁸⁷ Foister, *Holbein, Hans, the Younger (1497/8–1543), Artist*, 132–33.

¹⁸⁸ Coombs, *The Portrait Miniature in England*, 23.

with which court artists were tasked.¹⁸⁹ Holbein's career as a successful portraitist likely came from his ability to balance a descriptive likeness with the expectations of the patron. Holbein and his patrons desired this high degree of naturalism both as a source of pride, in the case of Derich Born, but also as a source of information, in the case of Anne of Cleves. Hans Holbein's portrait miniatures constitute a small part of his oeuvre, but they demonstrate the artist's navigation of a new portrait convention for a variety of patrons.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid., 22–24.

CONCLUSION

English portrait miniatures constituted an emerging art form in the early sixteenth century and the court of Henry VIII became the primary setting for them. Miniatures have been placed within a separate genre of portraiture because of their small size and different technique that derives from Northern European manuscript illumination. Initially miniatures appear to have been designed as elegant court objects intended for royal pleasure or exchange that derived from manuscript illumination.¹⁹⁰

Manuscript illumination survived as a traditional court method of decorating official court documents with intricate borders, tromp-l'oeil effects, and miniature likenesses of donors or monarchs. Manuscript illumination was valued as a traditional court means of decoration and used on official documents.¹⁹¹ The use of the medium for detached portrait miniatures indicates that the style began to take on a separate meaning closer to formal portraiture in this form that was luxurious, easily portable, and perfect for European diplomacy. In the 1520s, when France's miniaturist Jean Clouet began to create miniatures that were displayed internationally, this practice encouraged England to compete and develop these portraits to show that England was an equal artistically.¹⁹² However, even in this early period, miniatures were used not simply as signs of royal power or even gifts, but to convey messages in a variety of ways for a variety of patrons. Miniatures described and informed, conveyed political power and legitimacy, and commemorated a person or event.

This varied quality of miniatures is revealed in the style of Lucas Horenbout. His earliest miniature on a letter's patent (**Illustration 5**) conveyed Henry VIII's presence

¹⁹⁰ Strong, "From Manuscript to Miniature," 25–29.

¹⁹¹ Coombs, *The Portrait Miniature in England*, 16–19; Colding, *Aspects of Miniature Painting*, 22–29.

¹⁹² Foister, *Holbein and England*, 17–19.

and favor for a dispersal of properties. These miniatures also show the development from the illuminated page.¹⁹³ Horenbout's later miniatures become more and more detached from the page and text, but still maintain their focus on conveying a symbolic likeness of the monarch and his power rather than a specific likeness of Henry VIII as an individual. Several similar portrait miniatures showing Henry VIII and his wife created during a short period of time implies that they were in demand for exchange as signs of favor to foreign courts and for courtiers, friends and family.¹⁹⁴ Miniatures became tokens in diplomatic negotiations--such as the gift from Francois I of France and his son to encourage English intervention--and the miniature of Princess Mary used in propositions for marriage arrangements with Spain.¹⁹⁵

Lucas Horenbout's miniatures offer variety although that aspect is often ignored in scholarship that favors describing Horenbout as a lesser court artist with a background in manuscript illumination, one that is limited to traditional medieval art, thus showing he was unable to adapt to the growing individualism of the Renaissance. The attribution of these early works is complicated and part of an ongoing debate that results in the inevitable unfavorable comparison of Lucas Horenbout to Hans Holbein the Younger. The discussions usually conclude with a quality judgement in favor of Holbein's detailed and precise portrait style and a dismissal of Horenbout as a "good" portraitist.¹⁹⁶ However, the traits that scholars praise in Hans Holbein's works, such as modeling through light and shade and detailing the sitters' features and costumes, are also present in some of Horenbout's later works. Horenbout's *Portrait Miniature of a Gentleman*,

¹⁹³ Coombs, *The Portrait Miniature in England*, 16–21.

¹⁹⁴ Foister, *Holbein and England*, 19.

¹⁹⁵ Coombs, *The Portrait Miniature in England*, 18.

¹⁹⁶ Strong, "From Manuscript to Miniature," 32.

possibly Charles Brandon Duke of Suffolk, from around 1533, is an example of a portrait miniature attributed to Horenbout of a non-royal patron that shows a significantly greater use of shadow, light and shade to model the figure.¹⁹⁷

This level of attentive design is not present in Horenbout's earlier miniatures and may have been a development of Horenbout's style over time, yet a large enough sampling of his later work has not survived to make that argument. Instead, the explanation may be found in the work's patronage. This level of individualizing specificity may not have been an element that was important for Horenbout's royal patrons, but may have been for whoever commissioned this small painting of the unknown courtier.

Lucas Horenbout and Hans Holbein the Younger also had different approaches as court artists. Holbein's better-documented career provides insights into the experience of foreign artists working within the English court in the early sixteenth century. It is clear the political climate had a significant impact on Holbein, and possibly to a lesser extent, on Horenbout. Despite legal limitations imposed on his workshop, Holbein was prolific and actively took a variety of commissions inside and outside the English court. Although Holbein's portrait miniatures are a small portion of his surviving artwork, the majority of these miniatures do not show royal patrons. It is only possible to speculate why this should be the case. Horenbout may have been the preferred miniature portraitist for Henry VIII especially during the years of negotiation with France. Holbein's miniatures perhaps were commissioned sporadically by the monarch when necessary, as in the case of Anne of Cleves. Regardless, Holbein's portrait miniatures appear to have been more suitable to the needs of non-royal patrons. The reasons may have been price, time

¹⁹⁷ Ibid.

constraints, or the size and style of his miniatures, we cannot know. However, what is clear is that Holbein's success as a portraitist came from his ability to meet those expectations for his royal and especially his non-royal patrons.

Holbein's career as a successful portraitist likely came from his ability to balance a descriptive likeness with the expectations of the patron. Holbein and his patrons desired this high degree of naturalism both as a source of pride, as in the case of Hedrick Born, but also as a source of information, as in the case of Anne of Cleves. Hans Holbein's portrait miniatures constitute a small part of his oeuvre, but they demonstrate the artist's navigation of a new portrait convention for a variety of patrons.

Scholarship has reinvented portrait miniatures as collectable objects from the English Renaissance, and has neglected the early miniatures because they do not fit the definition of innovative Englishness created by Nicholas Hilliard. Historically early portrait miniatures do not fit squarely into either medieval or Renaissance traditions. Scholarship has largely neglected discussing miniatures as singular objects commissioned within particular circumstances for patrons in the way they would for large-scale portraits. The size of miniatures has made them collectable objects to be understood as a separate tradition. Yet these works were not all commissioned by singular specialized artists, but instead by salaried painters with assistants who created a wide variety of works for the English court and for patrons outside the court. Because of this approach, however, limited to attribution to an English tradition, crucial elements for meaning of patronage and function have been neglected. In conclusion, early English portrait miniatures are stylistically varied and should be understood in terms of their function and patronage, and not simply for their attributions.

Illustrations

Illustration 1



Illustration 1 Page 2, 32: Turned Ivory Box Holding Hans Holbein the Younger's *Portrait of Anne of Cleves*, c. 16th century. Portrait dates to 1539.

Image source: Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Accessed March 29, 2019.
<http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O18966/portrait-miniature-of-anne-of-portrait-miniature-holbein-hans/>

Illustration 2:

Illustration 2 Page 7: Nicholas Hilliard, *Portrait of a Man Clasping a Hand from a Cloud*, 1588. Watercolor on vellum mounted on plain brown card.

Image source: Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Accessed April 5, 2019.
<http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O16580/man-clasping-a-hand-from-portrait-miniature-hilliard-nicholas/>

Illustration 3:



Illustration 3 Page 28: Gerald Horenbout, *Sforza Hours*, Vol. 2 fol.104v., c. 1517-1521.

Tempera on parchment

Image source: British Library, London. Accessed March 29, 2019.

http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/Viewer.aspx?ref=add_ms_34294_f041r#

Illustration 4:



Illustration 4 Page 27, 36: Lucas Horenbout, *Portrait of Henry VIII* c. 1525-1527
Watercolor on vellum on card. 53, mm by 48, mm
Image source: Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge UK. Accessed March 29, 2019.
<http://webapps.fitzmuseum.cam.ac.uk/explorer/index.php?oid=18035>

Illustration 5:



Illustration 5 Page 36, 56: Letters patent of Henry VIII for Thomas Forster (d. 1528), in Latin, 1524, 28 April: Letters patent granting various properties in the parish of St Michael in Cornhill, London to Thomas Forster.

Image source: Coombs, Katherine. "English Limning: The Portrait Miniature in Tudor and Stuart England." In *Treasures of the Royal Courts: Tudors, Stuarts & the Russian Tsars*, edited by Olga Dmitrieva and Tessa Murdoch. London; New York: V & A Publishing; Distributed in North America by Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 2013, 44.

Illustration 6:



Illustration 6 Pages 7 and 37: Lucas Horenbout, *Portrait of King Henry VIII* c.1526-1527 Watercolor on vellum laid on playing card (the ace of diamonds) | 4.7 cm (Diameter) RCIN 420640

Image source: Royal Collection Trust. Accessed March 29, 2019.
<https://www.rct.uk/collection/420640/henry-viii-1491-1547>

Illustration 7:



Illustration 7 Page 37: Attributed to Lucas Horenbout, *Portrait of Queen Mary I*, c. 1525. Watercolor on vellum 1 3/8 in. 35mm diameter.

Image source: National Portrait Gallery, London. Accessed March 29, 2019.
<https://www.npg.org.uk/collections/search/portrait/mw09583/Queen-Mary-I?>

Illustration 8:



Illustration 8 Page 38: Lucas Horenbout, *Henry Fitzroy, Duke of Richmond and Somerset*, c.1533-4 Watercolor on vellum laid on card (the ace of hearts) 4.4 cm (diameter) RCIN 420019
 Image source: Royal Collection Trust. Accessed March 29, 2019.
<https://www.rct.uk/collection/420019/henry-fitzroy-duke-of-richmond-and-somerset-1519-1536>

Illustration 9:



Illustration 9 Page 39: Lucas Horenbout, *Portrait Miniature of a Gentleman, possibly Charles Brandon Duke of Suffolk* c. 1532 Watercolor on vellum stuck to plain card. 44mm in diameter.

Image source: Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Accessed March 29, 2019.
<http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O1267671/portrait-miniature-of-a-gentleman-miniature-horenbout-lucas/>

Illustration 10:



Illustration 10 Page 46: Hans Holbein, *Design for a Table Fountain with the Badge of Anne Boleyn*, 1533. Pen and black ink over chalk on paper. 25.1 by 16.4 cm.

Kunstmuseum Basel, Kupferstichkabinett

Image source: Foister, Susan and Tim Bachelor. *Holbein in England* London: Tate Publishing, 2009, 86.

Illustration 11:

Illustration 11 Page 47: Hans Holbein the Younger, *Portrait Derich Born* Signed and Dated 1533 Oil on oak panel. 60.3 x 44.9 cm

Image source: Royal Collection Trust. Accessed March 29, 2019.
<https://www.rct.uk/collection/405681/derich-born-1510-1549>

Illustration 12:



Illustration 12 Pages 7 and 50: Hans Holbein the Younger *Portrait of Anne of Cleves* 1539 Watercolor on vellum on card. 44.5mm

Image source: Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Accessed March 29, 2019.
<http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O18966/portrait-miniature-of-anne-of-portrait-miniature-holbein-hans/>

Illustration 13:



Illustration 13 Page 52: Hans Holbein the Younger *Portrait of Mrs. Jane Small* ca. 1536
Watercolor on vellum. 52mm in diameter

Image source: Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Accessed March 29, 2019.
<https://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O16583/mrs-jane-small-formerly-mrs-portrait-miniature/>

Illustration 14:



Illustration 14 Page 54: Hans Holbein the Younger. *Study for the Portrait of Sir Thomas More and His Family*, 1527. Pen and black ink on paper. 38.5 x 52.5cm
Kupferstichkabinett, Kunstmuseum, Basel.

Image source: Foister, Susan and Tim Bachelord. *Holbein in England* London: Tate Publishing, 2009, 50.

Illustration 15:



Illustration 15 Page 54: Hans Holbein the Younger *Portrait of Unknown Man possibly Hans Schwarzwaldt II* ca. 1540 watercolor on vellum 3.8cm diameter.

Image source: Royal Collection of the Netherlands. The Hague. Accessed March 29, 2019. <https://www.koninklijkeverzamelingen.nl/collectie-online/detail/aa6f2c6c-391c-51fa-aa8c-d5e20a3f4dd1/media/9718d4ae-ec58-7c90-f851-32a046>

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