

THE 'ENGLISHNESS' OF TUDOR AND EARLY STUART JEWELLERY

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One hundred years of Tudor and Early Stuart jewellery is a large chunk of history to compress into a 50-minute lecture - and, one might add, is an equally daunting task to write about with only a handful of illustrations. However, the very concept of the 'Englishness' - and please note that it is in inverted commas - introduces a highly selective and, perhaps, controversial element into the survey, the first part of which will be dealing with Henry VIII's reign (1509 - 1547). In this opening section, I will hope to demonstrate that what is often perceived as 'Tudor jewellery' is often so greatly influenced by what was going on in Flanders, particularly in Antwerp, and by what the London workshop of a Flemish immigrant goldsmith, John of Antwerp ("Hans von Antwerpen" in many of the documents) may have been making for the English court and his London clientele that its 'Englishness' is less pronounced than previously assumed.

In the second part of this survey, the growing individuality of Elizabethan and Early Stuart jewellery (1558 - c. 1640) will be considered against a background of increasingly strong French - rather than Flemish - influence, perhaps beginning in the 1570's during the protracted French courtship of the Queen of England when, firstly, Henri, duc d'Anjou, was a reluctant, politically-motivated suitor and, secondly, François, duc d'Alençon, became an eager and persistent suitor, whose second and more lengthy visit to the English court in 1581 was terminated only with difficulty - and considerable expense - by the Queen herself. Of great significance for the development of Elizabethan jewellery on French lines was the role of Nicholas Hilliard (1547 - 1619), the first English-born painter to achieve the status of an artist at the English court. He not only became the official painter, limner, engraver and goldsmith to Queen Elizabeth (died 1603) and, subsequently, to James I (died 1625) but he was also the author of the famous technical treatise *The Art of Limning* (written between 1597 - 1603). At the age of 29, soon after his marriage to Alice Brandon on 15 July 1576, Nicholas Hilliard and his bride went off to Paris and he spent more than two years - apparently very successful years - in France, partly attached to the household of François, duc d'Alençon, and partly supported by the English ambassador in Paris, Sir Amyas Poulet. Therefore,

Hilliard, with the Queen's approval, had undoubtedly been permitted a lengthy absence from her Majesty's service - in which he had been working since about 1572 - and was allowed to go abroad "with no other intent than to increase his knowledge by this voyage" (to quote from the ambassador's letter of 19 February 1578 to Sir Francis Walsingham, Chief Secretary to the Queen).

However, despite Hilliard's adoption of French styles and his dominant position at court, the craftsmen of London were simultaneously being subjected to the contending influence of Flanders as the city of London became 'home' to a colony of assorted Flemish artists fleeing from the 'Spanish Fury' and the persecutions of the Duke of Alva in the Netherlands. Furthermore, in this period insular styles had to compete with foreign engraved designs and printed pattern books that were beginning to circulate *internationally*, making it possible for the jeweller and goldsmith in London to share - at least superficially - the tastes of other centres, whether in Germany, France, Italy or The Netherlands. On the other hand, the statement (published in *Archaeologia* in 1986) that by the turn of the century when the Dutch immigrant merchant-jeweller, Arnold Lulls (active c. 1585 - c. 1621, was handling large quantities of jewels for the royal family, "jewellery was an article of international commerce and much was imported" could be very misleading. Certainly, there was - and for a long time, had been - a flourishing international trade in precious gemstones, especially diamonds, emeralds, rubies and fine pearls, and much of this commerce with the English court in the early 17th century was documented in fascinating detail in 1986, but the design of the settling of these jewels by goldsmiths - that is, the creation of jewellery - was essentially a local, and very individual, decision involving the patron and the goldsmith. Of course, there were items of jewellery being sent from one court to another as diplomatic gifts, especially at the time of political marriages and special embassies, but this was an age when the patron would normally expect to commission a piece of jewellery from a *particular* craftsman, who would then prepare a drawing or wax model of the proposed work, always taking care to incorporate any specific wishes of the patron. Only after further direct consultation between both

parties, would the gemstones be handed over and the work on the proposed piece of jewellery actually begin.

This practice is clearly described in Cellini's autobiography and in his technical *Treatises on Goldsmithing and Sculpture*, both of which were written in the second half of the 16th century: the *Vita* (started in 1558 but only completed some four years later) and the *Due Trattati* (begun in 1565). Furthermore, it is evident that in Italy this procedure was not confined to the princely rulers and their courts and, to see how commonplace it was north of the Alps, there are those revealing and intimate passages, for example, in the correspondence of Lady Lisle, wife of Henry VIII's Governor of Calais. Lady Lisle, kept busy in Calais, was accustomed to consult Anthony Barker, an English scholar studying in Paris, especially after her youngest son, James, aged 8 had been sent to begin his education at the University of Paris in August 1535. Like everyone else in Lady Lisle's circle, Barker found himself doing little jobs for her, such as organising the repair, the re-setting or the making of jewellery for Lady Lisle.

The letters from this period 1535-6 (as published in Vol. 3 of Muriel St Clair Byrne's 1981 edition) make it clear that, in answer to Lady Lisle's request to have two of her old jewels - a gold cross and "*a flower set with 4 diamonds and a ruby in the midst and 3 pearls hanging at it*" - converted into two brooches "*of the best and newest fashion that you can devise*", the immediate response was to cause "*the pattern of 2 brooches to be drawn out*". These were sent to her in Calais for her approval and, in the meantime, it was "*willed in this nothing to be meddled till we hear from your Ladyship*". The cost of the drawing of the 2 brooches was 20 sous, "*which he swore to have paid to the painter.*"

Because Lady Lisle had suggested, at the outset, that one should have "*an image of Our Lady of the Assumption*" and the other "*some person being under a cloth of estate*", the two drawings are said in the letter to depict precisely these subjects - but they had first to please Lady Lisle, who, on this occasion, was evidently slow to reply, which led to the gentle explanation in the next letter that "*because there came no word till now from you, the goldsmith let your work by*".

Jewellery of this kind was intensely personal and was specifically created to order. Under normal circumstances, therefore, the goldsmiths of the court or the nearest big city would personally receive the commissions so that the details could be discussed at each stage. Lady Lisle, who could not go to Paris or London, had to rely on friends and letters - but that was exceptional. So, in my view, it is most unlikely that jewellery in its finished state was "*an article of international commerce and much was imported*" into England in this period.

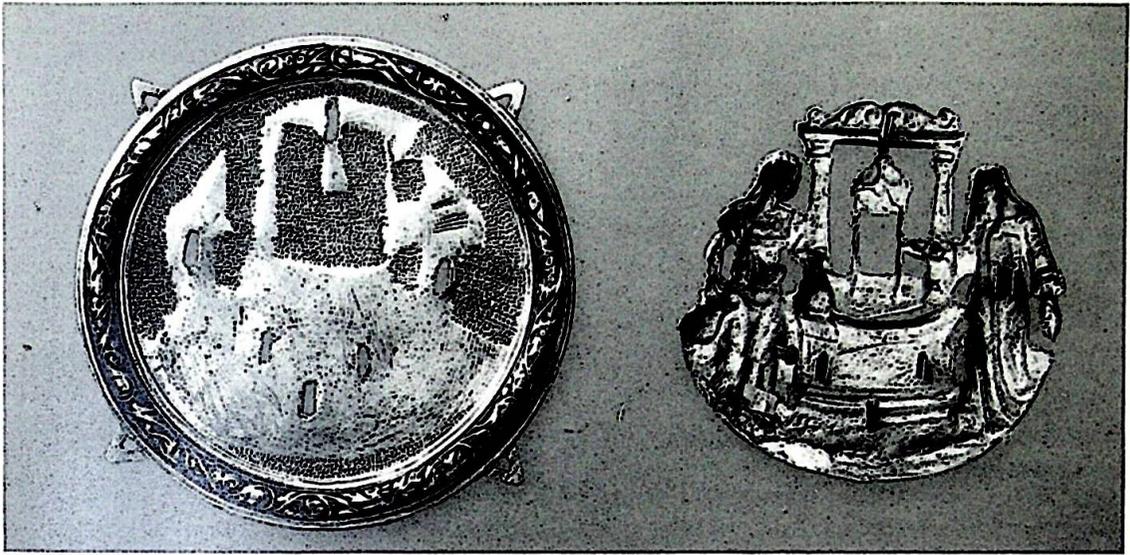
Instead, the widespread practice in Europe seems to have been to patronise the local goldsmiths and, therefore, the jewellery can be expected to exhibit certain distinctive methods of construction or technical details of craftsmanship that were characteristic of that particular part of Europe. I am not suggesting that these distinctions are rigid or that the lines do not become blurred - but, as a generalisation, it is a valid observation.

These distinguishing features of manufacture, however, tend to be less noticeable on the *outside* of a jewel. The *inner* surfaces are, by contrast, often left in a very 'natural' state and so can be very instructive about the regional idiosyncracies of workmanship.

Unfortunately, one of the major obstacles has always been to gain access to the *insides* of jewels. Even when owners are willing to have the jewels examined that closely, it often requires a skilled technician to open up a jewel safely, especially if it has been altered or repaired in the 19th century.

The interior of every jewel needs to be recorded accurately, photographed and published for posterity - as the present programme at the British Museum (Volume I, 1986 - Volume III, 1991) has attempted to do, not only with the jewellery but also with the very similar goldsmiths' work (often comparably set with gemstones and elaborately enamelled) found occasionally on silver but more especially on the gold mounted precious hardstone vessels, rock-crystals and exotic 'curiosities' of the princely *Kunstkammern* of Renaissance Europe. This laborious procedure has, for example, been carried out recently with astonishing results on the famous so-called 'Cellini' agate vase (in the British Museum). Reputably carved in Antiquity and mounted in enamelled gold during the Italian Renaissance, the vase has been widely published as a work of Cellini following the visit to London by Ernst Kris, the Viennese specialist, whose findings were made public in 1932. There is, however, no indication that the vase was taken apart at that time and only my recent investigation of its technical and constructional features, together with my discovery of two earlier drawings of the vase, have revealed that the mounts and the cover (with its enamelled relief of satyrs and vines approximately the size of a Renaissance hat-badge) have a very different - and more recent - origin.

By studying the technical features of one category of Renaissance jewellery - such as that ubiquitous item of male jewellery, the hat-badge - it is often possible to deduce from the different methods employed in their making the probable area in Europe in which they had been made in the 16th century. Thus, in Italy goldsmiths used the true repoussé and chasing techniques - as described in



1. View of the larger Tudor hat-badge of Christ and the Woman of Samaria taken apart, showing the pounced gold ground-plate and enamelled frame (left) with six of the short slits visible, through which pass the 'butterfly-clips' soldered to the back of the gold relief, including the separately made (and attached) English inscription (on the side of Jacob's Well); c 1540. Diam. 2.3 in. *British Museum*

detail by Cellini in his *Trattati* - to make the enamelled gold reliefs of the hat-badges and several outstandingly accomplished specimens in very high relief have been preserved in the Hapsburg collections, like the circular St George and the Dragon hat-brooch (Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, inv. no. 1614), and, in the British Museum, the Conversion of St Paul hat-jewel, treasured by the descendants of the Marquis Camillo Capizucchi (died 1597), a distinguished member of one of the ancient families of Rome. Cellini also emphasises in his *Trattati* that he was equally conversant with several versions of the casting technique - and, indeed, discusses at length the advantages and disadvantages of using it when making small intricate objects, like figural reliefs. A rare example, the hat-jewel depicting the Judgment of Paris from the collection of Lady Conyngham, mistress of George IV (reigned 1820-30), is preserved - albeit no longer in its original condition - in the British Museum and was fully analysed in 1986 (Volume I).

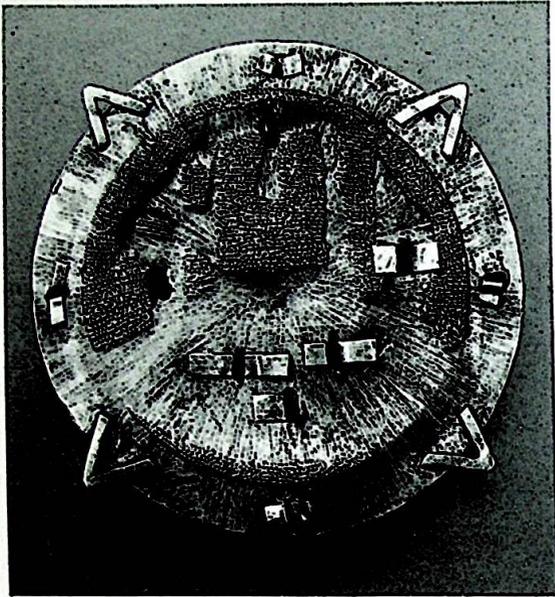
In contrast, the evidence from England - and, most significantly, from the Southern Netherlands - indicates that a far less demanding method of making hat-badges was followed by the goldsmiths of London, Antwerp and probably other centres in north-west Europe. The figural relief was made separately from a thin sheet of gold (Fig. 1), possibly by hammering it over a model, and, to the reverse of this newly made relief, 'butterfly-clips' were soldered, so that the relief could then be fixed firmly to the circular ground-plate, using the short slits cut in it for the 'butterfly clips' to pass through and be

opened, the ends pressing against the reverse of the ground-plate (Fig. 2). The pouncing of the ground in those areas not covered by the relief gave an attractive reflective texture to the gold background. The English examples date from the 1530's and 1540's and include two versions of the scene of Christ and the Woman of Samaria at Jacob's Well (John, IV, 4-42), the larger of which has a black enamelled inscription in English:

+ OF A. TREWTHE
+ THOW. ART. THE
TREW MESSIAS.

Both this piece of enamelling and the black enamelled tubular frame have been made on separate thin gold sheets and attached with 'butterflyclips' in an identical manner. This pre-fabrication of various sections of the hat-badge greatly simplified the task of the goldsmith, not only in the working of the gold but also during the enamelling process.

The same method had been used by the maker of an enamelled gold badge or button found in the centre of Antwerp in 1978 during the official excavations of the old part of the city (Fig. 4). Despite its tiny size, the relief of a bearded head and shoulders is separately made, enamelled, and then attached with two 'butterfly-clips'. The most famous example of this technique is the hat-badge in Vienna depicting the bust of Charles V, also in three-quarter view, but encircled by a black enamelled inscription in French and ending with the date, 1520. It has been, most plausibly, associated with Charles V's royal progresses through the Southern Netherlands prior to his coronation as



2. Reverse of the hat-badge (seen dismantled in Fig. 1.), showing the 'butterfly-clips' opened and pressed against the back of the gold ground-plate, including the four used to attach the enamelled gold tubular frame to the border of this hat jewel. *British Museum*

Holy Roman Emperor in Aachen Cathedral on 23 October, 1520, and its attribution to a workshop in Antwerp or some equally prosperous centre within the Burgundian inheritance of Charles V is no longer in doubt.

The trading links between Flanders and England were very close in the 15th and 16th centuries and, furthermore, one of the more important goldsmiths resident in London between about 1520-50 came to England from Antwerp. He was Hans von Antwerpen (John of Antwerp), who became a personal friend of Holbein and witnessed his Will in 1543. Men like Hans von Antwerpen, who came to England in the first decades of the 16th century, were not seeking a refuge from religious persecution but a more prosperous career. They not only brought their skills but they tended to keep in close touch with their homeland and their old family friends. Not surprisingly, therefore, a number of apprentices - many with Flemish-sounding names - passed through his London workshop, some being admitted to the Freedom of the Goldsmiths' Company of London. In my view, his workshop was probably not only responsible for producing the hat-jewel of Christ and the Woman of Samaria with the English inscription but also the only English inscribed gold enamelled girdle prayer-book covers (Fig. 3). These book-covers, the spine of which so closely resembles designs by Holbein, were probably made for a lady of the English court very soon after 1540, because of the exact spelling and precise



3. Four Tudor jewels of enamelled gold with scenes embossed in relief, c 1530-45: (in centre) two hat-jewels with separately made reliefs of Christ talking to the Woman of Samaria attached with 'butterfly-clips' (diam. of the larger, 5.7 cm); (at either side) the pair of panels with Latin inscriptions from the covers of a now-lost girdle prayer-book depicted in the portrait of Lady Philippa Speke dated 1592 represent the Judgment of Solomon and, unusually, the Judgment of Daniel (Daniel 13, 49); (at the top) the girdle prayer-book with English inscriptions - datable within a few years after 1539 - referring to the Judgment of Solomon (on back) and the Brazen Serpent (on front). *British Museum*

wording which correspond with the translations used in the 1539 Cromwell Bible and the 1540 Cranmer Bible. However, one of its gold covers has the enamelled relief of the Brazen Serpent copied directly from a panel of identical size on Abbot Aroldus de Dyest's monumental silver-gilt book-cover at the Abbey of Tongerlo (Fig 5). This masterpiece, signed, dated and hall-marked, was made in Antwerp by Hieronymus Mamacker, a leading goldsmith working in the Renaissance style, and was finished in 1543. Therefore, these two reliefs of the Brazen Serpent, one in silver and the other in enamelled gold, are exactly contemporary and, although made individually (as their minor differences confirm), they must be based on the same original source. However, it remains conjectural whether Hans von Antwerpen had access to the original relief in Mamacker's workshop in Antwerp while he was travelling on Henry VIII's behalf to Germany in 1539, or whether it had been brought to him in London by one of his Flemish assistants who previously may have been working in the workshop of Hieronymus Mamacker. Either way, the evidence confirms the impression that many of the new Renaissance features occurring in Tudor jewellery shortly before the middle of the century were



4. Enamelled gold button or badge found in 1978 during the official excavations of the old city of Antwerp (see Tony Oost, in the catalogue of an exhibition, *Van Nederzetting tot Metropool*, Volkskundemuseum, Antwerp, 1982).



5. Detail of the relief of the Brazen Serpent by the Antwerp goldsmith, Hieronymus Mamacker, from the large silver-gilt book-cover made for Abbot Arnoldus de Dyest and preserved since it was finished in 1543 at the Abbey of Tongerlo; the relief is the same size and design as the front cover of the English girdle prayer-book (see Fig. 3). Copyright A.C.L. Brussels

derived from Flemish sources.

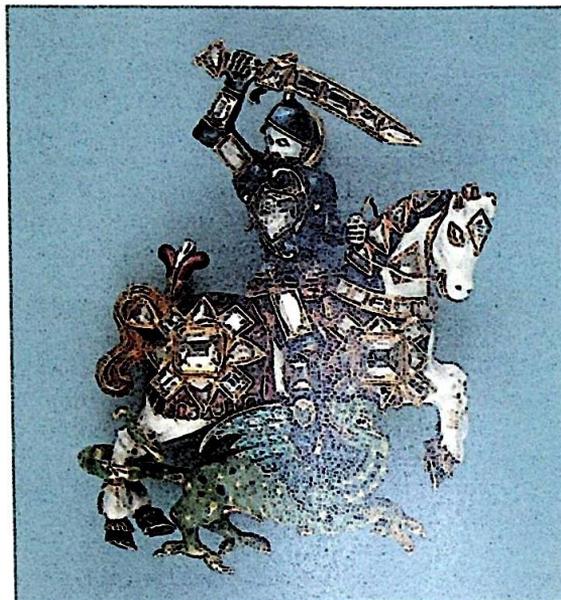
Furthermore, the panels on this girdle prayer-book can be contrasted with the slightly earlier and less confident treatment of similar scenes on the pair of panels – apparently salvaged from the lost Speke girdle prayer-book covers (Fig. 3), which probably had been made for Anne, wife of Sir Thomas Speke (1508-51), one of Henry VIII's gentlemen of the Privy Chamber. The lingering late-gothic quality of these two panels depicting the judgment of Solomon and the judgment of Daniel, with their enamelled inscriptions in Latin, probably accurately reflects the English style prevailing at the court in the 1530's. Certainly, by 1537 Hans von Antwerpen was not only receiving commissions from the powerful Thomas Cromwell, Henry VIII's Lord Privy Seal, but his name also appears in the Privy Purse Expenses of Henry VIII's daughter, Mary, in that year. From the subsequent references to Hans von Antwerpen – the last being in July 1550 – he appears to have been as much a jeweller as a maker of plate (silver or gold) and, undoubtedly, a channel through which Flemish Renaissance influence permeated the Tudor sculptural jewellery with representational scenes, thereby significantly affecting the "Englishness" of these jewels during the reigns of Henry VIII and Edward VI (died 1553).

Under Elizabeth I, the jeweller's art flourished and, although the famous 'Pelican' Portrait (Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool) and the 'Phoenix' Portrait (National Portrait Gallery) show the Queen in the late 1570's wearing great sculptural jewels of the 'Pelican in its Piety' and the 'Phoenix rising from the flames', respectively, no such magnificently enamelled gold figures executed 'in the round' have survived from her reign and, from the pictorial evidence, it is impossible to state whether they were made in a London workshop (as might be expected when emblematic jewels were so personal) or elsewhere in Europe.

However, there was an unbroken tradition for the twenty-five Knights of the Garter to wear the gold Insignia of the Order, which under the Tudor monarchy became increasingly prestigious and splendid. Under Henry VIII, the precise form and materials of the 'Collar' were regulated and suspended from the 'Collar' was a large pendant jewel of St Georges laying the Dragon, executed 'in the round', and known as the 'Great George' (Fig. 6). From a goldsmith's point of view, the making of this weighty sculptural figure-group in enamelled gold and, perhaps, set with precious stones, presented the same challenge as the creation of the 'Pelican' and 'Phoenix' jewels for Queen Elizabeth I would have done in the 1570's. The earliest complete set of the Insignia of the Order of the Garter to have survived

in England is the famous set made for the 1st Earl of Northampton which since 1980 has been preserved in the British Museum. It was made between 25 September 1628 and 20 April 1629 - the six months or so between his election and the unusually magnificent occasion of his Installation at St George's Chapel, Windsor Castle. He died in the following year, 1630, and the Insignia remained in the family, by descent, until 1980. The 'Great George' of enamelled gold is set with eight diamonds on the armour and six diamonds on the sword, while the white horse and its red enamelled caparison are enriched with more than twenty diamonds. The reverse is entirely enamelled but without the enrichment of precious gemstones, although there is an attempt to indicate the pattern of the cloth by engraving the gold surface before the translucent enamel was applied to that area of the horse's caparison. The lacing up of the armour is indicated by tiny beads of white enamel and the evil quality of the dragon is vividly conveyed by the lurid palette of the opaque enamelled colours. In 1628, therefore, the three-dimensional sculptural jewel was still part of the repertoire of the goldsmith, whose skill at combining the art of enamelling with that of gem-setting was ably demonstrated for this prominent figure at the court of Charles I. There is no reason to suppose that it was any less so under Elizabeth I.

Wholly English in subject matter are the host of minor jewels depicting the bust of Elizabeth I, which after 1570, when she was excommunicated, were worn as a pledge of loyalty. Some were set with cameos, others with a medallion portrait - rather in the manner of Isabella d'Este's famous gold example (early 16th century), which is surrounded by the diamond-set letters of her name, 'Isabel' (preserved in Vienna). Unique among them, however, is the finely chased gold 'Phoenix Jewel' that has been in the British Museum since its foundation in 1753 (Fig. 7). Although it has a medallion character, it is not a medal and has not been struck. It has a unique *ajouré* quality - as if the Queen is seen in a garden surrounded by red and white Tudor roses - because the background has been daringly cut away, leaving the bust of the Queen in silhouette and encircled by a most naturalistic frame, in which even the loops (for suspension) are a continuation of the twisting rose branches. This love of flowers is a charming development in Elizabethan jewellery - possibly reflecting the personal taste of the Queen - but it is also a continuing characteristic of Earl Stuart jewellery and can be seen, at its most luxuriant, on the Grenville Jewel of about 1635-40 (in the British Museum). This bejewelled flowery locket contains a miniature by David des Granges of the Royalist hero, Sir Bevil Grenville (1596 - 1643)



6. The 'Great George' from the Insignia of the Order of the Garter made for the 1st Earl of Northampton between September 1628 and April 1629. Made of enamelled gold, sculptured 'in the round' and set with diamonds, the Great George was suspended from the 'Collar' worn over the Mantle of the Order. H. 7.2 cm. *British Museum*

and in this respect is again part of the Elizabethan tradition of jewellery.

Under Elizabeth I and her court artist, Nicholas Hilliard, the gold enamelled locket containing the miniature portrait of an admired or loved person became *de rigueur*. Perhaps the most celebrated is the Drake Jewel, given by Queen Elizabeth to Sir Francis Drake and worn by him in his portrait (1591) in the National Maritime Museum Greenwich. Her portrait painted by Hilliard in 1588 is housed in this exquisite gem-set enamelled gold locket of full-blooded Renaissance design, the lid of which is set with a two-layer sardony cameo of a blackamoor. Today it still remains in the family's possession whereas the famous Lyte Jewel (Fig. 8), given by James I to Thomas Lyte in 1610 and containing Hilliard's portrait of the King under an openwork cover with the royal monogram formed in diamonds, was lost to this Somerset family in the 19th century and was later bequeathed to the British Museum by Baron Ferdinand Rothschild. The fashion for such enamelled gold lockets for miniatures may have first evolved in Paris and been brought back to the English court by Hilliard, for there survives in Vienna a slightly earlier French example, made to contain the miniatures of Charles IX and his mother, Catherine de' Medici, by François Clouet the Younger (died 1572). The wonderfully sculptural case in enamelled gold is almost certainly the work of the goldsmith, François



7. The 'Phoenix Jewel' of gold, chased on both sides and 'silhouetted' within an enamelled gold frame of Tudor white and red roses, the petals of which are made separately and attached by a central pin. Made c. 1570-80, perhaps by Nicholas Hilliard, it had been preserved in the collection of Sir Hans Sloane and was acquired in 1753 as part of the foundation collections of the British Sloave Museum. W. 4.6 cm *British Museum*

Dujardin and, because it has been in the Hapburg treasury since before 1619, its beautifully designed emblematic cover is remarkably well-preserved. Indeed, its cover with the female figures of Piety and Justice in high relief can be compared with the almost contemporary – but less fine – relief female figures of Faith, Prudence, Victory and Hope on the pierced cover of the renowned Lennox Jewel (in the Royal Collection, Windsor Castle).

The Lennox Jewel was made for Margaret, Countess of Lennox, whose husband was the Regent Lennox (died 1571) and whose son, Lord Darnley, married Mary, Queen of Scots, thereby leaving an heir, James (born 1566) – the future James VI of Scotland and James I of England. The heart-shaped locket which was perhaps intended to house miniature portraits, has many secret interior compartments and every available surface is filled with enamelled emblems, devices, mottoes, enigmatic legends and complex pictorial imagery – the full meaning of which has yet to be fathomed. Such elaborate 'conceits' were fashionable in Elizabethan England but, equally, coded messages were a wise precaution in a family so close to Elizabeth's throne and so eager to foster its own pretensions to the throne of England; through the infant, James. Nevertheless, the Elizabethan delight in jewels that held hidden messages – often humorous – is

well-documented in both the royal inventories and the records of the New Year's Gift Rolls – and even reflected in the popularity of Geoffrey Whitney's *Choice of Emblems* printed in 1586. The Lennox Jewel today offers a rare insight into this peculiarly English treatment of jewellery – a trait that never quite died out, even in the 20th century.

Hugh Tait, *Catalogue of the Waddesdon Bequest in the British Museum*, Vol. I. *The Jewels* (1986), Vol. II, *The Silver Plate* (1988), Vol. III, *The 'Curiosities'* (1991); H. Tait, 'London Huguenot Silver' in J. Scouloudi, ed., *Huguenots in Britain 1550 - 1800* (London 1987); John Hayward, 'The Arnold Lulls Book of Jewels and the Court Jewellers of Queen Anne of Denmrk', *Archaeologia*, CVIII, 1986; H. Tait, 'The girdle prayer-book or "tablett": an important class of Renaissance jewellery at the court of Henry VIII', *Jewellery Studies*, Vol. 2 (1985); H. Tait, 'Historiated Tudor Jewellery', *Antiquaries Journal*, Vol. 42 (1962); J. Pope-Hennessy, 'Nicholas Hilliard and Mannerist Art Theory', *The Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, VI (1943), pp.89–100; P. Fraser Tytler, *Historical Notes on the Lennox or Darnley Jewel*, London, 1843.



8. The 'Lyte Jewel', presented to Thomas Lyte in 1610 by King James I, whose portrait painted by Nicholas Hilliard is set within this harmoniously enamelled gold locket. The openwork cover is set with diamonds in the form of the King's monogram and the reverse has a sophisticated enamelled design in the latest French Mannerist taste. H. 2.5 in (6.5 cm). *British Museum* (Waddesdon Bequest)