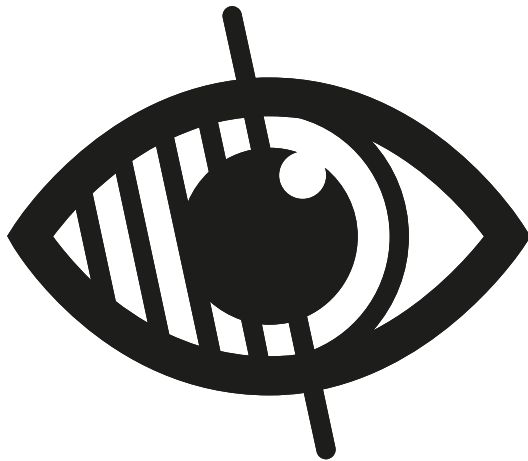


Large Text Labels

HOLBEIN At the Royal Court



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Chambers Gallery

Holbein at the Tudor Court

Hans Holbein (1497/8–1543) travelled to England from the Swiss city of Basel in 1526. He was seeking work at the English court, where Henry VIII employed artists from across Europe to celebrate the power and glory of the Tudor dynasty.

Over the next 17 years, Holbein would become one of the most successful artists working in England. His clients included senior courtiers, leading nobles and members of the Tudor royal family.

Holbein's success in England was due to his skill at portraiture. He came from a family of artists from Augsburg in Germany and learned to draw and paint at an early age.

Contemporaries praised him as an ‘incomparable painter’ and a ‘wonderful artist’. His portrait paintings and miniatures depicted sitters who, as the inscription on one painting proclaimed, only needed a voice to appear alive.

Holbein’s portraits started with drawings of his sitters, taken from the life. Although made as working studies, these drawings are beautiful works of art in their own right.

Their detail reveals much about Holbein’s working practice as he developed and refined his composition, a process which continued as he began to paint.

Holbein's drawings in the Royal Collection

The drawings, paintings and miniatures displayed here are all from the Royal Collection, which contains one of the most important groups of Holbein's works in existence.

This includes the majority of the portrait drawings surviving from the artist's time in England. These were probably acquired by Henry VIII after the artist's death and were recorded at Whitehall Palace in 1547. At this time, the drawings were in an album, described in 1590 as 'a great booke of Pictures done by Haunce Holbyn of certain Lordes, Ladyes, gentlemen and gentlewomen'. This book included inscriptions identifying some of the sitters by Sir John Cheke, tutor to Henry VIII's son, Edward VI.

The 'Great Book' passed through a number of hands between the mid-sixteenth century and the mid-seventeenth century. Its owners during that time included the great Holbein collector Thomas Howard, Earl of Arundel. Sometime after 1660 it was acquired by Charles II, and has been in the Royal Collection ever since.

In the early eighteenth century Queen Caroline, wife of George II, removed the drawings from the Great Book to display them on the walls at Richmond and Kensington Palaces. At this time, Cheke's identifications were copied on to the drawings themselves. These eighteenth-century inscriptions can be seen on many of the drawings on display.

Hans Holbein (1497/8–1543)

Noli me Tangere, 1526–8?

Oil on oak panel

This small, tense painting shows the moment when

Mary Magdalene first encounters the risen Christ.

She reaches out to him; he gestures for her to stand back,

saying 'Noli me tangere', or 'Touch me not'. This is believed

to have been made soon after Holbein arrived in England

since it is painted on oak, which he did not use in Basel.

The circumstances of its commission are not known.

RCIN 400001



European artists at the Tudor Court

The Tudors were a young dynasty, who had won the English throne by defeating Richard III at the Battle of Bosworth in 1485.

Henry VII, Bosworth's victor, sought to consolidate his position by arranging marriages for his children with other European ruling houses. His son Henry VIII, who inherited the throne in 1509, used diplomacy and warfare to assert his status as a European monarch.

Magnificent display helped the Tudors to claim a place at the heart of European politics. Declarations of allegiance or negotiations of marriage brought gifts of portraits.

These included works by artists who did not travel to England, among them the Brussels artist Pieter van Coninxloo and the French court painter Jean Clouet.

Like his rivals Francis I of France and Charles V, the Holy Roman Emperor, Henry VIII employed artists and craftsmen from across the continent. These included the Flemish miniaturist Lucas Horenbout and the Italian painter Girolamo da Treviso. Henry purchased tapestries from Brussels, and commissioned depictions of victories such as his capture of the French city of Thérouanne in 1513. This international outlook must have encouraged Holbein to travel to England in 1526.

Flemish School

**The family of Henry VII with
St George and the Dragon,
c. 1503–09**

Oil on panel

Commissioned by Henry VII, this was probably intended as an altarpiece for one of the Tudor royal chapels.

It shows the English patron saint, St George, about to deliver a fatal blow to the dragon, which has already been pierced by his lance. In the background, the princess who George is defending holds a lamb as a symbol of her innocence. In front of two tents in the foreground kneel Henry VII, his wife Elizabeth of York and their seven children.

The painting acts as a memorial to many members of the family, including the queen, who had died before it was painted.

The accomplished Flemish artist responsible for the panel has not been identified.

RCIN 401228

Flemish School

Philip the Handsome

(1478–1506), c.1500

Oil on panel

This painting was hanging at Whitehall Palace in 1542.

Philip was ruler of the Burgundian Netherlands. He was married to Joanna of Castile, sister of Henry VIII's first wife, Katherine of Aragon. Although the artist is unidentified, the careful depiction of the different textures of the fabrics worn by the sitter, from soft fur to glimmering threads of gold, is typical of Flemish painting of this period.

RCIN 403438

Spanish School

**Queen Isabella I of Spain, Queen
of Castile (1451–1504), c.1500**

**King Ferdinand V of Spain, King
of Aragon (1452–1516), c.1500**

Oil on panel

Isabella of Castile and Ferdinand of Aragon ruled Spain jointly from 1469. Their daughter Katherine married Henry VII's oldest son and heir, Arthur, in 1501. These portraits may have been sent as part of the marriage negotiations or accompanied Katherine when she arrived in England. After Arthur's death, Katherine married his younger brother Henry (later Henry VIII). Although that marriage was annulled in 1533, these examples

of Spanish portrait painting remained in the royal collection and were hanging at Whitehall Palace in 1542.

RCIN 403445 and 403448

Jean Clouet (c.1485–90?–1540/1)

Francis, Dauphin of France

(1518–36), c.1526

Watercolour on vellum laid on card

Jean Clouet had a thriving portrait practice, producing chalk drawings and oil paintings of sitters at the French court.

He was one of the first artists to make portrait miniatures, which developed from the practice of manuscript

illumination. This miniature may be that presented to

Henry VIII by Madame d'Alençon, Francis I's sister, in

autumn 1526.

Holbein must have seen examples of Clouet's work when

he visited France in 1524, and his adoption of coloured

chalk for his portrait drawings may have been inspired

by Clouet's success in this medium. He would later learn

the technique of miniature painting from Clouet's
contemporary, Lucas Horenbout.

RCIN 420070

Workshop of Jean Perréal (c.1455–c.1530)

Louis XII, King of France

(1462–1515), c.1510–14

Oil on panel

In 1514, the French court artist Jean Perréal travelled to England to paint a portrait of Mary Tudor, Henry VII's daughter, as part of the preparations for her marriage to Louis XII. He probably brought this portrait of Louis with him as a gift. It was recorded among Henry VIII's paintings at Whitehall Palace in 1542.

Holbein visited France in 1524. While there he would have encountered the works of Perréal and his colleague Jean Clouet.

RCIN 403431

Guido Mazzoni (d. 1518)

Bust of a boy, c.1498

Painted and gilded terracotta

Guido Mazzoni was born in Modena. He specialised in lively, expressive terracotta sculpture. This bust of an unknown youth was once thought to be a young Henry VIII. It was probably made for Henry VII, for whom Mazzoni designed an (unrealised) tomb in the late 1490s. Italian terracotta sculpture was fashionable in early Tudor England and was used to decorate buildings such as Hampton Court, as well as for freestanding pieces such as this one.

RCIN 73197

After Joos van Cleve (d. 1540/1)

Francis I, King of France (1494–1547), c.1530

Oil on panel

Francis I inherited the French throne in 1515. Like Henry VIII, Francis welcomed foreign artists at court. Among them was the Flemish painter Joos van Cleve, whose workshop produced many portraits of the French king. This painting was probably presented to Henry by Francis as a diplomatic gift. The sitter is shown as if in conversation, but this air of intimacy is offset by the magnificence of his clothing, which was intended to impress the viewer.

RCIN 403433

Flemish School

**Charles, Duke of Burgundy, later
Emperor Charles V (1500–58),**

c.1514

Oil on panel

Charles, ruler of the Low Countries, was the son of Philip the Handsome and was betrothed to Mary, Henry VIII's sister. This painting shows him holding rosemary, symbolising love. It was described in a letter as 'very badly depicted' when it was sent to England in 1514. Shortly afterwards, changing diplomatic priorities meant the marriage was cancelled. In 1516 Charles became King of Spain.

In 1519 he became Holy Roman Emperor, making him the most powerful secular ruler in Europe.

RCIN 403439

Flemish School

The Battle of the Spurs, c.1513–47

Oil on canvas



Henry VIII commissioned paintings to record his greatest diplomatic and military triumphs. In 1512 he invaded France in alliance with the Holy Roman Emperor Maximilian I. The allies laid siege to the French city of Th rouanne in June 1513. On 16 August, French cavalry attempted to supply their trapped compatriots with food and gunpowder. Henry, leading a joint English and Imperial army, attacked the French horsemen, whose hasty retreat led to the battle's nickname 'The Battle of the Spurs'. Th rouanne fell to the English six days later.

This painting, by an unknown Flemish artist, may have been commissioned shortly after the victory, or in the 1540s, when Henry VIII revisited his early triumphs by again invading France. Henry is shown in the centre of the melee, wearing gold armour and receiving the surrender of the celebrated Chevalier Bayard, who kneels before him. This was not the only depiction of the siege commissioned

by Henry: in 1527 Holbein was paid to paint a picture of Thérrouanne as part of the decorations for a grand diplomatic meeting between the English and the French at Greenwich.

RCIN 406784

Attributed to Goswijn van der Weyden

(c.1465–after 1538)

The Virgin and Child, 1510s

Oil on panel

This painting is probably the ‘picture of our Lady holding our Lorde at her brest her robe being redd’, recorded at Whitehall Palace in 1542. It is a copy of a work by the celebrated Flemish painter Rogier van der Weyden, and is probably by van der Weyden’s grandson, Goswijn.

This is one of the many devotional paintings owned by Henry VIII, of which only a few survive.

RCIN 403374

Girolamo da Treviso (active 1498–1544)

A Protestant Allegory, c.1542–4

Oil on panel

In 1534, the Act of Supremacy established Henry VIII, rather than the Pope, as the head of the English Church. This painting refers to Henry's 'triumph' over the Pope who, with Hypocrisy and Avarice, is being stoned by the Four Evangelists, authors of the Gospels. The candle associated with the Pope in the foreground has been extinguished by a cooking pan, but that over the city of Jerusalem in the distance shines brightly. The message is that the Gospels, rather than the Papacy, provide the light of true religion.

Although Henry took political control of the English Church, he never adopted the reforming theology that

was arriving from continental Europe, where Martin Luther and others were challenging the central tenets of the Catholic Church.

This painting was in Henry's collection and is likely to have been commissioned by a reforming courtier as a flattering gift for the king.

Girolamo da Treviso was an Italian engineer and artist, who arrived in England in 1538. He was paid an annual salary of £100 by Henry VIII. Girolamo died in Henry's service at the siege of Boulogne in 1544.

RCIN 405748

Basel to London, 1526

After training with their father in Augsburg, Holbein and his brother Ambrosius (d. c.1519) established themselves in the Swiss city of Basel.

Here they found success painting religious panels, portraits and house facades. They designed book illustrations for Johannes Froben, whose publishing house issued works by the leading thinker and writer Desiderius Erasmus.

But by the mid-1520s, the growth of religious reform meant that demand for devotional images in Basel had greatly reduced.

In August 1526, Holbein set out for England, probably carrying a letter of reference from Erasmus to the English lawyer and writer Sir Thomas More. Holbein travelled

via Antwerp, where he may have met the respected Flemish painter Quinten Massys. More confirmed Holbein's arrival in London in a letter of December 1526, describing the painter's work as 'wonderful'. Holbein had secured his first patron in England.

Quinten Massys (1465/6–1530)

Desiderius Erasmus, 1517

Oil on oak panel

Massys painted this portrait of the scholar Erasmus in his study in 1517. Erasmus sent it as a token of friendship to Sir Thomas More in London, along with a portrait of the Antwerp town clerk Pieter Gillis (now at Longford Castle). Holbein must have seen this painting and its pendant in More's house in Chelsea after his arrival in England.

RCIN 405759

Hans Holbein

Johannes Froben, c.1522–3

Oil on panel

After Hans Holbein

Desiderius Erasmus, c.1520–40

Oil on limewood panel

Although they now appear very different, these two works were originally hinged together as a pair. They symbolise the friendship of Erasmus and the Basel publisher Johannes Froben. The portrait of Froben, who faces right, is by Holbein.

That of Erasmus is a copy of a painting by Holbein and was probably commissioned by Froben to accompany

his portrait. The two originally shared the green curtain, which was painted over with a church interior in the seventeenth century. Only the original background of the Froben portrait has been restored. Froben employed Holbein in Basel to design woodcut illustrations for his publications. These included books by Erasmus and Sir Thomas More.

RCIN 403035 and 403036

Sir Thomas More

**De Optima reip. Statu deque nova
insula Utopia [‘On the Best Kind of
a Commonwealth and About the
New Island of Utopia’], 1518**

Printed book

Utopia was first published in 1516 and made More’s name across Europe. It describes the fictional island of Utopia (‘no place’ in Greek) as a veiled but bold criticism of contemporary society. Froben issued this edition in Basel in 1518, with woodcut illustrations by Hans Holbein and his brother Ambrosius.

This border was designed by Hans. The lively putti, and the curling sheet of paper pinned to the arch, on which

the book's title is apparently printed, are typical of his
engaging designs.

RCIN 1086970

Desiderius Erasmus, (1466–1536)

1518 Novum Testamentum ...

[‘The New Testament ...’], 1522

Printed book

Holbein designed this border for Froben in 1521. Made in four sections, it shows the progress of life from youthful Indulgence at the bottom along a steep path through a series of gateways to True Happiness at the top. Along the way, man encounters Virtues and Vices such as Fortune and Avarice.

Holbein’s border is here used to decorate the title page of Erasmus’s translation of the New Testament from Greek into Latin, published in 1522.

RCIN 1052035

Henry VIII (1491–1547)

Assertio Septem Sacramentorum

adversus Martinum Lutherum

[‘Defence of the Seven Sacraments

against Martin Luther’], 1521

Printed book

Henry VIII’s attack on the reformer Martin Luther was published in England in 1521. Luther had criticised the Catholic Church’s assertion that seven sacraments were necessary to achieve grace. Henry’s text defended the Catholic position and won him the title ‘Defender of the Faith’ from the Pope.

This title page is copied from one designed by Holbein for Froben. At the bottom is Mucius Scaevola, renowned

for defending ancient Rome and used here as a parallel to Henry's defence of the Papacy. Holbein's designs for books reached England some years before the artist himself arrived in 1526.

RCIN 1006836

Brussels

Neptune calming the storm which scattered Aeneas's ships, c.1530

Woven silk and wool tapestry with gilt-metal and silver-wrapped thread

This is one of a set of five Flemish tapestries telling the story of Aeneas purchased by Henry VIII in the early 1530s.

Henry owned more than 2,000 tapestries which were used to decorate the walls of his palaces. Masterpieces of Northern European art, they were made of fine coloured silks, wool and threads wrapped with gold and silver.

This tapestry was extended at the top in the eighteenth century.

Here Neptune is seen calming a storm which Aeolus, the ruler of winds, has raised to destroy Aeneas's ships at the

bidding of an angry Juno. Aeolus can be seen to the left releasing the winds from their cave, urged by Juno, who commands him with her sceptre.

Neptune in a chariot calms the seas and saves Aeneas's fleet. At the top, the sea nymph Cymothoe pours water to guide the ships away from wreckage on the coast.

A rainbow heralds the end of the storm and the brightening of the skies.

RCIN I255.5

He spoke; and, while he spoke, he smooth'd the sea,
Dispell'd the darkness, and restor'd the day.

Cymothoe, Triton, and the sea-green train

Of beauteous nymphs, the daughters of the main,

Clear from the rocks the vessels with their hands:

The god himself with ready trident stands,

And opes the deep, and spreads the moving sands;

Then heaves them off the shoals.

Where'er he guides

His finny coursers and in triumph rides,

The waves unruffle and the sea subsides.

The Aeneid

Translation by John Dryden, 1697

The More Family, 1526–7

Sir Thomas More told Erasmus he would do everything he could to help further Holbein's career in England.

This support included two commissions for paintings, one of them a group portrait of More and his family, seated in an interior. Although the painting itself does not survive, a drawing by Holbein, now in Basel, shows us the arrangement of the figures.

Holbein took studies of each of the sitters, six of which are shown here. He worked each drawing in coloured chalks and used a dampened red chalk to create the flesh tone of the sitter's face. In the drawing of Sir John More, he mottled the dampened area with dry chalk to reflect the broken veins in the old man's cheeks. Holbein must already

have had the group arrangement in mind since each sitter is placed to reflect their pose in the final painting. He has lightly sketched in the chair on which Anne Cresacre rests but has ensured she perches at the edge of the seat as she will be standing in the finished work.

The drawing of Sir Thomas More is at a larger scale and probably represents a different stage in Holbein's working process. Here, the artist has concentrated on the contours and modelling of the face.





Sketch for the group portrait of the More Family, c.1527,

© Kunstmuseum Basel

Sir Thomas More (1478–1535)

Black and coloured chalks with brown wash

RCIN 912225

Elizabeth Dauncey (b. 1506)

Black and coloured chalks

Daughter of Sir Thomas More

RCIN 912228

Cicely Heron (b. 1507)

Black and coloured chalks

Daughter of Sir Thomas More

RCIN 912269

Sir John More (c.1451–1530)

Black and coloured chalks

Father of Sir Thomas More

RCIN 912224

John More (1509–47)

Black and coloured chalks

Son of Sir Thomas More

RCIN 912226

Anne Cresacre (c.1511–77)

Black and coloured chalks

Ward of Sir Thomas More and fiancée of More's son, John

RCIN 912270