Queen Elizabeth's Wardrobe Unlock'd

JANET ARNOLD

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The Inventories of the Wardrobe of Robes prepared in July 1600 edited from Stowe MS 557 in the British Library, MS LR 2/121 in the Public Record Office, London, and MS V.b.72 in the Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington DC

Edited and with a Commentary by

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Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group
LONDON AND NEW YORK

First published 1988 by Maney Publishing

Published 2018 by Routledge
2 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon, OX14 4RN
52 Vanderbilt Avenue, New York, NY 10017

Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa business

ISBN 13: 978-0-901286-20-8 (hbk)
ISBN 13: 978-1-909662-53-7 (pbk)

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Acknowledgements

Research for this book started over eighteen years ago and has been carried on continuously while working on other projects. My thanks are first due to the Trustees of the British Library, the Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington, DC, and the Public Record Office, London, for their permission to publish the manuscripts in their care. I would like to acknowledge the help given by a Winston Churchill Travelling Fellowship for three months in 1973 which enabled me to visit many museums and art galleries in France, Germany, Italy, Spain, and Sweden. I am also grateful for a Jubilee Research Fellowship in the Department of Drama and Theatre Studies at Royal Holloway College, University of London, for three years from 1978. Research on sixteenth-century terminology (for Chapter VI) and on the artificers of the Wardrobe of Robes and their work (for Chapter VIII) was a continuation of that undertaken for my book *Patterns of Fashion: the cut and construction of clothes for men and women* c. *1560–1620*, and it would not have been possible to carry out this work, nor to prepare the indexes, without the very generous aid of a Fellowship awarded by the Leverhulme Trust Fund at the same college in 1980–85.

I would like to thank the Directors, Curators, and Assistants of the museums, art galleries, and costume collections which I have visited over the last eighteen years, for all their kindness and help while compiling the material for this book. I am also very grateful to members of the staffs of the British Library, the Public Record Office, the National Art Library at the Victoria and Albert Museum, and the Westminster and Bristol Central Reference Libraries for their assistance.

I have received encouragement and help from many people. This has included driving me to (and wrapping me with rugs in) cold country churches while studying details of dress on monumental effigies; carrying cups of tea up numerous flights of stairs; holding my notebooks and steadying my position while perched on chairs and stepladders taking photographs of inaccessible paintings and tombs; spending time to personally discuss or to write long letters on various aspects of sixteenth-century manuscripts, clothing, textiles, and portraits. Several friends have been particularly helpful with proof-reading and advice on preparing the indexes. I take full responsibility for all the final decisions and any mistakes. The latter are probably inevitable with a book of this size, but I hope there will be very few. There is not enough space to mention everyone, but I would particularly like to thank Mrs Alison Adburgham, Miss Jane Apple, the late Lord Astor, Professor George Brandt, the late Professor Julian Brown, Miss Anne Buck OBE, Dr Mary Westerman Bulgarella, Miss Christine Bullick, the late Dr Lionel Butler, Mrs Kathleen Chambers, Mrs Margie Christian, Miss Pamela Clabburn, Dr Christopher Coleman, Miss Elizabeth Ann Coleman, the late Mr T. Cottrell Dormer, Miss Gudrun Ekstrand, Sir Geoffrey Elton, the late Dr John Fletcher, Miss Norah Fuidge, Mr Robin Gibson, Mrs Caroline Goldthorpe, Dr Rainald Grosshans, Mr Robin Harcourt Williams, Miss Avril Hart, Miss Wendy Hefford, Miss Patricia Higgins, Mrs Millie Jaffé, Dr Mary de Jong, Mrs Joan Kendall, Mr John Kerslake FSA, Miss Mildred Lanier, Miss Ella McLeod, Sir Oliver Millar KCVO, Dr Roy Miller, Mr and Mrs Michael Morgan, Mrs Anne Wood Murray, Mr Revel Oddy, the Earl and Countess of Oxford and Asquith, Mr Stephen Parks, Miss Joyce Plesters, Mrs Esmé M. Plumbly, Miss Judith Prendergast, Mrs Susan Ranson, Dr Malcolm Rogers, Miss Natalie Rothstein, Mr Sidney Sabin, Dr Ann Saunders FSA, Miss Jennifer Scarce, Dr Karl Schütz, Miss Anna Southall, Miss Anneliese Streiter, Dr Frank Stubbings, Miss June Swann MBE, the Marquess of Tavistock, the Hon. Mrs Phyllis Thorold OBE, the Lord Tollemache, Miss Erika Weiland, Mr William Wells, Miss Norma Whittard, Dr Leonie von Wilckens, Miss Lorraine Williams, Miss Sarah Wimbush, Professor Katharine Worth and Mrs Laetitia Yeandle. My thanks are also due to Mrs Winifred Underwood for preparing numerous clean typescripts from my handwritten drafts over the years, no easy task. I owe a particular debt of gratitude to Miss Santina M. Levey, who read the manuscript at various stages, has given endless help in identifying and dating laces, produced photographs of various pieces of embroidery and designs at a moment's notice, and joined in the task of proof-reading and checking the indexes. Finally I would like to thank Miss Ann Campbell, Mr Derek Brown, and Mr Graham Maney for their kindness and inexhaustible patience while this book was going through the press.

Photographic Acknowledgements

Many of the photographs in this book were taken by the author, with the unstinting help of private owners and members of the staffs of art galleries, museums, and costume collections. Every effort has been made to trace owners of paintings, but some pictures have changed hands several times over the years and records have been lost. It has sometimes proved impossible to trace copyright holders of photographs: in some cases the prints are over twenty years old, and the firms

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The following abbreviated forms have been used for references to manuscripts, books, and articles cited more than once. Many other works have been cited once only, and are fully described in the notes which follow each chapter. In some cases different editions of early works have been used, and the dates of publication are given in the notes. The place of publication of all books is London, unless otherwise stated. This list takes the place of a bibliography, and readers are also advised to consult Conyers Read (ed.), *Bibliography of British History: Tudor Period 1485–1603* (Oxford, 1959, 2nd edition) and the *Annual Bibliography of British and Irish History* (Royal Historical Society 1975–).

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—— *'Doublet'* Janet Arnold, 'A Woman's Doublet of about 1585', in *Waffen-und Kostümkunde* (Munich, 1981), part 2, pp. 132–42.

—— *'Lost from HMB'* Janet Arnold, *'Lost from Her Majesties Back'*, Costume Society, Extra Series no. 7 (Wisbech, Cambridgeshire, 1980).

—— *'Mantle'* Janet Arnold, 'Jane Lambarde's Mantle', in *Costume*, 14 (1980), pp. 56–72.

—— *'Neckwear'* Janet Arnold, 'Three examples of late sixteenth and early seventeenth century neckwear', in *Waffen-und Kostümkunde* (Munich, 1973), part 2, pp. 109–24.

—— *'Nils Sture's Suit'* Janet Arnold, 'Nils Sture's Suit', in *Costume*, 12 (1978), pp. 13–26.

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—— *'Sweet England's Jewels'* Janet Arnold, 'Sweet England's Jewels', in *Princely Magnificence: Court Jewels of the Renaissance 1500–1630*, edited by Anna Somers Cocks (Victoria and Albert Museum catalogue, 1980), pp. 31–40.

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Auerbach, Tudor Artists Erna Auerbach, *Tudor Artists* (1954).

—— *Hilliard* Erna Auerbach, *Nicholas Hilliard* (1961).

Boissard Jean Jacques Boissard, *Emblematum Liber* (Metz, 1584).

Boynton Lindsay Boynton (ed.), *The Hardwick Hall Inventories of 1601* (The Furniture Society, 1971).

Bradford, Helena Charles Angell Bradford, *Helena Marchioness of Northampton* (1936).

BL British Library, London.

—— Add. Additional manuscripts, especially 4712, collection of sixteenth-century manuscripts, formerly owned by Sir Robert Cotton; 5751A, collection of warrants and other documents; 5751B, larger documents from the previous volume, now bound separately; 46,348, 1550 inventory; 35,324, containing pictures of Queen Elizabeth's funeral procession.

—— Cotton Manuscripts in the Cottonian Library deposited in the British Library, especially Caligula CI, Otho CX, Vespasian F III, and Vitellius F V, groups of sixteenth century letters and other documents.

—— Egerton Egerton manuscripts, especially 2806, formerly Phillipps MS 8853, *A boke of Warrantes to the great Guarderobe Tempore Regine Ylizabethae towchyng her majesties Roobes and Apparell in the chardge of John Roynon and Rauf Hoope yeoman of the Guarderobe of Roobes*, 20 March 1568 to 19 February 1589.

—— Harl. Manuscripts from the Harleian Library.

—— Lansdowne Manuscripts in the Lansdowne collection.

—— Royal Manuscripts in the old Royal and King's Collections, especially App. 68, *A booke of soche Jewells and other parcel[les] as are delivered to the charge and custodie of Mrs Mary Radclyffe one of the gentlewom[en] of the Quenes Majesties privie chamber. [All which] were parcell of soche Jewells as were in [the] charge of Mrs Blanche Parrye. Mense Julij 1587.*

—— Stowe Stowe manuscripts collected by George Temple Nugent-Greville, Marquis of Buckingham, and kept at Stowe, his country seat, especially 557, transcript printed in full on pp. 251–334.

—— *Briquet* C. M. Briquet, *Les Filagranes: Dictionnaire Historique des Marques du Papier dès leur apparition vers 1282 jusqu'en 1600*, 4 vols (Paris, 1907).

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CSP, Dom. *Calendar of State Papers of the Reigns of Elizabeth and James I, Domestic Series, Preserved in Her Majesty's Public Record Office.*

CSP, Foreign *Calendar of State Papers, Foreign Series of the Reign of Queen Elizabeth preserved in the Public Record Office.*

CSP, Spanish *Calendar of State Papers, Relating to English Affairs of the Reign of Elizabeth preserved principally in the Archives of Simancas.*

CSP, Venetian *Calendar of State Papers and Manuscripts relating to English Affairs existing in the Archives and collections of Venice and in other libraries of Northern Italy.*

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In loving memory of my mother
Adeline Arnold
who gave me constant encouragement

Introduction

If any excuse is needed for writing a book of such length on the subject of one woman's wardrobe, then my excuse must be that the careful and abundant records kept for Queen Elizabeth I give a unique source for the study of dress during the second half of the sixteenth century. The wealth of material which came so readily to hand made my task fairly straightforward, although I did not realize some eighteen years ago that it would be so time-consuming. The wardrobe in the title of this book refers not only to the Queen's clothes, but also to the Wardrobe of Robes, a sub-department of the Great Wardrobe. The yeomen and clerks who worked there kept records of all materials used, and work carried out, by a small band of skilled craftsmen making clothes and accessories for the Queen throughout her reign. They were also responsible for storing them safely in the Tower of London, the Wardrobe of Robes store near Blackfriars, and in other stores in various palaces, wherever the Court stayed.

The Stowe inventory, *The Booke of all suche Robes Apparell Silkes Jewells and other stuffe in the chardge of Sir Thomas Gorg knight gentleman of her majesties wardrobe of Robes*, which has provided the foundation of this book (pp. 251–334), was an accidental discovery. A short extract from it, which caught my interest in my student days in the early 1950s, was printed in *The Progresses and Public Processions of Queen Elizabeth* by John Nichols. This was first published in 1788, at which time the manuscript now known as the Stowe inventory, from which the extract was taken, belonged to Mr Craven Ord. In 1969, during a chance conversation about the correct names for different parts of dress in paintings at *The Elizabethan Image* exhibition at the Tate Gallery, Santina M. Levey told me that she had noticed an entry for an inventory naming loose gowns, French gowns and kirtles in the catalogue of Stowe MSS in the British Library, which might be helpful. Some months later, passing the shelves of catalogues of manuscripts just before closing time at the British Library, the two volumes of the Stowe catalogue caught my eye. With only a few minutes to indulge in serendipity, I put out my hand at random and the book fell open at the page listing Stowe MS 557. On the following morning I looked at the manuscript, and beneath the inscription on the title-page — 'This book belonged to Sir Simeon Stewart' — was a note — 'afterwards to Mr Craven Ord who placed it in 1790 in my M.S. Library' — written by antiquarian and palaeographer, Thomas Astle.

My first intention was to use extracts from the Stowe inventory as background material for my book *Patterns of Fashion: the cut and construction of clothes for men and women c. 1560–1620* (1985). However, after making a transcript, I felt that it should be published in full as A. J. Collins had done with the 1574 inventory in his *Jewels and Plate of Queen Elizabeth I* (1955). The clothes, with names of fabrics, of a wide variety of colours, and descriptions of embroidery, offered material to extend our knowledge of the terminology of sixteenth-century dress, while the scribbled marginal notes provided evidence of systematic checking which had been carried out between 1600 and 1604, casting light on the organization of the Wardrobe of Robes. I traced the duplicate copy of the inventory mentioned in the Stowe MS to the Public Record Office, London, in the Records of the Land Revenue Auditors (LR2/121). Mrs Laetitia Yeandle of the Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington DC, very kindly called my attention to what we thought might be a third copy of the inventory. This proved to be the list of other items remaining in store at the Great Wardrobe site near Blackfriars, and is printed here on pp. 335–50.

I wondered how long the large number of garments noted in the two inventories had been in the various stores of the Wardrobe of Robes. Obviously the Coronation robes were there from 1559, but what about the rest? The New Year's Gift Rolls, lists prepared each year to record gifts made to, and by, Queen Elizabeth on New Year's day, were already familiar to me. Many items of clothing were among those presented to her. One of the first I recognized, which also appeared in the Stowe inventory, was a purple taffeta forepart decorated with roses of white cypress presented by the Lady Mary Vere in 1578. Once this connection had been made I went through all the surviving rolls, preparing transcripts of several of them, for which there is not enough space in the present volume: these are being printed separately. A number of the descriptions differed slightly, apart from minor variations in spelling. For example, some French gowns in the New Year's Gift Rolls appeared as round gowns in the Stowe and Folger inventories, suggesting that the garments had been altered. Later research proved this to be the case. Searching the British Library catalogues for evidence of the tailors' work, I found Egerton MS 2806, *A boke of Warrantes to the great Guarderobe* (formerly in the library of Sir Thomas Phillipps) which recorded all the work carried out by tailors, embroiderers, and other craftsmen for the Wardrobe of Robes between 1568 and 1588. I decided to transcribe it completely, to make easier work of linking the pieces of clothing described in it with those in the Stowe and Folger inventories. Some had been in store for forty years, others were recent acquisitions, and many had been altered one or more times. In order to trace other garments before 1568 and after 1588, I returned to the Public Record Office, and found an almost complete run of copies of

warrants from 1560 to 1603 among the Records of the Lord Chamberlain's Department (LC5/33–37), duplicating those contained in Egerton MS 2806. Here again I made a full transcript and continued to link the items. I have listed the dates and places where warrants for the Wardrobe of Robes were signed by the Queen on pp. 244–46, as they give the names of some of the palaces and country houses to which the Court travelled each year. Although there were delays in signing, and obviously other places were visited between the dates given, the warrants do give some idea of the number of removes undertaken by the Wardrobe staff. Although garments were frequently altered and re-used, some being given to the Queen's women, it soon became apparent that many more had been given to, and made for, Elizabeth than were finally listed in the inventories in 1600. I wondered what had happened to them and decided to look for a day book for the Wardrobe of Robes which recorded items of clothing and jewels lost or given away by the Queen between 1561 and 1585. This is mentioned in Agnes Strickland's account of the life of Queen Elizabeth, printed in 1843, at which time it was in the library of Sir Thomas Phillipps. Miss Norah Fuidge had come upon it some years before in the Public Record Office and very kindly traced the accession number (the Duchess of Norfolk Deeds, MS C/115/L2/6697) among her notes for me. Over one hundred and fifty lengths of material and items of clothing which had belonged to Elizabeth were recorded as gifts. Already in 1980 it was clear that there would not be enough space to print my transcript in the present volume and I published it with a commentary in '*Lost from Her Majesties Back*'.

A number of jewels were listed in the Stowe inventory, and I had hoped to include in the present book my transcript of the inventory of the Queen's jewels which were in the charge of Blanche Parry and transferred to the care of Mary Ratcliffe in 1587 (BL, Royal App. 68). Again, there was insufficient space, and it is being published separately with a more detailed commentary on the jewels than would have been feasible here. I have linked individual jewels with donors, tracing some back to earlier inventories.

Research on the coronation robes listed in the Stowe inventory, together with the 'Coronation' portrait and miniature, led to the discovery of a manuscript titled *Materials for the apparel of her majesty and the persons engaged about her Coronation* in the Public Record Office, among the Various Accounts of the King's Remembrancer at the Exchequer (E101/429/3). I prepared a transcript and linked the entries with relevant extracts from the account of Sir Edward Waldegrave, Master of the Great Wardrobe, of all 'Clothes of Tishewe clothes of golde Sylver and Tyncell Velvet Satten Damask and other kindes of Sylkes' used for the coronation (E101/429/4). This unfortunately is again too long to include in the present book, but it was published as an appendix to my article 'The "Coronation" Portrait of Queen Elizabeth I' in *The Burlington Magazine* in November 1978.

The profusion of documentary evidence soon made it apparent that the scope of this book would have to be limited in some way. Some of the material directly relating to it has been, and will be, published separately, as I have explained. By the time I had transcribed and indexed the copies of warrants for forty years I began to realize that it would be impossible to write a book about the Stowe and Folger inventories without bringing in the clerks, yeomen and artificers of the Wardrobe of Robes. Although it would have been best if the complete run of warrants could have been printed together with the inventories, the volume of material was too great. However, numerous extracts have been used to cast light upon many entries in the inventories. When the whole run is published, possibly on microfiche, I intend to incorporate the prices of all materials and work done taken from the Accounts of the Great Wardrobe, where the entries appear in clerks' Latin, using a personal computer to make the task easier and quicker. It will then be possible to carry out more research on the type of materials used and the silkwoman's supplies, to note variations in prices, the exact number of new gowns, remodelled items, alterations, and cost of workmanship, and to make a comparative study of the annual expenditure of the Wardrobe of Robes during Elizabeth's reign. It would appear that in some years, when many gifts of clothing were made to the Queen, she would spend less on herself and present a number of gowns made in the Wardrobe of Robes to her women, often to the young Maids-of-Honour. Clothes of her own which Elizabeth gave to her ladies-in-waiting were frequently first remodelled or lined with new taffeta.

It may seem strange for the Queen to give cast-off gowns to women of rank, such as Lady Warwick, but it must be remembered that the materials from which they were made, such as elaborately patterned velvets, cloths of gold and silver, richly embroidered silks and satins, sometimes cut and pinked, were of high quality and extremely expensive. In passing, I am indebted to Miss Jane Apple for a fascinating insight into the way in which one lady at Court obtained a quantity of rich material. Edward Stafford wrote from Paris to Sir Francis Walsingham on 10 July 1588 reporting that an unknown gentleman 'telleth me he sawe a pasport which he shewed him from you, and he knoweth your hand and he thinketh ytt to be cownterfetted, butt he telleth thatt ytt cost him seventie yeards of velvet to a ladie of the court to gett ytt him' (BL, Harl. 288, f. 218). Perhaps some of the velvet was eventually presented to the Queen — but by whom? Clothes were frequently left as bequests in wills during the period under study, as the value of the material was so much greater than the cost of making up the garment — hence the number of alterations. The elaborately embroidered gowns from the later part of the reign listed in the inventories may have been considered unsuitable to be given away. Many had been presented as gifts, and the embroidered motifs were often rich with symbolism, as well as heavy with gold thread. They were probably considered to be state treasure by the Queen. Certainly great care was taken of them in the Wardrobe stores.

The realization that all that had been written about Queen Elizabeth's dress might not be entirely accurate came early in my research. Gifts of clothes to the Ladies and Gentlewomen of the Bedchamber and Privy Chamber, and lengths of black satin, velvet, and taffeta suitable for two mourning gowns presented to Mary, Queen of Scots, make it clear that the claims of numerous writers that Elizabeth never gave anything away are untrue. I had originally intended to use eye-witness descriptions of the Queen's appearance on a number of public occasions, and to link them with entries in the Stowe and Folger inventories. By chance, within the space of a week, I read ten accounts of her visit to Tilbury in August 1588, to review the troops at the time of the threatened invasion by the Spanish Armada. These were all by authors writing from the seventeenth century onwards. Elizabeth was described variously as wearing a silver breastplate, a white velvet gown, great white plumes in her hair, a white satin gown, and a masque

PLATE IA *(Right) Queen Elizabeth I. Panel painting by an unknown artist, c. 1590–92. The sleeves and stomacher are embroidered with lilies, strawberries, eglantine (sweet-briar) and other flowers in coloured silks. The interlocking linear pattern is in gold thread set with pearls. Toledo Museum of Art, Ohio*

PLATE IB *(Below) Detail of stomacher in Plate* IA

PLATE IC, D and E *(Bottom) Details from a bodice worn by Queen Amalia Sophia around 1640, pieced together from white silk camlet embroidered around 1590. The motifs include clasped hands denoting friendship, a blazing heart pierced by arrows, which signifies love, and pansies for thoughts. The linear pattern is in couched gold thread. Rosenborg Castle, Copenhagen*

PLATE IIA *(Above left) Detail from a portrait of Queen Elizabeth I, by an unknown artist. The sleeves date from around 1570 and the hairstyle from around 1585. She fingers a jewel which appears in a later portrait, incorporated into a fan handle (Figs 143 and 143a). Elizabethan Club of Yale University*

PLATE IIB *(Above centre) Detail from the illumination of Queen Elizabeth I on the Ashburne Charter, by Nicholas Hilliard, 15 July 1585. Queen Elizabeth's Grammar School, Ashbourne, Derbyshire*

PLATE IIC, D, E, F, and G *A figure representing Astrology, a lion, an armillary sphere, a flagon with dolphin qrotesques, a bird with strawberries, and a thunderbolt, details from an embroidered white satin panel, probably from a petticoat, c.1600. Victoria and Albert Museum, London (T.138–1981)*

PLATE III *(Opposite) Queen Elizabeth I. Panel painting by an unknown artist, 1590. Jesus College, Oxford*

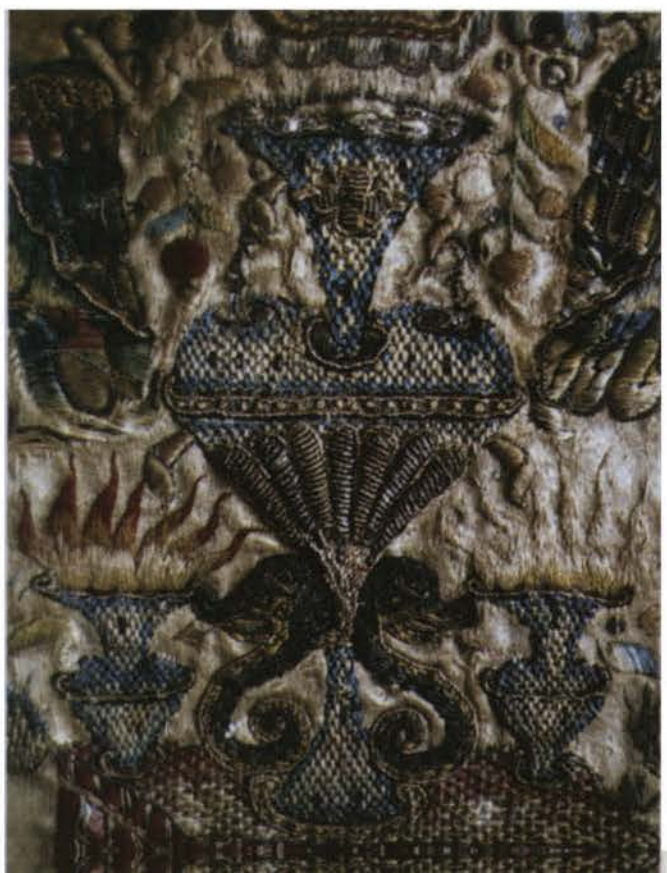


PLATE IVA *(Above) 'Armada' portrait of Queen Elizabeth I. Panel painting by an unknown artist, c. 1588–89. W. Tyrwhitt-Drake, Bereleigh, Petersfield*

PLATE IVB *(Far left) The 'Welbeck' or 'Wanstead' portrait of Queen Elizabeth I, attributed to Marcus Gheeraerts the Elder, c. 1580–85. Private collection*

PLATE IVC *(Left) Detail of a river, a cloud with raindrops, and a rainbow, from an embroidered white linen smock, c. 1600. Whitworth Art Gallery, Manchester*

costume. The longest account, apparently based on an engraving, from which some of these images were partly drawn, came from Agnes Strickland, published in 1844: 'She wore a polished steel corslet on her breast and below this . . . a fardingale of such monstrous amplitude that it is wonderful how her mettled war-horse submitted to carry a lady encumbered with a gaberdine of so strange a fashion.' Intrigued to find so many discrepancies, I turned to the panel painting in the Church of St Faith, Gaywood, Norfolk, which shows the Queen mounted on a white horse and wearing a gown with a wide farthingale, her ruff opening to a wide square neckline, dating from around 1605 or a little later. It is not known if this was painted by someone who was eye-witness to the event, up-dating the clothes worn by the Queen, or from other people's memories of the occasion. The picture was heavily restored in 1905.

Miller Christy, in his article 'Queen Elizabeth's visit to Tilbury in 1588' (*English Historical Review*, CXXXIII, 1919), points out that there are at least two contemporary accounts of the occasion, one by James Aske, who seems to have been present, and another by Thomas Deloney, who may have had it at second hand. Both are in verse and neither of them gives detailed descriptions of the Queen's clothes. Aske describes her as 'like to Mars, the God of fearefull Warre . . . Bellona-like renowned' reviewing her troops on foot, 'She thence some way still marching King-like on'. Later she was 'Most bravely mounted on a stately steede / With trunchion in her hand (not used thereto)', and was 'In nought unlike the Amazonian Queene'. Her coach was apparently studded with emeralds, diamonds, and rubies, 'set checker-wise by strange invention', and embroidered with gold knots. Deloney's ballad was set to the tune of 'Wilson's wild'. In his words she '. . . from fair St James's took her way, / With many Lords of high degree, / in princely robes and rich array; / And to barge upon the water / (being King Henry's royal daughter!) / She did go with trumpets sounding, / and with dubbing drums apace, / Along the Thames, that famous river, / for to view the Camp a space'. She viewed her 'armèd soldiers bright'on foot, 'Whereat her royal heart so leaped, / on her feet upright she stepped. / Tossing up her plume of feathers / to them all as they did stand, / Cheerfully her body bending / waving of her royal hand'. The description of the Queen on horseback is for the following day when 'The morrow after her abiding, / on a princely palfrey riding; / To the Camp she came to dinner / with her Lords and Ladies all. / Then came the Queen, on prancing steed, / attired like an angel bright'. We certainly have the image of a regal presence, but in neither account is the colour of Elizabeth's clothes mentioned. Space does not permit a full discussion of the Queen's appearance at Tilbury here, but my article 'The "Armada" portraits of Queen Elizabeth I', appearing in *Apollo* early in 1989, explores the subject more fully.

The problems of finding a detailed and reliable report of the Queen's appearance at one of the most important events of her reign are repeated on lesser occasions. In the end only a few personal accounts have been used and these are mainly by foreigners who wrote in greater detail than English observers. I have concentrated more on the portraits of Elizabeth, although it has not been possible to link conclusively items in the inventories with any of them, with the exception of the Coronation and Parliament robes. However, the magnificent clothes in paintings and miniatures, with their lavish embroidery, jewels, veils, and other accessories, offer visual evidence of fashions described in the inventories. I hope that the publication of this book will lead to some fragments of the Queen's embroidered clothes being traced. Even as it was being printed I saw a portrait, from a private collection, of Princess Magdalena Sibylla of Saxony who married Christian, the Prince Elect of Denmark, in 1634 (*Christian IV and Europe*, Exhibition Catalogue, Denmark, 1988, no. 119). Her gown was made from embroidered ivory silk dating from around 1600, which could well have belonged to Elizabeth, sent to Denmark by James I's consort, Queen Anne. A bodice dating from around 1640 worn by Queen Sophia Amalia, preserved at Rosenborg Castle in Copenhagen (*Christensen*, II, Plates LIV, LV), pieced together from silk dating from around 1590, seems likely to have had a similar history. The material is a white silver camlet, exquisitely embroidered with an interlacing design in gold thread, with motifs including clasped hands, hearts with crossed arrows and flames, daffodils, gillyflowers, and dolphin grotesques (Plates IC, ID, IE). In the same collection I found the kirtle, or surcoat, which was worn with the Garter mantle sent to Denmark for Christian IV in 1606 (*Christensen*, II, Plate IL). It was described in the Rosenborg inventory in 1718 as 'Een Carmesin Røed fløyels Polsk Kiortel', and was thought to have been part of the Polish dress worn by Frederick III around 1640–50. These discoveries encourage further research.

The transcripts complete, I worked on the first seven chapters of the book, concentrating on aspects of the Queen's appearance from contemporary accounts, her portraits, ceremonial robes, designs for jewellery and embroidery, their sources and symbolism, gifts of clothing and jewels to and from Elizabeth, fashions worn by her, and the work of clerks and yeomen in the organization of the Wardrobe of Robes. Most women will acknowledge the feeling of confidence and well-being which comes from wearing beautiful clothes in the latest fashion with complementary hairstyle and accessories. Elizabeth was a fascinating woman: she had a powerful charisma, and this was reinforced by clothes and jewels which reflected not only her own taste, but, in many cases, that of her loyal subjects who had presented them to her throughout her reign. Good organization was essential to ensure that the right clothes and accessories were ready when required. The posts of Gentleman, Yeoman and Groom of the Robes, Ladies and Gentlewomen of the Bedchamber and Privy Chamber, and Maids of Honour were no sinecure. Each had the safe keeping of portions of the Queen's apparel and jewels. A large number of persons shared the responsibility of making certain that Elizabeth would create the right impression at her audiences, on her Progresses, and on all occasions when she was in the public eye.

While working on *Patterns of Fashion: the cut and construction of clothes for men and women c. 1560–1620* I gathered a great deal of material on the work carried out by the artificers of the Wardrobe of Robes. In the end there was insufficient space to use it, and I decided therefore to publish this research in Chapter VIII, although it has made the book rather long. However, the contents of the Stowe and Folger inventories are far more interesting when seen in relation to the practical work carried out by tailors, embroiderers, skinners, silkwomen, shoemakers, and other craftsmen, together with the way in which the clothes were ordered and cared for. Unfortunately there was insufficent time for a full genealogical search to be carried out for every individual working for the Wardrobe of Robes, nor space to print the results, but some time spent with the Indexes and Printed Lists in the Society of Genealogists

Library, London, may discover many examples of family ties among the craftsmen. It seemed more useful to undertake the even more time-consuming task of providing an index of paintings, persons, places, and events, with a separate index, partly a glossary, for clothing, textiles, jewels, woven and embroidered motifs, symbolism, fashion terminology, and other related topics. I hope this will make the inventories more readily accessible and of use to the general reader, because terms for dress and textiles can be very confusing. There may be several words for the same item, as in our own time, for example, sweater, jumper or woollie, with cardigan for the same garment when buttoned down the front. What is a gown, what is a dress, what is a suit? We may have an evening gown or evening dress, wedding gown or wedding dress, but a bathing dress, bathing suit or swim suit, as well as a tailored suit to be worn with a blouse. These same difficulties were encountered by the International Committee for the Museums and Collections of Costume of ICOM when attempting to rationalize the terms for cataloguing costume in 1971–76. The same problems faced me when choosing terms for the different parts of dress in the sixteenth century, particularly as I had much new material which would be unfamiliar to the reader. Decisions have not been reached easily but I hope the reasons for them will be apparent in each case.

The reader is advised to study the list of abbreviations on pp. ix–xi and the key to signs and abbreviations in the transcripts on p. 243, as these are used in the text of the book as well as in the Stowe and Folger inventories. Those unfamiliar with Roman numerals, Imperial weights and measures, and Elizabethan currency will find some explanation on p. 242. It became apparent as I was writing this book that many younger readers have difficulty in reading Roman numerals because they are used so infrequently today, so in many places I have given Arabic figures in square brackets to help them.

On several occasions I have been asked if the preparation of the Stowe and Folger inventories in 1600 was not an example of the Queen's vanity and love of display. There is nothing unusual in the preparation of such inventories. Bearing in mind that Elizabeth probably considered the gowns enriched with gold thread as state treasure, it would seem she wished to leave everything in order and carefully recorded before her death. The Stowe inventory was kept by the officers of the Wardrobe of Robes as a record and was used to check the contents again when James I came to the throne in 1603. From this study we find the glittering lists prove, paradoxically, not that Elizabeth was extravagant, but that in the words of the Master of the Great Wardrobe, Sir John Fortescue, in 1593: 'As for her apparel, it is royal and princely beseeming her calling, but not sumptuous nor excessive.'

I

In the Eye of the Beholder

There is probably no other monarch whose appearance is so familiar to every school child. Horace Walpole remarked 'A pale Roman nose, a head of hair loaded with crowns and powdered with diamonds, a vast ruff, a vaster farthingale, and a bushel of pearls, are the features by which everybody knows at once the portraits of Queen Elizabeth' (Fig. 1).[1]

F. M. O'Donoghue gives the view which has been generally accepted about Elizabeth's elaborate gowns in the later years of her reign, following the lead given by Francis Bacon:

> Though in her girlhood, when her position was one of great uncertainty and some danger, she discreetly affected an extreme simplicity of dress, and a dislike for outward show, after her accession to the throne her natural vanity and love of admiration led her to adopt every expedient calculated to enhance her charms, and in her later years, 'imagining' as Francis Bacon observes 'that the people who are much influenced by externals, would be diverted by the glitter of her jewels from noticing the decay of her personal attractions' she indulged in an absolutely barbaric display of rich fabrics and jewellery.[2]

What is the truth of this statement? Was it just vanity and love of admiration or can the change in the Queen's taste be attributed to other factors? The quantities of clothes recorded in the Inventories taken in 1600 would seem, at a cursory glance, to suggest sheer vanity: after relating them to the surviving New Year's Gift Rolls and the warrants for the Wardrobe of Robes for forty years a different picture begins to emerge. It is one of careful organization and economy. As the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Sir John Fortescue, told the House of Commons in February 1593: 'As for her apparel, it is royal and princely, beseeming her calling, but not sumptuous nor excessive'.[3]

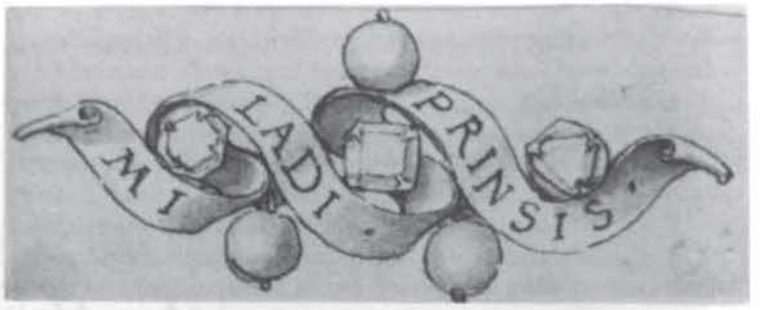
Lack of space prevents a detailed comparison between Elizabeth's expenditure on her clothes and that of other princesses and queens during the sixteenth century. However, even a cursory glance at the wardrobe expenses of Katherine of Aragon in 1520,[4] the list of materials used for Anne Boleyn's clothes in 1536,[5] the clothes worn by Mary Tudor in 1553–54, the inventory of the wardrobe of Mary, Queen of Scots, at Holyrood in 1562[6] and the list of clothes for Christina di Lorena when she married Ferdinando I de'Medici in 1589[7] shows that these words were quite true. Elizabeth's wardrobe expenses each year during the last four years of her reign were £9,535, while those for James I during the first five years of his reign, were £36,377, annually.[8]

Contemporary accounts record Elizabeth's elegant appearance as a princess and during the first years of her reign. Her preference for black and white — 'These are my colours' as she told Don Diego Guzman da Silva, the Spanish Ambassador, at a masque in July 1564[9] — gave dramatic emphasis to the rich jewels which she wore. Black velvet and satin were a perfect foil for the pearls, gold embroidery, and pieces of gold and enamelled jewellery depicted in the 'Phoenix' portrait, one of the paintings which show Elizabeth at her most elegant (Fig. 26). The fashions of the first half of her reign were more flattering to the figure than later styles; and the small waist, constricted body, widening sleeves and cone-shaped Spanish farthingale would have made Elizabeth appear even slimmer and taller than she was. The elaborate clothes worn during the later years of the reign created an impression of wealth and majesty. Although less flattering, as it tended to cut the figure in half and thus make it appear shorter, the wide drum-shaped farthingale, fashionable from the early 1590s onwards, was certainly impressive and offered a larger area of skirt for ornamentation.

Signor Francesco Gradenigo reported back to Venice in November 1596 that 'Her Majesty is about sixty-four years of age, short and ruddy in complexion; very strongly built'.[10] The ruddy complexion is borne out by the portrait at Jesus College painted in 1590 (Fig. 66) and Elizabeth had certainly put on a little weight over the years. In 1581, when she was forty-eight, William Whittell, one of her tailors, had the job of 'alteringe enlarginge newe making & lyninge of thirtye peire of bodies & slevis with Jagges parte cloth of golde cloth of silver vellat satten taphata & netteworke perfourmed with like stuff and lyned with taphata'.[11]

William Jones, the Queen's tailor, carried out several large groups of alterations between 1585 and 1588.[12] In 1585 he was engaged in 'alteringe enlarginge pecinge longer and wider in the bodies slevis & skyrtes of fower score and eight peire of bodies for Gownes Dublettes and Jacquettes parte cloth of golde tyssue, cloth of golde, cloth of silver, vellat, satten striped, taphata, netteworke curle, and tufte taphata perfourmed with like stuff the lyninges perfourmed with sarceonett & taphata'.[13] In the same year Arthur Middleton, an

1 *Queen Elizabeth I encircled by the Tudor rose on the left and eglantine on the right. Woodcut from 'The Light of Britaine' by Henry Lyte, 1588. Private collection*



2 *Design, or drawing from an inventory, of a brooch, possibly for the Princess Elizabeth. Pen and ink drawing by Hans Holbein the Younger c. 1536. British Museum, London (5308–ECM 86/G347)*

alterations hand, was employed in 'alteringe & enlarginge of fower Gownes fower Dublettes sixe payer of bodies & one Jaquett parte of cloth of golde cloth of silver vellat tufte taphata satten & netteworke florished with golde silver & silke perfourmed with like stuff the lyninges perfourmed with sarceonett taphata canvas bayes hookes & eyes'.[14] Between September 1587 and April 1588 Jones altered, enlarged, and lengthened the bodices and sleeves of forty gowns and doublets.[15] By September 1588 he had carried out similar work on another thirty[16] and by April 1589 on thirty-two more.[17] During the summer of the same year Jones was then engaged in 'alteringe pecinge Longer enlarginge in the bodies and slevis of xxxiiij gownes saffegardes and Petycoates the bodies lykewyse of them enlardged and of dublettes and Jacquettes parte Cloth of Gold, clothe of Silver, velvet Satten and Taffeta perfourmed with lyke stuff and plushe Networke florished with gold, with Taffata to border and lyne the said garmentes, and Canvas bayes hookes and eyes to perfourme them of our greate warderob'.[18] These may have been further alterations to garments first altered a year or more before. However, safeguards and petticoats were now on the list, so it seems likely that these were yet more clothes, which may not have been worn for some time, made ready in case the Queen wished to wear them.

The slow change in fashion from Spanish cone-shaped farthingale to wider drum-shaped variety accounts for all the alterations to the length of cloaks, gowns, petticoats, and safeguards which first appear in 1578,[19] but these references to 'pecinge longer and wider in the bodies' indicate a change in the Queen's size as well as in the fashions at this time. This, in addition to fashionably padded sleeves, must have given the impression of a strongly built figure, while the wide farthingale made Elizabeth appear short to Signor Gradenigo.

The wide-skirted fashions enhanced the regal presence while the slow and stately movements described by George Puttenham in 1589 would have made an impressive display of rich fabrics:

> And in a prince it is decent to go slowly and to march with leisure, and with a certain grandity rather than gravity; as our sovereign lady and mistress, the very image of majesty and magnificence, is accustomed to do generally; unless it be when she walketh apace for her pleasure, or to catch her a heat in the cold mornings.[20]

Dignity might be sacrificed on occasion; Elizabeth could walk quickly to get warm and she probably looked very graceful when 'dancing high' in the Italian manner.[21]

The New Year's Gift Rolls show that an increasing number of items of clothing were given to Elizabeth as the years went by. It is hardly surprising that both embroidery and fabrics became more and more elaborate, since the donors were not only striving to please the Queen and show their loyalty, but also to keep abreast of each other. During the closing years of her reign, Elizabeth became not only a glittering symbol of church and state but also a cult figure — Pandora, Gloriana, Cynthia, Belphoebe, Astraea, Queen of the Sea[22] — and the mixture of Queen and Divine Goddess was well served by the image which she presented. The often complex symbolism expressed in the rich embroideries was in many cases carefully chosen by close friends and loyal subjects as well as those trying to climb the ladder of preferment. While the effect must often have been spectacular, it might not necessarily have been elegant. Although the ladies-in-waiting could advise donors on colours and fashions, and gifts were often altered by the Queen's tailor, to a certain extent Elizabeth's clothes in the closing years of her reign reflected her subjects' attitude towards her and their taste.[23]

Elizabeth's apparent need for compliments and admiration of her appearance has also been put down to sheer vanity, but was it just that? On occasion Elizabeth made it quite obvious that a compliment was expected from ambassadors and courtiers, but in some of these cases it may simply have been a feminine manoeuvre for gaining time. The oft-quoted conversation with Sir James Melville may have been as much to test him and gain information about the Queen of Scots as to obtain compliments for herself.[24] Sir Richard Baker described her as short sighted;[25] the compliments would have given her time to get a clear view of the speaker.

As Queen of England, Elizabeth played an intricate game of matrimonial alliances with suitors from all over Europe for

3 *Detail from Figure 191, 'Lady Jane Dudley', commonly called 'Lady Jane Grey'. Panel painting attributed to Master John, c. 1550. She wears a chain of antique cameos with a miniature watch above the deep crimson silk tassel. The deep red forepart, probably velvet, is decorated with interlaced lines of gold cord and braid forming a trellis-work, with stylized gold leaves and flowers enriched with pearls, and knots of pearls. Most of the gold leaf has worn away, or been removed with cleaning, revealing the ochre-coloured bole beneath. National Portrait Gallery, London*

years.[26] The game's success depended a great deal on her appearance and the illusion of eternal youth. She dressed carefully for the part, but the story of Elizabeth's vast wardrobe turns out to be one of careful budgeting and good organization, not wild extravagance and vanity. She certainly loved beautiful clothes and always dressed in the latest fashion but the impression gained is that she regarded the rich silks and velvets, gold embroidery, and spangles as state treasure; they were looked after most carefully. Some items dating from the 1560s were still there, unaltered, in 1600.

Some of the more familiar descriptions of Elizabeth are repeated here, with others not so well known, to build up the whole picture of the Queen and her choice of dress. These accounts from her tutor, close friends, onlookers in the crowds and ambassadors, some written shortly after seeing Elizabeth, others from memory years afterwards, give another slant on the subject before considering the portraits.

As a small child she was dressed most attractively. William Loke, the King's mercer, supplied some materials to Queen Anne Boleyn for Elizabeth in the spring of 1536, when 'my lady princess' was two and a half years old.[27] A yard of white sarsenet was bought to line a gown of orange velvet and the Tudor pale red gold hair and white skin would have been enhanced by a kirtle of russet velvet, newly edged with matching velvet. A kirtle of yellow satin was edged with yellow velvet and one of green satin with green velvet while two yards of 'white capha damaske' were used to make a kirtle edged with white velvet (white was one of Elizabeth's favourite colours in later years.) There were two pieces measuring a quarter of a yard each of black velvet and satin to make partlets, both lined with black taffeta sarsenet and a quarter of a yard of purple sarsenet to line a sleeve of purple embroidered satin.

After Anne Boleyn's execution Elizabeth's status changed, as in June 1536 Parliament passed an Act declaring her illegitimate. The child's household was reduced and her governess, Lady Margaret Bryan, a widowed cousin of Anne, wrote a worried letter to Thomas Cromwell, Lord Privy Seal:

> Now et es so my {Lady Eliza}bethe es pot from that degree she was afor what d{egree she is at n}ow, I know not bot be heryng say therfor I know not how {to order her, n}or my self, nor non of hars that I have the rowl of {that is her} women and har gromes besychyng yow to be good lord {to my lady and to} al{l} hars, and that she may have som raymant for {She hath neither} gown, nor kertel nor petecot nor no maner of t{hinges as linen} for smokes, nor cerchefs, nor sleves, nor rayles, nor {body stitchets, nor hand}cerchers, nor mofelers nor begens. al{l} thys hir grac{e must have. I have} dreven of as long as I can, that be my trothe {i can drive i}t no longer. besychyng you my lord that ye wel{l see that her Grace m}ay have that es nedful for her, as my trust is ye wel{l do.}.[28]

The theory that Elizabeth's early memories of not having enough clothes to wear suitable for a child of her rank might have made her compensate for it in later life may be true. However she was only about three and a half years old when this letter was written and is unlikely to have understood Lady Bryan's worries. It may have been a case of 'out of sight, out of mind' as Lady Bryan also had difficulty in dressing the baby Prince Edward suitably for his rank for the visit by the Lords of Council in September 1538.[29] She wrote that she would

> acompleche et to the best of my power with syche thynges as her es to do et with al, wyche es but very bare for syche a time. The best cot [coat] my Lord Prinses grace hath es tensel, and that he shal have on at that teym; he hathe never a good jewel to set on his cape [cap]; howbet I shal order al things for my lordes honer the best I can.[30]

Elizabeth may not have had a great many clothes as princess but she does not seem to have been unsuitably clad after this early episode. She certainly had some pretty jewels, although perhaps none of great value. In 1540 Katherine Howard gave her a 'Brooche of Golde wherin is set an Antique hedd of Agathe vj verey small Rubyes and vj verey small Emeradds. Litle thing worthe'.[31] A trifle, but no doubt the cameo would

4 *'Elizabeth I when Princess'. Panel painting attributed to William Scrots, c. 1547. Royal Collection. Reproduced by Gracious Permission of Her Majesty the Queen*

have fascinated a seven year old child. The Queen also gave some beads 'to the Lady Elysabethe, the kynges dowghter'; they were 'of golde that is to say x Longe stones enamuled with white and garneshed with peerle & redstones every of them havyng peerlles and x other stones ennamuled with blewe like cuppes havyng also a pillar garnesshed with peerll and redstones and a buttone of golde with divers small cheynes of golde with black knoppes'.[32] Designs by Holbein for two little brooches, with the words 'My Ladi Prinsis' (Fig. 2) may have been commissioned by Henry VIII for his two daughters, perhaps when Jane Seymour was Queen.

Princess Mary gave her sister more valuable jewels, among them 'a grene Tablet garnished with golde havying the Picture of the trinite in it' and a 'pomander of golde with a Diall in yt' (perhaps similar to the watch in Fig. 3). Both were 'geven to my Lady Elizabeth grace'. On 21 September 1553, when Mary was Queen of England, she gave Elizabeth 'a Broche of thistory of piramys & tysbie [Pyramus and Thisbe] with a fayr table Diamond garneshed with iiij Rubies' and a 'payr of Bedes of Corall . . . white trymmed with gold'.[33]

The portrait at Windsor Castle, probably painted in 1547, shows Elizabeth as a serious young girl of thirteen with fair skin, red-gold hair and long, slim-fingered hands (Fig. 4). Her love of simplicity in dress, described by Ascham and Aylmer, is not borne out by the richly patterned fabrics used for the undersleeves and gown. Perhaps her most elaborate clothes were chosen for the portrait, as befitting a princess, both daughter and sister of a king.[34] The deep pink gown is fashionably cut and the material is described in the records of Edward VI's collection of pictures '. . . the ladye Elizabeth her grace with a booke in her hande her gowne like crymsen clothe of golde with workes'.[35]

Elizabeth dressed simply in her teens according to her tutor Roger Ascham. She had just passed her sixteenth birthday when he wrote in a letter to John Sturm:

> It is difficult to say whether the gifts of nature or of fortune are most to be admired in that illustrious lady. The praise which Aristotle gives wholly centres in her — beauty, stature, prudence and industry. She has just passed her sixteenth birthday and shows such dignity and gentleness as are wonderful at her age and in her rank . . . . In adornment she is elegant rather than showy, and by her contempt of gold and head-dresses, she reminds one of Hippolyte rather than Phaedra . . .[36]

Perhaps it was a method of self-defence, as O'Donoghue suggests in *A Descriptive and Classified Catalogue of Portraits of Queen Elizabeth*. Or it may have been simply a lack of any great interest while her mind was occupied with the fascinations of Greek and Latin. She must also have realized that she looked very attractive in the plain styles which accentuated the pallor of her skin and set off the red gold hair.

John Aylmer, Lady Jane Grey's tutor, who was made Bishop of London in 1576, must have found it difficult to reconcile his praise of Elizabeth's love of simplicity with some of her richly embroidered gowns after she came to the throne. In *An Harborowe for Faithful and Trewe Subjectes*, printed in 1559, he wrote that in seven years after her father's death Elizabeth had only once looked at the jewels he left her and continued:

> I am sure that her maidenly apparel, which she used in Kyng Edwardes tyme, made the noblemens daughters and wyves to be ashamed to be drest and paynted lyke pecockes, being more moved with hir most vertuous example: than with all that ever Paule and Peter wrote touchyng that matter. Yea this I know that a great mans daughter, receavinge from Ladye Marye before she was Quene, goodly apparel of tynsyll, cloth of golde, and velvet, layd on with parchement lace of gold: when she sawe it, sayde, what shal I doo with it? Marry saide a gentlewoman weare it. Nay quoth she, that were a shame to followe my lady Mary against Gods woorde and leave my Lady Elyzabeth, whiche foloweth Gods woorde.

Aylmer recounted another interesting story which may be true, although it is told from a staunch Protestant viewpoint. When the Scottish Queen Regent, Mary of Guise, broke her journey at the English Court on her way back to Scotland from France in October 1551, both she and her retinue were wearing the newest fashions and hairstyles which captivated all the English ladies, with the exception of one — Elizabeth — according to Aylmer: 'And this all men knowe, than when all the ladies hent up thattire of the Scottish skyttes at the commyng in of the Scottishe Quene, to go unbrydled, and with their heares frounsed and curled and double curled she altered nothing, but to the shame of them all kepte hir olde maydenly shamefastness'. This was, perhaps, not the best way to be unobtrusive at Court. Elizabeth must have stood out with dramatic emphasis against the other ladies, if the story is true, but it seems that neither Elizabeth nor her sister Mary appeared at Court during this visit.

Aylmer apparently made one attempt to reform Elizabeth's love of fashions in the early 1590s. He died in 1594 at the age of seventy-three and Sir John Harington's story, although undated, appears to refer to 1593:

> One Sunday (April last) my Lorde of London, preachede to the Queens Majestie, and seemede to touche on the vanitie of deckinge

the bodie too finely — Her Majestie tolde the Ladies, that if the Bishope helde more discorse on suche matters shee wolde fitte him for Heaven, but he shoulde walke thither withoute a staffe and leave his mantle behind him; perchance the Bishope hathe never soughte her Highnesse wardrobe, or he woulde have chosen another texte.[37]

Another tactless sermon was preached to the Court at Richmond in 1596 by Anthony Rudd, Bishop of St David's, on the infirmities of old age. Elizabeth was, not unnaturally, displeased at his observation that time had 'furrowed her face and besprinkled her hair with meal'.[38]

A brief glimpse is given of the young Princess in the procession from the Tower to the Palace of Westminster for the coronation of Queen Mary on the last day of September 1553: 'Next came a triumphal chariot covered with silver, in which was the Lady Elizabeth, sister of her Majesty, and Madam Anne of Cleves, wife of King Henry the Eighth and afterwards divorced by him, attired in cloth of silver.' Another eye-witness account in a manuscript used by Planché gives crimson velvet instead of cloth of silver, but the account here agrees with that of the French Ambassador.[39]

Giovanni Michiel, the Venetian Ambassador in England during the reign of Queen Mary, described Elizabeth shortly before she came to the throne in his *Relazione d'Inghilterra* presented to the Senate on his return in 1557:

My Lady Elizabeth was born in September 1533 so she is now twenty-three years old. She is a young woman whose mind is considered no less excellent [bello] than her person although her face is comely [gratiosa] rather than handsome but she is tall and well formed with a good skin although swarthy [anorchè olivastra]; she has fine eyes and above all a beautiful hand of which she makes a display [della quale ne fa professione].[40]

Paul Johnson points out that 'swarthy' or olive-skinned may reflect the fact that Elizabeth was apparently suffering from jaundice.[41]

There are a few other references to the Princess during 1557 and 1558, at which time she was in the charge of Sir Thomas Pope. She must have been beautifully dressed at the Shrovetide Pageant of 1557 in the great hall at Hatfield with forty-six or more gentlemen and ladies dressed in crimson satin embroidered with wreaths of gold and garnished with pearls.[42] This apparently incurred the displeasure of Queen Mary, but in spite of this Elizabeth was allowed to make visits to Court. On 25 February 1558 she rode from Hatfield to Somerset Place beyond Strand bridge and was received by the Queen on 28 February at Whitehall. On 4 March Elizabeth rode to her Palace at Sheen with a large company and in April she was escorted to Enfield Chase from Hatfield by a retinue of twelve ladies clothed in white satin and twenty yeomen in green, all on horseback, so that she might hunt the hart. In the summer of the same year she paid a visit to the Queen at Richmond, travelling by water from Somerset Place in the Queen's barge which was hung with garlands of artificial flowers and covered with a canopy of green sarsenet wrought with branches of eglantine in embroidery and powdered with blossoms of gold, accompanied by Sir Thomas Pope and four ladies of her chamber. Six boats attended this procession filled with her highness's retinue, richly dressed in russet damask and blue embroidered satin, tasselled and spangled with silver, with bonnets of cloth of silver plumed with green feathers. During the time of the Princess's residence at Hatfield she also spent Christmas at Hampton Court with the Queen and King Philip, but retired before the revels, maskings and disguisings began. On St Stephen's day she heard matins in the Queen's closet adjoining the chapel, dressed in a robe of white satin strung all over with pearls.[43]

On her accession to the throne many more accounts might be expected but, although there are a large number of surviving portraits, there are remarkably few really detailed descriptions of Elizabeth's appearance until late in her reign. The best are written by foreigners, particularly the Venetians; the description of the coronation robes in 1559 is most illuminating when related to both portrait and miniature which show Elizabeth wearing them.[44] Unfortunately no authorized diplomatic functionary was accredited by the Signory of Venice to the English Court from 5 July 1557, when Giovanni Michiel left England with King Philip, until 1602;[45] the letter describing the coronation of Queen Elizabeth was written by Il Schifanoya, a Venetian in London, to the Castellan of Mantua.[46] The greater part of the Venetian despatches relating to Elizabeth were written from the Court of France, where Venice was represented by a succession of Ambassadors in Ordinary. One of the last audiences which Elizabeth gave in 1603 was described by another Venetian, with the same attention to detail shown by Michiel and Il Schifanoya. If only diplomatic relations had been maintained throughout the reign we might have had a series of similar eye-witness records of the Queen's appearance on many important occasions.

The English accounts frequently refer to Elizabeth's splendid presence. The dominant personality, Gloriana, Astraea, Belphoebe, must have impressed observers more than the clothes, as rarely is there more than a mention of colour and material, or a note that the Queen was richly dressed with many jewels. Perhaps letters were written by ladies at Court to relations in the country, describing the Queen's latest gowns and the lavish embroidery, but none seems to have survived. In one way the lack of description of her clothes may be a subtle compliment to Elizabeth's tailors for creating gowns in which she must have felt supremely confident and assured and which did not dominate her personality. However, it may simply be that the English were less observant of the detail which fascinated Venetian eyes.

Most of the accounts give no more than tantalizing glimpses of Elizabeth. For example we know that she was 'apparelled in purple velvet, with a Scarf about her neck' when she rode on horseback to take possession of the Tower after her accession to the throne on 28 November, 1558, but no further detail is given.[47] At the end of May 1559 the Queen received an Embassy from France at Whitehall for supper when she was 'dressed entirely in purple velvet, with so much gold and so many pearls and jewels, it added much to her beauty'.[48] On the occasion of her visit to Cambridge in 1564, again on horseback, she was described as wearing a gown of pinked black velvet with her hair in a caul set with pearls and precious stones and a hat over it, spangled with gold, with a bush of feathers.[49] Although the colour, fabric, and decoration are given, the gowns cannot be definitely identified with similar items in the inventories or portraits with any certainty, as there is insufficient detail. However, these brief descriptions do give an idea of the Queen's appearance on particular occasions. Only the Coronation, Parliament, and Garter robes are easily recognizable (Figs 86, 87, 99–102, 104–07, 109 and 114).

Her appearance, but not her dress, was carefully recorded by the Scottish Ambassador, Sir James Melville, after an interview with her in 1564. He wrote that her hair was more reddish than yellow and 'curled in appearance naturally. She

desired to know of me what colour of hair was reputed best; and whether my Queen's hair or hers was best; and which of the two was fairest. I answered, the fairness of them both was not their worst faults . . . She inquired which of them was of highest stature? I said, My Queen. Then saith she, she is too high; for I myself am neither too high nor too low'.[50]

Lupold von Wedel who started his travels in England in August, 1585, was fascinated by the Queen and described her, with her retinue, at Hampton Court:

It being Sunday she attended Divine Service in the church or chapel which is in the castle . . . Before the Queen marched her bodyguard. They are all tall, strong, picked men. There are said to be two hundred of them, but this day they were not all present. They bore gilt halberds and wore red coats trimmed with black velvet. On their coats in front and behind are the Queen's arms in beaten gilt silver. Then came the most distinguished lords and councillors. Two of them bore a royal sceptre each. Then came one bearing the royal sword in a red velvet scabbard embroidered with gold and studded with precious stones and pearls. Him followed the Queen in black, because she is in mourning for the Prince of Orange and the Duke of Alençon. On either side of her crisp hair hung a great pearl about as large as a hazel-nut. The common people, who formed two rows on either side her path, fell upon their knees. The Queen's demeanour, however, was gracious and gentle and so was her speech, and from rich and poor she took petitions in a modest manner. Behind her walked a countess bearing her train. Then followed twenty-two maids of honour, mostly the children of Earls and other Lords. These were followed by twenty-four noblemen who bore small gilt pikes tipped with iron and adorned with long plumes. Although she has a hundred of these, they are not all on duty at the same time but discharge their office in turns. The Queen's path up to the chapel was guarded on both sides by the aforesaid bodyguard.[51]

Her 'crisp hair' would be described today as 'curled' or 'waved'. Shakespeare gives 'crispèd, snaky golden locks' for hair 'often known to be the dowry of a second head'[52] and the style was probably that seen in Figures 39 and 217. Pearls were often used to decorate Elizabeth's coiffure and are to be seen in many portraits.

Von Wedel also described the Queen arriving in London on 12 November in the same year to take up residence at St. James's for the Accession Day Tilts:

Before the Queen in her progress had reached the City, the Burgomaster or Mayor rode out to meet her with a cavalcade of some hundred horse. Amongst them were all the Aldermen and other burghers and craftsmen. Amongst these were very many goldsmiths, all dressed in black velvet coats, with fine trimmings. Each of them wore a gold chain over his coat. With them, but on foot, was a large crowd of the populace, not only men, but also women and girls. The Queen's train then came up. Riding ahead were her servants, then followed two of her guards, then came her equerries, and behind these her chamberlains, of whom there were about twenty. Then came the Privy Councillors. In front of the Councillors rode three bishops, amongst them the Bishop of Canterberg [Canterbury] who is the Primate of all England. On this occasion he had with him fifty of his horsemen. Behind the Bishops rode some councillors, but immediately before the Queen the Treasurer, who has been created a baron or knight, and a Secretary named Walsinger [Walsingham]. They were followed by the Queen in a gold coach, open all round, but having above it a canopy embroidered with gold and pearls. On the front and on the back of the coach were three plumes of various colours. The coach was drawn by four bays in royal trappings. The coachman was clad in red velvet, and on his coat both before and behind was the Queen's coat-of-arms and a rose of chaste silver-gilt. The Queen sat alone in the carriage. She was dressed in white and cried to the people: 'God save my people', to which the crowd responded with 'God save Your Grace.' This they repeated many times, falling upon their knees. The Queen sitting all alone in her splendid coach appeared like a goddess such as painters are wont to depict. Behind the Queen's coach rode my Lord Lester, who is an Earl of princely blood. He had long been Master of the Horse. Beside him rode yet another of the Queen's Privy Councillors. Then followed the Queen's Maids of Honour, twenty-four in number. All were on horseback and beautifully attired. Behind them came the Queen's guards who on this day were fifty strong. They were all armed with bows and dirks. Then came a gilt coach embroidered with gold and silver, which however did not rival that of the Queen, and behind it yet another coach studded all over with nails of gold [Fig. 5]. In neither of these coaches was anyone seated. Behind this followed those who, as already related, had ridden out to meet the Queen. They accompanied her up to the house. On her entry all the bells pealed.[53]

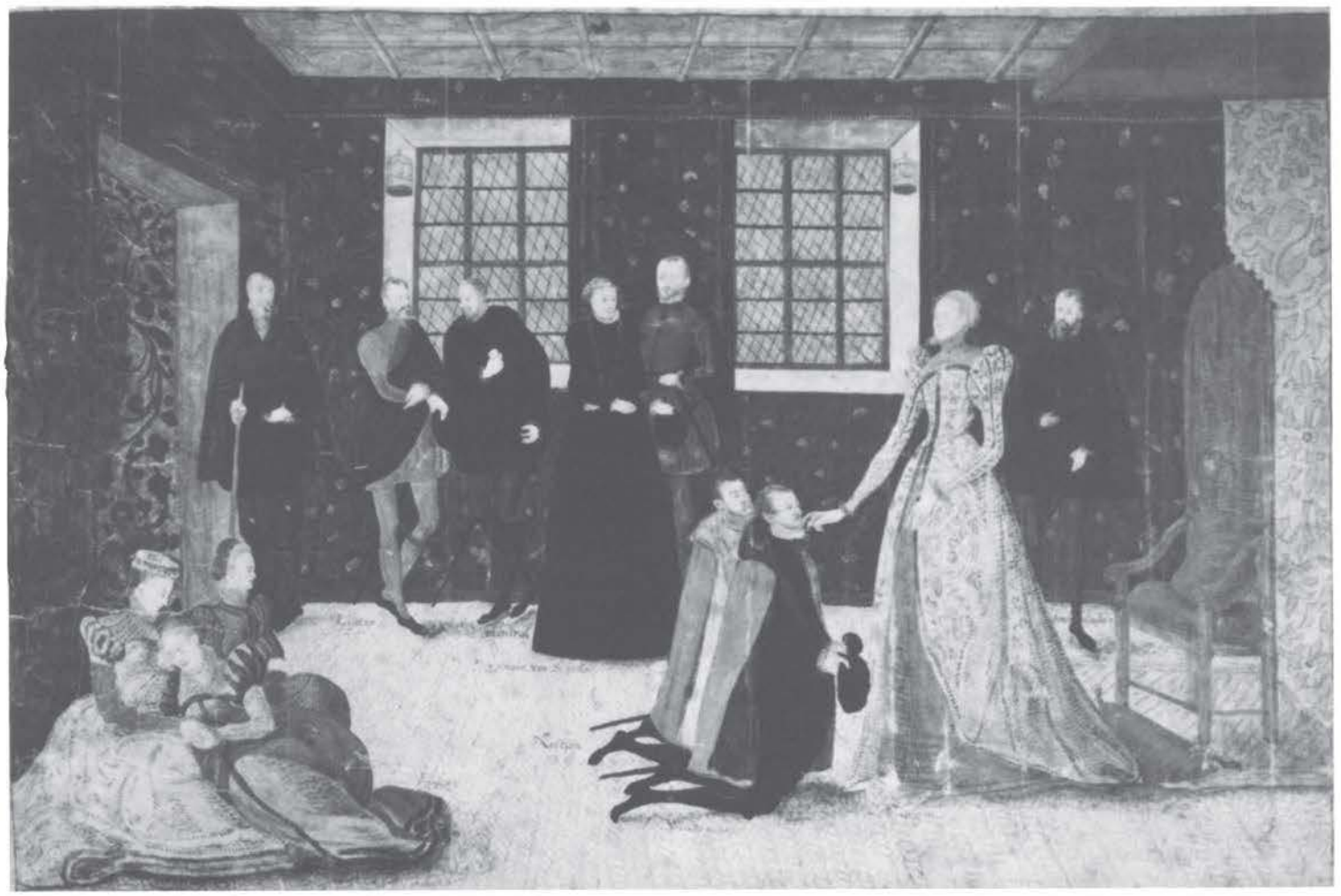
5 Travelling carriage studded with gilt nails, similar to that described by Lupold Von Wedel. Water-colour drawing c. 1610. Scottish National Portrait Gallery, Edinburgh

Von Wedel certainly conjures up a splendid scene. The expenses of most of this and other similiar occasions can be pieced together from the almost complete run of yearly Accounts for the Great Wardrobe from 1558 to 1603 preserved in the Public Record Office, discussed further in Chapter VII.

Von Wedel's most detailed description of the Queen's appearance was for 27 December, when he went five miles down the Thames to Greenwich, where she was in residence:

Arrived at the palace, I first went into the chapel which is hung with gold. The pulpit is covered with red gold-embroidered velvet. In one-half of the church stands a large, high, gilded altar and there, divided off from the rest, is a recess entirely of gold cloth out of which the Queen comes when she is about to receive the Sacrament. Then I went into a large room before the Queen's chamber hung with tapestry wrought in silver and gold. Here I waited until she went to church. As at Hampenkort, as I have already related, she was accompanied to church by her gentlemen and ladies-in-waiting, who, however, on this occasion, it being Christmas-tide, were more gorgeously dressed. But the Queen being in mourning for the Duc d'Alençon and the Prince of Orange, was dressed in black velvet sumptuously embroidered with silver and pearls. Over her robe she had a silver shawl, that was full of meshes and diaphanous like a piece of gossamer tissue. But this shawl gleamed as though it were bespangled with tinsel, which, however, was not the case, and it hung down over her robe as low as the hem of her skirt.[54]

Shawl would be better translated as 'veil' or 'mantle'. Here again, although the detail is insufficient to connect these clothes with items in the Inventories, one gains an impression



6 *'Queen Elizabeth receiving the Dutch Ambassadors in the Presence Chamber'. Water-colour drawing by an unknown artist, c. 1570–75. Staatliche Kunstsammlungen, Kassel (GS 10430)*

of the Queen's appearance when in mourning which can be linked to the description of the whole Court wearing black when the news of the Massacre of St Bartholomew's Day was brought to Kenilworth in 1572.[55]

André Hurault, Sieur de Maisse, Ambassador Extraordinary from Henri IV to Queen Elizabeth, gives some of the best eye-witness accounts of the Queen's gowns in 1597. Several of his familiar descriptions are quoted here, as they also give the setting in which the Queen appeared and the way in which she spoke of herself and her attire. Unfortunately the original manuscript has apparently disappeared but six seventeenth-century transcripts survive. The translation by G. B. Harrison and R. A. Jones was based on a modern copy of one of these transcripts.[56] I have included some of the French terms of clothing from this copy, enclosing them in square brackets. De Maisse uses the New Style of reckoning throughout. His dates are therefore ten days in advance of current English reckoning. The English dates are given in square brackets. He wrote:

> On the 8th of December [28 November] . . . about one hour after noon there came a gentleman from the Queen who . . . brought me in a coach to take me down to the river where one of the barges awaited me, and we went thence to the gate of the Queen's palace. At our landing there came to seek me a gentleman who spoke very good Italian, called Monsieur Wotton . . . He led me across a chamber of moderate size wherein were the guards of the Queen, and thence into the Presence Chamber, as they call it, in which all present, even though the Queen be absent, remain uncovered. He then conducted me to a place on one side, where there was a cushion made ready for me [Fig. 6]. I waited there some time, and the Lord Chamberlain, who has the charge of the Queen's household (not as *maître d'hótel*, but to arrange audiences and to escort those who demand them and especially ambassadors), came to seek me where I was seated. He led me along a passage somewhat dark, into a chamber that they call the Privy Chamber, at the head of which was the Queen seated in a low chair, by herself, and withdrawn from all the Lords and Ladies that were present, they being in one place and she in another. After I had made her my reverence at the entry of the chamber, she rose and came five or six paces towards me, almost into the middle of the chamber. I kissed the fringe of her robe [le bas de sa robe] and she embraced me with both hands. She looked at me kindly, and began to excuse herself that she had not sooner given me audience, saying that the day before she had been very ill with a gathering on the right side of her face, which I should never have thought seeing her eyes and face: but she did not remember ever to have been so ill before. She excused herself because I found her attired in her night-gown [sa robe de nuit], and began to rebuke those of her Council who were present, saying, 'What will these gentlemen say' — speaking of those who accompanied me — 'to see me so attired? I am much disturbed that they should see me in this state'.[57]

This reference to a 'nightgown' does not imply that the Queen was wearing the equivalent of a modern dressing-gown. The term is nearer in meaning to the eighteenth-century 'dress' and 'undress' and the modern 'formal' and 'informal'. 'Fringe'

might be better translated as 'hem'. The rest of the description gives details of the gown:

She stood up while I was speaking, but then she returned to her chair when she saw that I was only speaking of general matters. I drew nearer to her chair and began to deal with her in that wherewithal I had been charged; and because I was uncovered, from time to time she signed to me with her hand to be covered, which I did. Soon after she caused a stool to be brought, whereon I sat and began to talk to her.

She was strangely attired in a dress [robbe] of silver cloth, white and crimson [toile d'argent blanche et incarnate], or silver 'gauze' [gaze d'argent], as they call it. This dress [robbe] had slashed sleeves [manches ouvertes] lined with red taffeta, and was girt about with other little sleeves that hung down to the ground [et estoit ceincte d'autres petites manches qui pendoient jusques à terre], which she was for ever twisting and untwisting.[58]

'Ouverte' is translated as 'gaping wide' by Cotgrave in his *Dictionarie of the French and English Tongues* printed in 1611; the sleeves may have been Spanish sleeves (Fig. 196), open at the front for the arm to pass through, rather than heavily slashed, or similar to those in Figure 7, where the opening can be fastened with gold buttons. Incarnate according to Cotgrave is 'carnation & more particularly, light or pale carnation: flesh coloured, or of the colour of our damaske Rose'.

It is interesting that Elizabeth should have fidgeted with her sleeves in this way, sometimes considered a sign of nervousness. Each period, however, has its own idiosyncratic mannerisms connected with dress or hairstyle; the twisting and untwisting of sleeves may be equated with the gesture familiar in the late 1960s and 1970s, of pushing long hair back and allowing it almost immediately to fall back on the face. De Maisse continues:

She kept the front of her dress [robbe] open, and one could see the whole of her bosom, and passing low [tout sa gorge et assez bas], and often she would open the front of this robe [manteau] with her hands as if she was too hot. The collar of the [said] robe [manteau] was very high, and the lining of the inner part all adorned with little pendants of rubies and pearls, very many, but quite small. She had also a chain [carcan] of rubies and pearls about her neck. On her head she wore a garland of the same material [estoffe] and beneath it a great reddish-coloured wig, with a great number of spangles [papillottes] of gold and silver, and hanging down over her forehead some pearls, but of no great worth. On either side of her ears hung two great curls of hair, almost down to her shoulders and within the collar of her robe, spangled as the top of her head. Her bosom [la gorge] is somewhat wrinkled as well as [one can see for] the collar that she wears round her neck, but lower down her flesh is exceeding white and delicate, so far as one could see.[59]

Cotgrave translates 'robbe' as 'a robe, gowne, mantle, coat; any long upper garment' and 'manteau' as 'a cloke'. De Maisse's description seems to be of a very elaborate style, but from the Queen's remarks her crimson cloth of silver nightgown with high collar, Spanish sleeves and narrow hanging sleeves behind may have been the type of dress she would have worn among her women, less formal than an ensemble considered suitable for an audience. This nightgown might also have been described as a loose gown.[60] It would have been worn over a kirtle or jacket and petticoat, but de Maisse does not appear to have seen enough to be able to describe them. 'Carcan' is translated by Cotgrave as 'a carkanet, or collar of gold, etc; worne about the necke' and the garland on the Queen's head was made of rubies and pearls to match it.

7 *'Portrait of an unknown lady', by an unknown artist, c. 1585. J. B. Speed Art Museum, Louisiana, Kentucky*

De Maisse continues:

As for her face, it is and appears to be very aged. It is long and thin, and her teeth are very yellow and unequal, compared with what they were formerly, so they say, and on the left side less than on the right. Many of them are missing so that one cannot understand her easily when she speaks quickly. Her figure is fair and tall and graceful in whatever she does; so far as may be she keeps her dignity, yet humbly and graciously withal.[61]

This description of the face is very close to the portrait of Elizabeth painted in 1590 when she was fifty-seven years of age, which is at Jesus College, Oxford (Fig. 66).

Elizabeth was dressed differently on the next occasion when de Maisse saw her, and again he gives a good description:

15th [5th] December. I thought that I should have appeared before the Queen. She was on point of giving me audience, having already sent her coaches to fetch me, but taking a look into her mirror said that she appeared too ill and that she was unwilling for anyone to see her in that state; and so countermanded me.

To-day she sent her coaches and one of her own gentlemen servants to conduct me. When I alighted from my coach Monsieur de Mildmay, formerly ambassador in France, came up to me and led me to the Presence Chamber, where the Lord Chamberlain came to seek me as before and conducted me to the Privy Chamber where the Queen was standing by a window. She looked in better health than before. She was clad in a dress [robbe] of black taffeta, bound [bandée] with [broad] gold lace [de passement d'or fort large], and like a robe in the Italian fashion with open sleeves and lined with

8 *Detail from 'Queen Elizabeth I and the Three Goddesses' by an artist who uses the monogram HE, 1569. Royal Collection. Reproduced by Gracious Permission of Her Majesty the Queen*

8a *Detail of glove from Figure 8*

crimson taffeta. She had a petticoat [une robbe desoulz] of white damask, girdled, and open in front, as was also her chemise [chemise], in such a manner that she often opened this dress and one could see all her belly [l'estomach], and even to her navel [nombril]. Her head tire was the same as before. She had bracelets of pearl on her hands, six or seven rows of them. On her head tire [coiffure] she wore a coronet of pearls, of which five or six were marvellously fair. When she raises her head, she has a trick of putting both hands on her gown [robbe] and opening it [l'entrouvre] insomuch that all her belly [l'estomach] can be seen.[62]

This curious description may be a confusion of terms made in transcription and translation. It is unlikely that the Queen's women would have been so careless as to allow her to appear in public without fastening her clothes properly; this has since been described as a 'shameless occasion'.[63] The word 'chemise' may originally have been written as 'chemisette' or 'petite chemise', translated as 'waistcoat' by Minsheu in *The Guide into Tongues* (1617). Short embroidered jackets are seen in many portraits by the 1600s. A number of linen, flannel and silk waistcoats are listed in the warrants for the Queen's tailor. One, made in 1570, was 'of camerick enbrodered allover with silver'.[64] Another, altered in 1577, was of 'lynen cloth, quilted with blak silke'.[65]

Alternatively if the word was 'chemise', for which Cotgrave gives the translation 'a shirt or smocke', and it really was worn open as described, perhaps Elizabeth was wearing a style similar to that worn by an unknown lady in *c.* 1585 (Fig. 7). It would have been easy for any man, particularly a foreigner, to confuse the terms for different parts of an Englishwoman's dress. In this portrait, for example, the lace-edged neckline of the smock just shows above the jewelled stomacher. The ruff is attached to what appears to be another smock but the sitter might have described it as a lining or a facing.

Even the names for the parts of the body may be misleading. Cotgrave gives 'The Stomacke; the gorge; also . . . the breast (being the seat of the stomacke)' as translations of 'estomach' and the use of the word 'nombril' may be de Maisse's exaggerated way of indicating the waist level. Cotgrave further defines 'gorge' as 'in a woman, the outward, and upper part of the breast, betweene the necke and pappes', so that the area seen by de Maisse may, in fact, have been rather higher than the description suggests. The word 'bandée' is given by Cotgrave as 'garded, or welted' and 'entrouvre' as 'halfe to open, to make way through'. The gown was therefore guarded with broad gold lace as a decorative feature rather than bound with it, and when the Queen put her hands on each side it would have parted slightly, half opening to reveal the garments beneath.

De Maisse also mentions Elizabeth's height:

When anyone speaks of her beauty she says that she was never beautiful, although she had that reputation thirty years ago. Nevertheless she speaks of her beauty as often as she can. As for her natural form and proportion, she is very beautiful; and by chance approaching a door and wishing to raise the tapestry that hung before it, she said to me laughing that she was as big as a door, meaning that she was tall.[66]

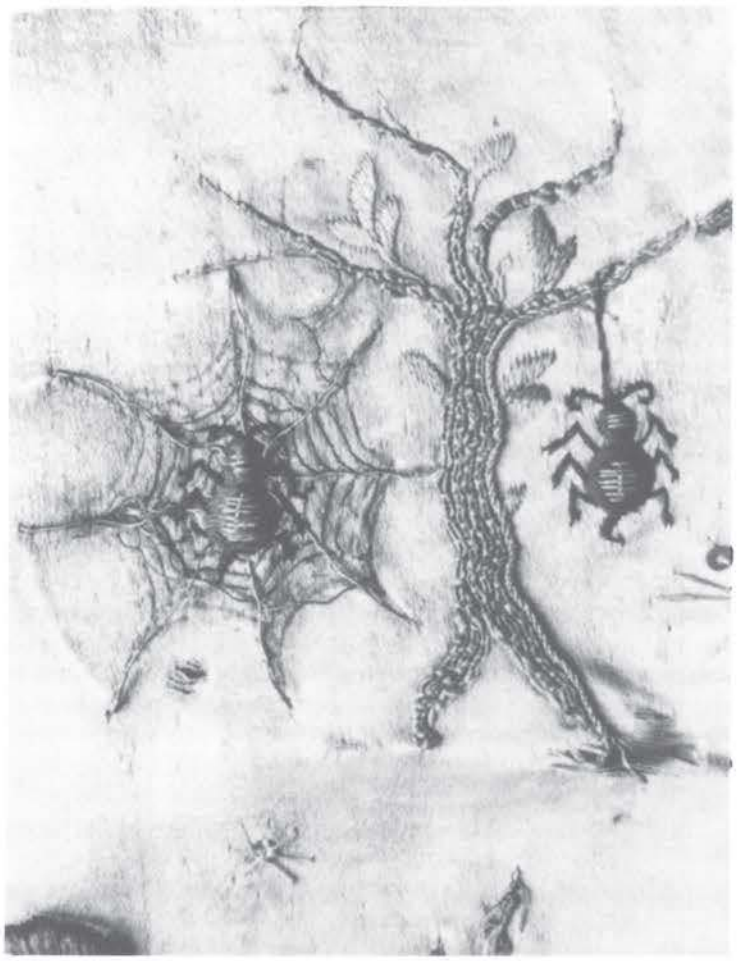
De Maisse gives a third account of the Queen's appearance:

The same day (24th [14th] December) I went to see the Queen, and she sent me her coaches. I found her very well and kindly disposed. She was having the spinet played to her in her chamber, seeming very attentive to it . . . She was clad in a white robe of cloth of silver [robe de toile d'argent blanche], cut very low [eschancrée fort bas] and her bosom uncovered [le sein descouvert]. She had the same customary head attire, but diversified by several kinds of precious stones, yet not of any great value. She had a little gown of cloth of silver of peach colour, covered and hidden, which was fair.[67]

Cotgrave's translation of 'eschancrée' is 'cut or made hollow and into a halfe-round' and a neckline of this style would certainly have left the bosom uncovered (Figs 140 and 153).

The Queen's beautiful hands also attracted de Maisse's attention on his visit in 1597:

Having told her at some point that she was well advertised of everything that happened in the world, she replied that her hands were very long by nature and might, *an nescis longas Regibus esse manus*; whereupon she drew off her glove and showed me her hand, which is very long and more than mine by more than three broad fingers. It was formerly very beautiful, but it now very thin, although the skin is still most fair.[68]



9 *Detail of spiders and a cobweb from a panel of embroidered satin c. 1600. Victoria and Albert Museum, London (T.138–1981)*

Here Elizabeth was wearing gloves while listening to music in the Palace. This may have been a matter of etiquette but would also have been a way of keeping the hands warm in a cold room in December. The other descriptions of Elizabeth wearing gloves are all on public occasions. Fifteen portraits, among over seventy I have examined, show her holding a glove or a pair of gloves in one hand and she is described as holding gloves in her hand in the Recognition Procession on 14 January 1559.[69] One picture shows her wearing gloves, *Queen Elizabeth and Three Goddesses* painted in 1569, where she is regally clad in a magnificent gown, as she must often have appeared before the people (Fig. 8). The gloves have narrow cuffs and are decorated with rows of fine silver cord, giving a striped effect. The beautiful gloves with very deep embroidered cuffs preserved in museums are not in evidence in portraits until after *c.* 1600. Those in the paintings of Elizabeth have richly decorated cuffs, but they are not usually more than about two inches deep.

De Maisse continues in his report of 1597:

. . . save for her face, which looks old, and her teeth, it is not possible to see a woman of so fine and vigorous disposition both in mind and in body . . . This day she was habited, as is her custom, in silver tissue [toile d'argent], or 'gauze' [gaze], as we call it in French; her robe was white and the overvest of gold and silk of violet colour [sa promelle de soye d'or et de couleur violette]. She wore innumerable jewels on her person, not only on her head, but also within her collar [qu'au dedans de son collet], about her arms and on her hands, with a very great quantity of pearls, round her neck and on her bracelets. She had two bands [carcans], one on each arm, which were worth a great price. She preserves a great gravity amidst her own people. Having entered this time into the Chamber, she walked in a manner marvellous haughty, having Secretary Cecil near her; and I believe she did so expressly that I might see her while she pretended not to see me.[70]

Cotgrave translates 'gaze' as 'also (the sleight stuffe) Tiffanie'. 'Promelle' does not appear in Cotgrave's *Dictionarie* but is probably better translated as 'mantle'.[71] The description calls to mind the Ditchley portrait (Fig. 71).

Duke Frederick of Württemberg chose Herr Johann Jacob Breuning von Buchenbach to lead an embassy to Elizabeth in March 1595 on a quest for the Order of the Garter. Von Buchenbach reported back to the Duke:

I cannot pass over in silence the fact that at the last audience, as already reported, Her Majesty came forward a few paces to meet me and that she did not sit down. She stood for longer than a full hour by the clock conversing with me; which is astonishing for a Queen of such eminence and of such great age, for on the coming Michaelmas Day she attains the sixty-fourth year of her life. I have not heard that Her Majesty is wont often to do this.

Her Majesty was this time dressed in a red robe interwoven with gold thread, and on her head was the usual royal crown of pearls. She wore a collar that looked almost exactly like that worn by the Knights of the Order on St George's Day. Everything was studded with very large diamonds and other precious stones. Over her breast, which was bare, she wore a long filigree lace shawl, on which sat a hideous large black spider that looked as if it were natural and alive. Many might have been deceived by it.[72]

The 'long filigree lace shawl' was probably a network scarf like the eight which were lined with taffeta sarsenet and edged with gold and silver lace and fringe by Roger Mountague for the Queen in 1587.[73] The black spider may have been a jewel or, if the network was designed to look like a cobweb, it might have been a piece of applied raised embroidery (Fig. 9).

Paul Hentzner's description of the Queen at Greenwich written in 1598 also conjures up an image very similar to that of the Ditchley portrait, painted around 1592–94 (Fig. 71):

We arrived next at the royal palace of Greenwich, reported to have been originally built by Humphrey Duke of Gloucester, and to have received very magnificent additions from Henry VII. It was here Elizabeth, the present queen, was born, and here she generally resides; particularly in summer, for the delightfulness of its situation. We were admitted by an order Mr Rogers had procured from the Lord Chamberlain, into the Presence-chamber, hung with rich tapestry, and the floor after the English fashion, strewed with hay, through which the Queen commonly passes in her way to chapel: At the door stood a Gentleman dressed in velvet, with a gold chain, whose office was to introduce to the Queen any Person of Distinction, that came to wait on her: It was Sunday, when there is usually the greatest attendance of Nobility. In the same hall were the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Bishop of London, a great number of Counsellors of State, Officers of the Crown, and Gentlemen, who waited the Queen's coming out; which she did from her own apartment, when it was time to go to Prayers, attended in the following manner:

First, went Gentlemen, Barons, Earls, Knights of the Garter, all richly dressed and bare-headed; next came the Lord High Chancellor of England, bearing the Seals in a red silk Purse, between Two; one of which carried the Royal Scepter, the other the Sword of State, in a red scabbard, studded with golden Fleurs de Lis, the point upwards: Next came the Queen, in the Sixty-fifth year of her Age, as we were told, very majestic; her Face oblong, fair, but wrinkled; her Eyes small, yet black and pleasant; her Nose a little hooked; her Lips narrow, and her Teeth black; (a defect the English seem subject to, from their too great use of sugar) she had in her Ears two pearls, with very rich drops; she wore false Hair, and that red (crinem fulvum sed

10 *'An unknown lady wearing a scarf'. Panel painting by an unknown artist, 1606. Present whereabouts unknown*

factitium); upon her Head she had a small Crown, reported to be made of some of the gold of the celebrated Lunebourg table. Her Bosom was uncovered, as all the English ladies have it, till they marry; and she had on a Necklace of exceeding fine jewels; her Hands were slender, her Fingers rather long, and her Stature neither tall nor low; her air was stately, her manner of speaking mild and obliging. That day she was dressed in white Silk, bordered with pearls the size of beans, and over it a Mantle of black silk, shot with silver threads; her Train was very long, and the end of it born by a Marchioness; instead of a Chain she had an oblong Collar of gold and jewels. As she went along in all this state and magnificence, she spoke very graciously, first to one, then to another, whether foreign Ministers, or those who attended for different reasons, in English, French, and Italian; for besides being well skilled in Greek, Latin, and the Languages I have mentioned, she is mistress of Spanish, Scotch, and Dutch: Whoever speaks to her, it is kneeling; now and then she raises some with her Hand. While we were there, William Slawata, a Bohemian Baron, had letters to present to her; and she, after pulling off her glove, gave him her right Hand to kiss, sparkling with rings and jewels, a mark of particular Favour: Wherever she turned her Face, as she was going along, every body fell down on their knees. The Ladies of the Court followed next to her, very handsome and well-shaped, and for the most part dressed in white; she was guarded on each side by the Gentlemen Pensioners, fifty in number, with gilt halberds; in the antechapel next the Hall where we were, Petitions were presented to her, and she received them most graciously, which occasioned the acclamation of GOD SAVE THE QUEEN.[74]

Thomas Platter records seeing her at the Palace of Nonsuch in 1599 and although he mistakes her age — she was only sixty-six — the rest of his description is very similar to those of de Maisse and Hentzner:

We were led very soon into the presence chamber where we were placed well to the fore, so as better to behold the queen. This apartment like the others leading into this one was hung with fine tapestries, and the floor was strewn with straw or hay; only where the queen was to come out and up to her seat were carpets laid down worked in Turkish knot.

After we had waited awhile there, somewhere between twelve and one, some men with white staffs entered from an inner chamber, and after them a number of lords of high standing followed by the queen, alone without escort, very straight and erect still, who sat down in the presence chamber upon a seat covered with red damask and cushions embroidered in gold thread, and so low was the chair that the cushions almost lay on the ground, and there was a canopy above, fixed very ornately to the ceiling.

She was most lavishly attired in a gown of pure white satin, gold-embroidered, with a whole bird of paradise for panache, set forward on her head studded with costly jewels, wore a string of huge round pearls about her neck and elegant gloves over which were drawn costly rings. In short she was most gorgeously apparelled, and although she was already seventy-four, was very youthful still in appearance, seeming no more than twenty years of age. She had a dignified and regal bearing.[75]

One interesting discrepancy between these last accounts is the description of the hands. Hentzner writes that when Elizabeth drew off her right glove her hand was sparkling with rings and jewels, while Platter describes 'elegant gloves over which were drawn costly rings'. In Hentzner's description she was on her way to chapel and the glove was presumably fairly loose-fitting to permit it to be drawn off easily when a courtier was allowed to kiss her hand, a mark of favour. Platter saw her in the Presence Chamber at Court and the gloves must have fitted her hands very smoothly, with rings worn on top.

Giovanni Michiel wrote of Elizabeth's beautiful hands 'of which she makes a display' in 1557. She certainly drew attention to them, sometimes with words and sometimes by drawing her gloves on and off. Louis Aubery, Seigneur du Maurier, wrote in his memoirs: '& sur ce sujet, j'ay oüy dire à mon Pere, qu'ayant êté dépêché vers elle, dans chaque Audiance qu'il eut, elle se déganta plus de cent fois pour luy faire voir ses mains qui êtoient tres-belles & tres–blanches'.[76] Even allowing for exaggeration, taking her gloves on and off so many times during an audience seems more like a nervous habit, but it certainly attracted attention to the beautiful white hands.

Sir Robert Sidney writing to Sir John Harington in 1600 gives an account of the Queen's appearance and the entertainments when she visited his house in 1600.

I do see the Queen often, she doth wax weak since the late troubles and Burleigh's death doth often draw tears from her goodly cheeks . . . Her Highnes hath done honour to my poor house by visiting me and seemed much pleased at what we did to please her. My son made her a fair speech, to which she did give most gracious reply. The women did dance before her, whilst the cornets did salute from the gallery; and she did vouchsafe to eat two morsels of rich comfit cake, and drank a small cordial from a gold cup. She had a marvellous suit of velvet borne by four of her first women attendants in rich apparel; two ushers did go before, and at going up stairs she called for a staff, and was much wearied in walking about the house, and said she wished to come another day. Six drums and six trumpets waited in the court, and sounded at her approach and departure. My

wife did bear herself in wondrous good liking and was attired in a purple kyrtle fringed with gold; and myself in a rich band and collar of needlework, and did wear goodly stuff of the bravest cut and fashion, with an under body of silver and loops. The Queen was much in commendation of our appearances; and smiled at the ladies, who in their dances often came up to the stepp on which the seat was fixed to make their obeysance, and so fell back into their order again'.[77]

Sir John Harington wrote to Sir Hugh Portman in the troubled time of Essex's rebellion and described the Queen as 'quite disfavour'd and unattir'd' and that 'so disordered is all order, that her Highnes hathe worne but one change of raiment for many days . . .'.[78] In spite of her advancing years Elizabeth recovered her spirits sufficiently to be described as walking like an eighteen-year old in 1602. Her interest in clothes revived and she wore spectacular jewels and gown for an audience with the Venetian Secretary in England in February 1603.

Another foreign visitor, Frederic Gerschow, saw the Queen closely on the occasion of the Duke of Stettin's visit to Oatlands on 26 September, 1602. The Queen had given orders that they should walk in the garden close to the palace 'and her Royal Majesty passed us several times, walking as freely as if she had been only eighteen years old, always taking off her mascara [mascaram] and bowing deeply to his princely Grace, who, however, not willing to make himself known, stood almost behind'.[79] 'Mascara' is better translated as 'mask' (Fig. 289). The fashion for wearing masks seems to have started in the early 1570s; Harrison records that 'Women's Maskes, Buskes, Mufs, Fanns, Perewigs, and Bodkins, were first devised and used in Italy by Curtezans, and from thence brought into France and there received of the best sort for gallant ornaments, & from thence they came into England about the time of the Massacar in Paris [St Bartholomew's Day, 24 August 1572]'.[80] Emmanuel Van Meteren, a merchant of Antwerp who settled in London, lived there throughout Elizabeth's reign and was Dutch consul in England from 1583 to 1612, noted in about 1575 that 'ladies of distinction have lately learned to cover their faces with silken masks or vizards and feathers'.[81] Apparently the Queen's masks might be lined with perfumed leather: 'Item to Raffe Abnett . . . for one dozin of sweet skynnes to lyne maskes'.[82]

Elizabeth certainly wore a mask when hunting on a Progress at Basing Park in September 1601,[83] probably to protect her face from the elements, rather than as a disguise. The mask she wore at Oatlands, which Gerschow observed, may have been made from the two and a half yards of satin delivered by Baptist Hickes 'for Maskes and byllements' recorded in the warrants in April 1602.[84] Gerschow continues:

> Her Majesty also gave him to understand that she would like to see his princely Grace, according to the English fashion, kiss her hands, which however, his Grace, for various weighty reasons, politely declined to do. At last the Queen, to show her royal rank, ordered some of the noble lords and counsellors to approach, and they, in their stately dress, were obliged to remain on their knees all the time the Queen addressed them. Meanwhile, the Queen uncovered herself down to the breasts, showing her snow white skin [Inmittelst entblöste sich die konigen bis an die Brüste und liess ihre schneeweisse Haut sehen]. To judge from portraits showing her Majesty in her thirtieth year there cannot have lived many finer women at the time; even in her old age she did not look ugly, when seen from a distance.

The description of Elizabeth uncovering herself down to the breasts probably means that she removed a light gauzy scarf from around her neck. Elizabeth had many exquisitely decorated scarves. One, made in 1590, was of 'white Syvework Lawne' edged with 'one ounce di of gold & silver Lace to perfourme the same.[85] Another, in 1591, was of white silk cypress, embroidered with scaling ladders, armed men and other devices in the borders at each end.[86] Stubbes described them as extravagant accessories in 1583:

> Then must they have their silke scarffes cast about their faces, and fluttering in the wind with great tassells at every ende, eyther of gold, silver or silke. But I know wherefore, they will say, they weare these scarffes, namely, to keep them from Sunne burnyng.[87]

A scarf, apparently made of fine, semi-transparent silk, is tucked into the neckline in the portrait of an unknown lady painted in 1606 (Fig. 10).

One of the last audiences which Elizabeth gave was attended by Giovanni Carlo Scaramelli, Venetian Secretary in England, at Richmond on 16 February, 1603. He wrote to the Doge and Senate that he had been taken to the Presence Chamber and immediately after that into the room where her Majesty was:

> The Queen was clad in taffety of silver and white trimmed with gold; her dress was somewhat open in front and showed her throat encircled with pearls and rubies down to her breast. Her skirts were much fuller and began lower down than is the fashion in France. Her hair was of a light colour never made by nature, and she wore great pearls like pears round the forehead; she had a coif arched round her head and an Imperial crown, and displayed a vast quantity of gems and pearls upon her person; even under her stomacher she was covered with golden jewelled girdles and single gems, carbuncles, balas-rubies, diamonds; round her wrists in place of bracelets she wore double rows of pearls of more than medium size. Her Majesty was seated on a chair placed on a small square platform with two steps, and round about on the floor and uncovered were the Archbishop of Canterbury Metropolitan of England, the Lord Chancellor, the Lord Treasurer, the Lord High Admiral, the Secretary of State and all the Privy Council; the remainder of the Chamber was all full of ladies and gentlemen and the musicians who had been playing dance music up to that moment.
>
> At my entry the Queen rose and I advanced with reverences made in due order, and reaching her was in act to kneel down upon the first step and to kiss her robe, but her Majesty would not allow it, and with both hands almost raised me up and extended her right hand, which I kissed with effusion, and at the same moment she said 'Welcome to England, Mr Secretary'.[88]

Scaramelli's description is not that of an old lady; he leaves us with the image of the Ditchley portrait, the magnificent, regal figure of Gloriana.

Notes

1 Horace Walpole, *Anecdotes of Painting in England* (1862), I, p. 150. Quoted in *O'Donoghue*, p. vii.
2 *O'Donoghue*, p. vii.
3 *D'Ewes*, p. 473; quoted in *Johnson*, p. 209.
4 John Rylands Library, MS 239. Transcribed in preparation for publication.
5 *Heath*, pp. 10–13.
6 *Carter, 'Mary Tudor's Wardrobe'*, pp. 23–28, and *Robertson, Inventaires*, pp. 60–74.
7 Martha McCrory and Anna Maria Testaverde Matteini, 'Fashion in Florence around 1589: The marriage of Ferdinando I de'Medici and Christina de Lorena', a paper prepared for the CIETA conference in Prato, September 1981.
8 Menna Prestwich, *Cranfield: Politics and Profits under the Stuarts* (Oxford, 1966), p. 12.
9 *CSP Spanish*, 1558–67, I, p. 368. Letter dated 10 July 1564.
10 *CSP Venetian*, 1592–1603, IX, p. 239. Letter dated 2 Nov. 1596.
11 BL, Egerton 2806, f. 166, warrant dated 6 April 1581.
12 For example ibid., f. 208^{v}, warrant dated 27 Sept. 1585; f. 213^{v}, warrant dated 27 Sept. 1586; f. 223, warrant dated 26 Sept. 1587.
13 Ibid., f. 204, warrant dated 16 April 1585.
14 Ibid., f. 208^{v}, warrant dated 27 Sept. 1585.
15 Ibid., f. 227^{v}, warrant dated 3 April, 1588.
16 Ibid., f. 232, warrant dated 27 Sept. 1588.
17 PRO, LC5/36, f. 100, warrant dated 3 April 1589.
18 PRO, LC5/36, ff. 119, 120, warrant dated 27 Sept. 1589.
19 BL, Egerton 2806, ff. 124, 124^{v}, warrant dated 12 April 1578.
20 George Puttenham, *The Art of Poesie* (1589), quoted in *O'Donoghue*, p. xviii.
21 *De Maisse*, p. 95.
22 Thomas Dekker, *The Pleasant Comedy of Old Fortunatus as it was plaied before the Queenes Majestie this Christmas* . . . (1600). The symbolism is discussed in *Yates, Astraea*.
23 See Chapter V.
24 *Melville, Memoirs*, pp. 95–97.
25 Quoted in *Progr. Eliz.*, I, p. xiii.
26 Discussed in Martin Hume, *The Courtships of Queen Elizabeth* (1904, rev. edn.).
27 *Heath*, pp. 10–13.
28 BL, Cotton MS Otho CX, f. 230 (new no. 234). Quoted in *Strickland*, pp. 7, 8. The MS is badly damaged and the parts given in brackets in my transcript are either illegible or missing.
29 *Nichols, Literary Remains*, p. xxxvi.
30 Ibid., p. xxxvii. This letter is undated but seems to refer to the visit of the Lords of Council.
31 BL, Stowe 559, f. 58.
32 Ibid., f. 64.
33 *Madden*, pp. 178, 194, 197. The story of Pyramus and Thisbe is used in William Shakespeare, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.
34 See Chapter II for further details.
35 *Millar, Tudor Pictures*, cat. no. 46, p. 65.
36 *Giles, Works of Ascham*, I, p. lxiii.
37 *Nugae Antiquae*, II, p. 215.
38 *Progr. Eliz.*, 1788–1805 edn., III, p. 8.
39 Antonio de Guaras, *The Accession of Queen Mary*, ed. Richard Garnett (1892), pp. 119, 139.
40 *CSP Venetian*, 1556–57, VI, pt. 2, p. 1058, report dated 13 May 1557.
41 *Johnson*, p. 13.
42 Thomas Warton, *Life of Sir Thomas Pope* (1780), pp. 86–87.
43 For these events see ibid. pp. 86–91, John Strype *Historical Memorials of Events under the Reign of Queen Mary I* (1721), pp. 108, 444–45 and BL, MS Cotton Vitellius F V. This MS, on which all the accounts in Warton and Strype are based, has been badly damaged and some folios removed. References to the pages in Strype are given on each folio.
44 *Arnold, 'Coronation Portrait'*, pp. 729, 732.
45 *CSP Venetian*, 1558–80, VII, p. vii–viii.
46 Ibid., pp. 11–19, letter dated 23 January 1559. Il Schifanoya appears to be the true name of the writer, not an assumed one, ibid., pp. viii–ix.
47 *Progr. Eliz.*, I, p. 32.
48 *CSP Venetian*, 1558–80, VII, p. 92, letter dated 30 May 1559.
49 *Progr. Eliz.*, I, p. 160.
50 *Melville, Memoirs*, pp. 95–96.
51 *Klarwill*, pp. 322–23.
52 Shakespeare, *Merchant of Venice*, III, sc. 2.
53 *Klarwill*, pp. 328–29. For further details about the Accession Day Tilts see Roy Strong 'The Popular Celebrations of the Accession Day of Queen Elizabeth I', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, XXI (London, 1958) and Frances A. Yates, 'Elizabethan Chivalry: the Romance of the Accession Day Tilts' ibid., XX (1957). A superb coach was presented by Queen Elizabeth to Czar Boris Godunov in 1603, but not delivered until 1625, 20 years after his death. It was remodelled in 1678 and is now in the Kremlin. I am indebted to Miss Santina Levey for this information. Illustrated in Valeri S. Turchin, *Moscow* (1981), Fig. 142; B. A. Rybakov, *Treasures in the Kremlin* (1962), Figs 77–79. I am grateful to Miss Lorraine Williams for tracing these illustrations.
54 *Klarwill*, pp. 335–36.
55 *Jenkins, Eliz. and Leicester*, p. 222.
56 *De Maisse*, p. xvi. The copy of Paris Bibliothèque Nationale, fonds français 15974 is among the Baschet transcripts of French archives, PRO, 31/3/29.
57 Ibid., pp. 23–24. PRO, 31/3/29, ff. 204–04^{v}.
58 Ibid., pp. 24–25. PRO, 31/3/29, ff. 204^{v}–05.
59 Ibid., p. 25. PRO, 31/3/29, f. 205.
60 For futher details about nightgowns and loose gowns see Chapter VI.
61 *De Maisse*, p. 256. PRO, 31/3/29, f. 205.
62 Ibid., pp. 36–37. PRO, 31/3/29, ff. 210–10^{v}.
63 A. L. Rowse, *The English Spirit* (1945), p. 121.
64 BL, Egerton 2806, f. 22, warrant dated 12 April 1570.
65. Ibid., f. 118^{v}, warrant dated 27 Sept. 1577.
66 *De Maisse*, pp. 38–39, PRO, 31/3/29, f. 211.
67 Ibid., pp. 55–56. PRO, 31/3/29, f. 218^{v}.
68 Ibid., p. 59. PRO, 31/3/29, ff. 220–21^{v}.
69 *CSP Venetian*, 1558–80, VII, p. 12, letter dated 23 Jan. 1559.
70 *De Maisse*, pp. 82–83. PRO, 31/3/29, f. 230^{v}.
71 For full discussion of mantles see Chapter VI.
72 *Klarwill*, p. 394.
73 BL, Egerton 2806, f. 224^{v}, warrant dated 26 Sept. 1587.
74 *Rye*, p. 104.
75 *Williams, Platter*, p. 192.
76 Louis Aubery, Seigneur du Maurier, *Memoires pour Servir à l'Histoire de Hollande* (1680), p. 256.
77 *Nugae Antiquae*, II, pp. 255–56.
78 Ibid., pp. 64, 66.
79 Dr Gottfried von Bulow (ed.), 'Diary of the Duke of Stettin's Journey September 10–October 3, 1602' in *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, new series, VI (1892), pp. 1–67. The original MS is lost. This is a translation of a transcript dated 1757.
80 *Harrison*, pt. I, p. 34.
81 *Rye*, p. 73.
82 PRO, LC5/37, f. 72, warrant dated 28 Sept. 1595.
83 *Progr. Eliz.*, III, pp. 566–67.
84 PRO, LC5/37, f. 258, warrant dated 19 April 1602.
85 PRO, LC5/36, f. 147, warrant dated 28 Sept. 1590.
86 See Chapter VIII, note 168, for full details.
87 *Stubbes*, p. 42^{v} (1585 edn.).
88 *CSP Venetian*, 1592–1603, IX, pp. 531–32, despatch dated 19 Feb. 1603.

II

Portraits of the Queen

Fashions, face patterns and variations in the Queen's portraits

The clothes in many portraits of Queen Elizabeth are painted in great detail. Identifying them with entries in the inventories of 1600, the warrants for the Wardrobe of Robes,[1] the New Year's Gift Rolls[2] and the day book recording items leaving the Wardrobe of Robes between 1561 and 1585[3] would seem to be a simple matter. However, after indexing the warrants and linking these other manuscript sources with them, it gradually became clear that the numerous alterations carried out to Elizabeth's clothes had made them very difficult to trace with any certainty. The gowns depicted in some of the paintings may well have been painted exactly as Elizabeth wore them, but they could easily have been altered out of all recognition by the time they were entered in the Stowe and Folger inventories in 1600. Gowns opening at the back were sometimes altered to open at the front[4] and embroidery was often taken from one gown and mounted on another, perhaps of a different fabric and colour, thus completely changing its appearance.[5] Each costume depicted in the paintings was composed of a large number of detachable pieces: ruff, partlet, sleeves, forepart, petticoat, stomacher, gown, and veil were all separate items, and interchangeable. In addition to this each painter had his own style and the same item of clothing may thus appear in different portraits with subtle variations as, for example, the embroidered forepart in the three 'Armada' portraits of Elizabeth and other related pictures, discussed later in this chapter.

We know that some of the Queen's gowns were passed on to the Yeomen, Grooms and Pages of the Robes as gifts and fees.[6] Part of a purple velvet gown which had belonged to Mary Tudor was lost when some of her clothes were borrowed for a play presented before Elizabeth at Oxford in 1566.[7] When Thomas Platter visited the London playhouses in 1597 he noted that:

> The actors are most expensively and elaborately costumed; for it is the English usage for eminent lords or Knights at their decease to bequeath and leave almost the best of their clothes to their serving men, which it is unseemly for the latter to wear, so that they offer them then for sale for a small sum to the actors.[8]

Although there seems to be no surviving evidence, the staff of the Wardrobe of Robes may have sold or hired some of Elizabeth's discarded gowns, given them as fees, to the players and also to some of the unknown artists who painted the Queen's portrait, for use as studio properties. This might account for the fact that the same forepart appears more than once, observed by several painters, in the three 'Armada' portraits and other pictures of the Queen.

Sir Roy Strong has discussed the different types of portraits of Elizabeth in his book *Portraits of Queen Elizabeth I*. He shows that the early ones were not good likenesses and provides documentary evidence that she was painted by, and probably sat personally for, at least these five artists during her reign — Levina Teerlinc in 1551, Nicholas Hilliard sometime about 1572, Federigo Zuccaro in 1575, an unknown French Master in 1581 and Cornelius Ketel. He also suggests another three who were likely to have had sittings — George Gower, John de Critz I, and the elder Marcus Gheeraerts.[9] Isaac Oliver would also have had a sitting around 1590–92 for his unfinished miniature (Fig. 81) and Elizabeth must surely have posed for the painter of the life-like Jesus College portrait in 1590 (Fig. 66). Although there is no evidence that it was ever put into effect, a proclamation drafted by Sir William Cecil in 1563 was designed to keep some control over production of the royal likeness. It prohibited painters, printers, and engravers from drawing the Queen's picture until 'some speciall conning paynter might be permitted access to hir Majesty to take ye natural representation of hir Majestie wherof she hath bene allweise of her owne riall[?] disposition very unwillyng'. After this 'hir Majestie will be content that all other paynters, or gravors . . . shall and maye at ther plesures follow the sayd patron or first portraictur'.[10] The face patterns were copied both officially and unofficially but we do not know exactly how the clothes and jewels in Elizabeth's portraits were arranged for the painters to work from. Some of the most beautiful pictures of the Queen, among them the 'Pelican', (Fig. 25), the 'Phoenix' (Fig. 26), the 'Cobham' or 'Darnley' (Fig. 215), the 'Ermine' (Fig. 217), the 'Welbeck' or 'Wanstead' (Fig. 218), the portrait at Jesus College, Oxford (Fig. 66) and the Ditchley (Fig. 71), show properly mounted gowns, the jewels and perfectly set ruffs arranged with loving care. This

would have taken expert hands some time to do. In *Lingua or the Combat of the Tongues* Thomas Tomkis complains that . . . 'a ship is sooner rigged by far than a gentlewoman made ready'.[11]

Freeman O'Donoghue classified the Queen's portraits according to ruff styles.[12] Early in the reign the ruff was set in small figure-of-eight pleats, often with two layers, packed closely together beneath the chin. From the 1570s to about 1586 the ruff grew slowly wider and deeper, the sets radiating out from the neck. From about 1587 to 1589 a wide, shallow ruff was also fashionable, and towards 1590 was sometimes worn open a little at the front. In the 1590s the deeper style of ruff was worn wide open, framing the sides of the square neckline and standing high at the back of the neck. Each of the Queen's face patterns continued in use for several years, but the ruff, together with sleeve width, shape of farthingale and hairstyle, can date a portrait fairly closely, no matter which face pattern was used.

Although the original portraits are obviously preferable for costume study, copies made at a later date can also be useful. Many were made only a few weeks or months after the first picture. In a few cases meticulously painted Victorian water-colours are a record of miniatures which have since faded and paintings which were later heavily cleaned, thus removing much of the detail;[13] occasionally the original picture cannot now be traced and may have been destroyed. Each painting must be evaluated carefully before accepting the visual evidence.

According to the draft proclamation the Queen apparently did not like having her portrait painted, probably because of the time involved. Edward Norgate describes the number of hours and sequence of work for painting a miniature in *Miniatura or the Art of Limning*.[14] The first sitting usually took up to two hours and sometimes longer 'to dead colour the face only, not troubling your selfe . . . with ground, apparrell etc . . .' The second sitting

> ordinarily takes up three or fower howres, or more . . . The third and last sitting is commonly of two howres or three according to the patience of the Sitter or skill of the Lymner . . .

Norgate does not mention using a model or lay figure for the clothes, but he might have used one, on occasion, to get the correct folds in the material:

> for the apparrell, Linnen, Jewells, pearle and such like, you are to lay them before you in the same posture as your designe is, and when you are alone, you may take your owne time to finish them with as much neatnes and perfection as you please, or can.

Although the official face patterns of the Queen were used many times and some of the surviving portraits of Elizabeth are uninspired copies, others are the work of painters who used a face pattern but observed the details of clothing most carefully. In some cases the gowns and ruffs have been unskilfully mounted and the heads do not fit the bodies properly (Fig. 57). The portraits already listed, which show gowns, jewels and ruffs arranged convincingly, were probably completed when a lady-in-waiting was standing in for the Queen. This point is discussed later in this chapter. Other portraits appear to have been painted partly from a face pattern and partly from clothes propped up in the studio, possibly bought or borrowed from the staff of the Wardrobe of Robes. Jewels were probably copied from drawings and other paintings when they were not available in the studio. Variations in hairstyles and ruffs, sometimes of a later date than the particular style of gown used in several pictures, may indicate the painters' efforts to record the latest fashions,[15] but the changes are sometimes the result of cleaning and restoration.

11 *'Queen Elizabeth I'. Engraving by Remigius Hogenberg, c. 1570. Private collection*

Subtle differences may be detected between a portrait and the engraving apparently made from it. One example, an engraving of Elizabeth made around 1570 by Remigius Hogenberg, shows a gathered partlet with very fine dotted lines running out from the neck, probably representing lines of decorative stitching (Fig. 11). It may have been taken from the portrait in the collection at Syon House,[16] but, if so, the painting has been altered slightly at a later date, possibly during cleaning. The fine dotted lines are not shown in the painting and the partlet has been incorrectly depicted on Elizabeth's left shoulder, where it covers the gown. On the right shoulder it is arranged correctly, beneath the gown. Pearls round the neckline and the ring on a cord at the neck appear in both pictures.

The Hogenberg engraving is from a portrait, but probably not the one at Syon House. A comparison of these two images and a portrait at Anglesey Abbey using the same face image (Fig. 12) gives rise to the theory that the engraving was taken from another picture which may no longer exist. The 'Anglesey' portrait has a slightly deeper ruff, an intricately embroidered partlet, deep embroidered guards and a heavy jewelled chain round the shoulder. The square neckline is bordered with pearls, as in the other two pictures, but it is far more carefully observed. The partlet extends right to the edge

12 *'Queen Elizabeth I'. Panel painting by an unknown artist, c. 1570–72. The Queen wears a fine whitework partlet with the embroidered smock showing at the front. National Trust, Anglesey Abbey*

13 *'Frances Croker'. Panel painting attributed to workshop of George Gower, c. 1585–87. Victoria and Albert Museum, London*

of the wide neckline, and it is easy to see how this may have been misinterpreted in the Syon portrait. The edge of a lace-trimmed exquisitely embroidered smock, 'embroidered round the square',[17] shows at the centre front, beneath the partlet.

Paintings showing identical pieces of clothing

The same pieces of clothing appear in several portraits of the Queen. The paintings of *Frances Croker* (Fig. 13) and *Mary Cornwallis* (Fig. 14) offer an example of a duplicate item of dress worn by two different women in about 1585–87. Both of them are wearing sleeves with the same embroidery. Those worn by Frances Croker miss one or two curly sprigs, but otherwise the pattern is identical; she has a wrist ruffle to match her ruff and the embroidered frill of the sleeve shows beneath it. Mary Cornwallis has an almost transparent covering for her sleeve and the embroidered sleeve frill can be seen more clearly. Did the two women use the same draughtsman to draw out the embroidery design? Did one of them admire the other's sleeves and ask if she might copy them? Or did George Gower (or one of of his assistants) use the detailed designs of the embroidery from the portrait of Mary Cornwallis, the more skilfully painted picture of the two, for that of Frances Croker? No documentary evidence survives to answer these questions. All the other details are completely different — aglets, jewels, foreparts and fans. A miniature of *Frances Croker*[18] shows different jewels again, but the likeness is sufficiently close to the painting in Figure 13 to prove that both pictures are not of Mary Cornwallis.

Another pair of portraits show identical costumes of about the same date; *Elizabeth Stafford, Lady Drury*, attributed to Segar (Fig. 15) and an *Unknown lady said to be Queen Elizabeth I*, at Trerice House, which has had the face over-painted, probably in the late eighteenth or early nineteenth century (Fig. 16). Was the portrait at Trerice House originally a second version of Lady Drury or was it a portrait of Queen Elizabeth, or of another lady? The ruffs, jewels and other details of the costume have been very carefully observed. If the pictures are of the Queen and Lady Drury, then there is ample evidence that the Queen gave presents of her clothes to ladies-in-waiting and others in the Court circle,[19] and it would have been possible for the recipient of the gown and ruff to order a duplicate portrait of herself wearing them. If the pictures are of two different women then we have a similar problem to that presented by the portraits of Frances Croker and Mary Cornwallis.

Portraits of two sisters in identical costumes may be seen in the Suffolk collection at the Ranger's House, Blackheath; *Diana Cecil, Countess of Oxford* and *Anne Cecil, Countess of Stamford*, both painted in *c.* 1615 and attributed to Larkin, wear white satin gowns heavily slashed to show the yellow silk

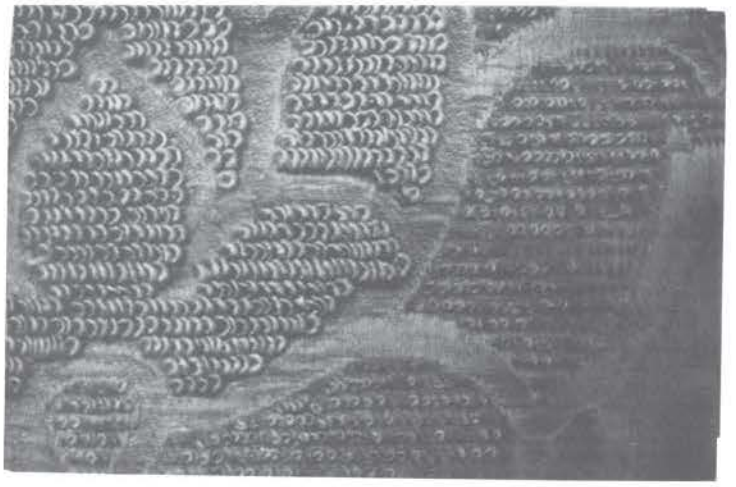
14 *'Mary Cornwallis', formerly at Hengrave Hall. Panel painting attributed to George Gower, c. 1585–87. Manchester City Art Galleries*

15 *'Elizabeth Stafford, Lady Drury'. Panel painting attributed to Sir William Segar, c. 1585. Present whereabouts unknown*

lining. The lace ruffs and cuffs are of a different design, but apart from that, although Anne Cecil is smaller than Diana, every crease, slash and spangle is virtually identical. Apparently the same gown has been used for both portraits.[20] In two other paintings of *c.* 1620, both attributed to Daniel Mytens, the dress is similar but the ruffs and cuffs are identical, with scalloped borders, alternate scallops caught down, exquisitely embroidered with black silk in a design resembling ermine tails; the portrait of Elizabeth Howard, Countess of Banbury, is also at the Ranger's House[21] and that of her sister Frances, Countess of Somerset, is in the collection at Woburn Abbey.

At the moment there is no conclusive evidence to answer the questions presented by these examples of pairs of paintings showing identical costume detail. However they do offer a note of warning that we should not accept the evidence of all the portraits of Queen Elizabeth at their face value. A few costumes depicted in early seventeenth-century paintings still survive today and can be compared with the artists' representations, among them *Sir Richard (?) Cotton* and his slashed satin suit,[22] *Margaret Laton* and her embroidered jacket[23] and *Jane Lambarde* and her crimson velvet mantle.[24] These three examples give us an insight into the type of detail to expect of a portrait where the painter has been able to make a careful study of the clothes.

16 *'Unknown lady said to be Elizabeth I'. Panel painting attributed to Sir William Segar, c. 1585. National Trust, Trerice House, Cornwall*



17 *(Above left) Fragment of rich crimson woven silk. Victoria and Albert Museum, London (563.1884)*

18 *Detail from Figure 4 of 'crymsen cloth of gold with workes' used for the gown worn by Princess Elizabeth. Panel painting attributed to William Scrots, c. 1547. Royal Collection. Reproduced by Gracious Permission of Her Majesty the Queen*

19 *Detail from Figure 90, a fragment of 'cloth of silver tissued with gold', woven with a design of looped gold thread in two sizes on a yellow silk ground with an additional weft of silver wire. Much of the metal thread has disappeared. A similar material with looped metal pile and satin ground is used for the undersleeves and forepart in Figure 18. Probably Italian, c. 1550. Victoria and Albert Museum, London (641.1883)*

The portrait of Elizabeth when princess

One early portrait of Elizabeth, in the Royal Collection, was painted when she was a girl of thirteen (Fig. 4). It is described in the inventory prepared for Edward VI in 1547 as 'A table with the picture of the ladye Elizabeth her grace with a booke in her hande her gowne like crymsen clothe of golde with workes'.[25] The fabrics are painted in minute detail; the artist has put flecks of yellow to give the effect of gold thread on the sleeves, bodice front and sides of the skirt. The 'workes', in a bold linear design, may have been cut velvet, but it is more likely that the material was of a similar weave to a surviving fragment of silk in the Victoria and Albert Museum (Fig. 17). The undersleeves and matching forepart are in very rich material with a white satin ground and raised looped pile of gold thread (Figs 18 and 19). Faint traces can still be seen of the red silk embroidery on the wrist ruffles and 'pullings out' of the white linen smock showing beneath the undersleeves. A band of white embroidery with fleurs-de-lis linked by a curvilinear design worked around the top of the smock emerges beneath the square neckline of the gown.

The portrait is a companion piece to that of her brother (Fig. 339); Sir Oliver Millar points out that both are by the same hand.[26] Sir Roy Strong suggests that the pictures are by the court painter, William Scrots, who served both Henry VIII and Edward VI.[27] The picture may have been commissioned by Henry VIII in 1546, but alternatively it might be one that Elizabeth sent to her brother at his request, with a letter in which she wrote '. . . the face, I graunt, I might wel blusche to offer, but the mynde I shal never be asshamed to present'.[28] The letter ends 'from Hatfield this 15th day of May': the year was probably 1547. It is unlikely that Edward would have asked for another picture if such a recent portrait had already been in the Royal Collection. The inscription 'Elizabetha/ [?Filia] Rex/Angliae' may originally have read 'Soror'.

Not very much is known about the exact length of periods of mourning in Royal households in the sixteenth century and customs varied in different countries. James V of Scotland and Mary of Guise spent weeks in mourning for their two sons who died in August 1541 and for Margaret Tudor who died later in the same year. However, when Mary visited the French Court in 1550 Diane de Poitiers advised her against wearing full

20 *'Queen Elizabeth I'. Panel painting by an unknown artist, c. 1571–75. By courtesy of Reading Borough Council*

mourning, although her father had died recently; a Queen might only wear mourning for her husband without damaging her dignity. Diane added, however, that Mary might wear black clothes at Court, without any explicit evidence of mourning.[29]

Elizabeth would have worn mourning black for a few weeks after her father's death at the end of January, but Edward VI's coronation was on 20 February 1547 and after that she would, no doubt, have been ready to wear her best gown for a portrait to please her brother. Unfortunately Elizabeth did not describe the clothes in which she sat for the picture in her letter, but until another portrait or perhaps a miniature of her painted at this time is discovered, it may be conjectured that this is the picture she sent to Edward. It is a good example of the type of work carried out by a painter who had all the clothes and jewels in front of him, properly mounted, to complete the work.

Three portraits of the Queen in a white gown embroidered with gold thread

Three portraits painted in the early 1570s show the Queen in what appear to be the same clothes. Comparison between them suggests that the bands of embroidery from neck to waist have been altered, although it is possible that the differences are due to artists' interpretations or restoration work.

The first portrait, at the Guildhall, Reading (Fig. 20) shows clothes carefully arranged and observed in great detail. The bodice is high-necked and fits closely. The term 'strait' is defined as narrow and tight-fitting in the sixteenth century and this style may resemble the French gown 'with a straite Bodie' made in 1562.[30] The term continues in use and may later be interchangeable with 'high bodies'.[31] There is an entry 'for alteringe and newe lyninge of a strayte bodyed Gowne of white Satten lyned with white bayes the bodyes being enlarged with white Satten' in April 1571,[32] about the time this picture was painted, but no further detail is given in the warrant. Perhaps the style might have been described as Spanish, as it is high necked, although made without hanging sleeves. Walter Fyshe is entered in the September warrant for 1572 'for making of a Spanyshe Gowne of white Satten with whole bodies and hangyng slevis with an enbrauderid garde of golde and silver and gowne lyned with blak sarceonett the bodies with canvas and buckeram and cotton in the ruffes'.[33] Here the 'whole bodies' probably means high-necked, but 'Spanyshe gown' implies that it might also have had hanging round sleeves open at the front, the 'manga redonda' familiar from the Spanish tailors' pattern books.[34] However the tabbed skirts at the waist of the bodice in Figure 20, copying men's fashions, make it seem likely that this is a doublet. Doublets for women appear to have been something of a novelty in 1574 and the term first appears in the warrants in 1575,[35] but this garment may have been an earlier gift.

From the late 1560s onwards the pleats at the waist were interlined and the skirt was worn over padded cotton rolls which gradually increased in size, giving a dome shape. The waistline rose slightly over the padding in the mid-1570s (Figs 203 and 205) still keeping the point at the front. The Reading picture was cleaned in 1977[36] and it was then discovered that there were two layers of paint on the left side of the skirt, the top one almost transparent: they are clearly visible in Figure 20. The second layer had been added a couple of years after the picture was first painted, when the panels had moved slightly. The gap was filled, probably by the original artist, and he updated the skirt to the newly fashionable line, worn over wider hip-pads.

The white satin bodice or doublet fastens down the front, left over right, with gold buttons like roses and worked buttonholes. On either side of the centre front, bordering the row of buttons, are bands of curving vines with bunches of grapes embroidered in gold thread. This design is repeated down both sides of the skirt opening at the front and on the forepart beneath. The forepart is slashed to match the doublet.

Each of the long regular slashes is bound with gold 'binding lace', which would be termed braid today. Decorative gold buttons, set alternately with diamonds and rubies, are placed between them. The armhole is bordered with a wing made of doubled strips of satin embroidered to match the front. Each strip is made up separately. The tabbed skirts are embroidered and assembled in the same way. Beneath the wing is a border cut in scallops which may be compared with one where scallop shapes have been cut away (Fig. 174). A long strip of fine white silk or cobweb lawn is caught down with jewels round the armhole, just above the wing.

The long, full sleeves are made of either very fine lawn or cypress, embroidered with daisies and roses in silver and gold thread. A gold armlet set with jewels catches the right sleeve to the arm, just below the wing, forming loose folds in the fine material. Two rather pronounced folds near the wrist on each