The Horenbout family workshop at the Tudor court, 1522–1541: Collaboration, patronage and production

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Abstract: For 500 years, the work of the Horenbout family of Flemish artists at the Tudor court (fl. 1522–1548) has played a supporting role in art histories. Foundational in the creation of the English miniature tradition and initiators of repetitive portraiture employed as a political tool, they have taken a back seat in the literature both to contemporaries like Hans Holbein and to those who came after. Yet the Horenbouts—*paterfamilias* Gheraert, daughter Susanna, son Lucas, daughter-in-law Margaret—were principal players in the visual campaigns of propaganda and self-promotion undertaken by Henry VIII, his successive queens, Cardinal Wolsey and the 5th Earl of Northumberland. Creators of many of the images and symbols that became the common currency of Tudor identity, the Horenbouts were the starting point for the emerging mask of royalty, the way in which the Tudor monarchy presented itself visually to the world. By analyzing and contextualizing a set of diverse works, some attributed to the hand of “Horenbout”, others that should be added to the catalogue, this paper examines how the family workshop created representational change, moving Tudor art from the medieval to the modern, and in the process identifying a broader pool of patrons than has yet been recognized.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Susan E. James is an independent writer and researcher who earned her Ph.D. at Cambridge University. She has written extensively in the fields of the humanities and social sciences, publishing over 40 peer-reviewed articles on various aspects of the humanities and three books on sixteenth-century English history: *Katherin Parr: The Making of a Queen* (1999), *The Feminine Dynamic in English Art, 1485-1603: Women as Consumers, Patrons and Painters* (2009, nominated for the Berger Prize), and *Women’s Voices in Tudor Wills, 1485-1603: Authority, Influence and Material Culture* (2015). Her work on identifying the long portrait of Katherin Parr (NPG 4451) in London’s National Portrait Gallery led to the relabeling of the portrait. The current article expands this research and explores new aspects of the careers of the Horenbout family of Flemish artists who established the miniature tradition at the Tudor court. “St. Mark in his Study”, *Sforza Hours, fo. 10v* (© British Library Board)

PUBLIC INTEREST STATEMENT

What did Tudor queens Anne Boleyn and Katherine Howard really look like? Now, some answers to this question may have been found, together with the names of the artists who painted them. The reign of Henry VIII produced some of England’s finest Renaissance art, not only likenesses great and small but illuminated manuscripts, wooden sculptures, and architectural designs defining the visual world of the Tudors. This article analyzes the overwhelming evidence that it was the Flemish family of painters, Gheraert, Susanna, Lucas and Margaret Horenbout, who were the originators of much of this work, designers of an entire range of production stretching from exquisite illuminations to miniature likenesses to architectural installations. Together with an analysis of select pieces revealing surprising discoveries, it also discusses new ways in which their workshop collaborated on commissions and suggests its relationship with patrons like Anne Boleyn, Cardinal Wolsey and the 5th Earl of Northumberland.
Subjects: Art & Visual Culture; Visual Arts; History

Keywords: miniatures; Flemish illumination; Hampton Court; Anne Boleyn; Cardinal Wolsey; Tudor queens; Henry VIII; Katherine Howard

Much has been written about the Horenbout (also Horenbolte/Hornebolte) family of Flemish artists who gained international acclaim during the late 15th and first half of the 16th centuries. Remembered principally for their skill in illumination, the family patriarch Gheraert (ca. 1465-c.1540/1) came originally from Ghent where he joined the painters guild on 27 August 1487 and rose to become court painter to Margaret of Austria, regent of the Netherlands (1480–1530). During his lifetime Gheraert was celebrated throughout Europe not only for his artistic skill but for his versatility, producing designs for stained glass, wrought iron, ecclesiastical robes, embroidery and tapestries, as well as creating illuminated manuscripts, maps, panel paintings, and miniatures (James, 2009, pp. 258 no. 76).

Gheraert trained three of his six children in his Ghent workshop, two of whom, Susanna (1503-c.1554) and Lucas (d.1544), went on to have successful careers at the English court. They were joined about 1525 by Lucas’ new wife, Margaret Holseywther (ca. 1504-after 1560), who, herself, had a career as a miniaturist (James, 2020, 2009, pp. 279–81). This paper seeks to identify a select group of hitherto unrecognized or controversial Horenbout commissions, to analyze their contextual importance, and to discuss new ways in which the family collaborated on these commissions. It also seeks to suggest a broader spectrum of patrons than has previously been appreciated and to examine the Horenbouts’ relationships with those patrons (Campbell & Foister, 1986, pp. 719–727; Foister, 2004a–c; James, 2020, 2009; James & Franco, 1999/2000; Kren & McKendrick, 2003, pp. 414–438).

1. Materials and methodology

The materials laid out below expand upon extensive earlier research published over the last two decades which focuses on the art of Susanna Horenbout and the discovery of the miniatures of Margaret Holseywther (James, 2020, 2009; James & Franco, 1999/2000). Most of the literature concerning the Horenbout workshop has concentrated on the family’s output as miniaturists, assigning to Lucas, erroneously in many cases, virtually all existing “Horenbout” portraits. This literature has also concentrated on royal patronage rather than investigating the pool of possible patrons that was available to the Horenbouts. Such a narrow assumption has left largely unexplored the activities of the remaining Horenbouts as artists and as innovative designers while in England. Such focus has also short-changed Lucas’ own innovations beyond the miniature. In retrospect, it can be shown that production at the Horenbout workshop marked the transition point at the Tudor court between the aesthetics of the Middle Ages and those of the Renaissance.

This article examines the multiple ways in which the Horenbout workshop established not only the miniature in England but influenced the evolution of a variety of collateral arts, including illumination, stained glass, architecture, and interior design.

Attributions of pieces under discussion have been made based on the study of a selection of existing artifacts which exhibit in their design the Horenbout imprimatur sourced from established works, such as Gheraert’s illuminations for the Sforza Hours and the funeral brass of Margaret Horenbout (nee Saunders) in All Saints Church, Fulham. Connected with that attribution is the work’s context, an examination of when and for what purpose it was created. This two-fold approach sheds light on the development of Renaissance imaging at the Tudor court and the centrality that the Horenbout workshop commanded in its visual politics. The importance of such findings both broadens and recalibrates our understanding of early Tudor art, its genesis and evolution, and the impact of Horenbout workshop production on a broad array of items that define the visual world of Tudor England.
The methodology employed in this research was necessarily circumscribed by the quarantine regulations for 2020. Fortunately, most of the works under discussion had been previously examined by the author in person during earlier research projects.

Equally fortunate, despite the closure of so many libraries during 2020, institutions such as the British Library, the National Archives, Magdalen College and Christ Church College, Oxford, the Royal Collection Trust, the Fitzwilliam Museum and numerous other organizations had all generously placed works in their collections online where it was possible not only to contrast and compare them but to enlarge them in extensive detail.

The selection of works examined was guided both by previous research and by online availability. Based on these twin tracks of analysis, the following article asks the question of whether it can be shown that numerous works beyond the miniature tradition demonstrate enough visual references and commonalities with known Horenbout works to conclude a probable Horenbout authorship and, if so, what such conclusions say not only about 16th century symbolic and representational imagery but how that imagery was used for personal pleasure, popular persuasion, and political propaganda.

2. Proposed chronology
The chronology of the Horenbout family in England from 1522 through 1528 is sparsely documented. Both Susanna and Lucas were creating miniatures for the king and queen as early as June 1522 when the miniature of Princess Mary at the age of six was painted to celebrate her betrothal to Charles V (NPG 6453). Upon her arrival in England, Susanna was assigned to the household of Catherine of Aragon where missing chamber records make it impossible to know her original title or wages. In surviving accounts from January 1533, she is listed as a gentlewoman of the queen's household and was receiving New Year's gifts from the king (L&P, 6, no. 32). One of the few remaining records of her wages dates from June–July 1540 in the account books of Anne of Cleves where Susanna is listed as a gentlewoman of the privy chamber and paid 50 shillings, equal to the salary paid to Holbein and slightly less than the 55s 6d then being paid to her brother (L&P, 15i, no. 21; TNA: E101/422/16 fo. C3). Like Lucas, who continued on the royal payroll until his death in 1544, Susanna served at court until shortly before her own death in the summer of 1554 (James, 2009, pp. 242–254).

Lucas first appears in the chamber accounts in September 1525 as “pictor maker” for the king, and by 1528 Gheraert, too, is recorded in the royal employ, remaining there through at least 1531, the year in which Lucas was promoted to the position of the king’s official painter. As there are large gaps in the surviving accounts before and after these years, an exact record of when Gheraert arrived in England and how long he worked for the king is difficult to determine. His status as an artist of international reputation would seem to conflict with his lesser monthly salary of 33s 4d, paid between October 1528 and April 1531, but rather than accepting this as an indicator of his value to the king, it seems possible that his English salary acted more as a doceur tying him to the Tudor court during absences in Flanders for intermittent periods of time. Gheraert’s contract with Margaret of Austria ended in 1517 and his work for the 5th Earl of Northumberland places him in England around 1525. Yet his work under the identity of the Master of James IV shows him back in Ghent the following year (Kren & Gay, 2003, pp. 414–28).

The funeral brass of Gheraert’s wife, Margaret Saunders, in All Saints Church, Fulham, dated 1529, may place her husband back in England once again, although it is possible this was their daughter Susanna’s work, while other examples, such as Gheraert’s miniature of the Duke of Richmond (1534–5), his proposed designs for the Chapel Royal, Hampton Court, and his signed illuminations for Anne Boleyn, dating from her time as queen, show that he was working in England as late as 1535–6. Where he died has yet to be discovered but at his death, he still held
an estate in Ghent. Gheraert’s contract with the regent of the Netherlands allowed him to live where he would as long as her commissions were given priority. What is apparent on the evidence is that, as with the regent, the Horenbouts were not exclusive to the king. While identified as official royal painters and no doubt giving primary consideration to royal commissions, they served many patrons.

All that can be said with certainty is that while the work of Susanna and Lucas appears to have been done in England, their father completed commissions in both London and Ghent between 1522 and his death nearly two decades later.

The use of the term workshop in the title of this article generally implies one manufactory in a defined physical space composed of a master, his journeymen and apprentices. For the Horenbouts, the concept of the workshop was more expansive. As a member of the queen’s chamber, Susanna would have been resident at court for part of the year. The rest of the time, at least from 1526 to 1537, she lived in a house or “capital messuage” called “Brightwell’s” on the south side of Parson’s Green in Fulham, together with her parents and her husband, John Parker. The house was large, expensive and had at least 24 acres of surrounding land attached to it (Lysons, 1810, p. 236). It was an estate meant for the wealthy and for someone of high social standing. It has been proposed that Susanna’s mother, Margaret Saunders, may also have been trained as an illuminator (James, 2009, pp. 248, 257 n. 73). Consequently, Susanna’s artistic commissions would have been executed in a setting where the skills of her father (when he was present) and possibly her mother were available if needed.

Shortly after his arrival from Flanders, her brother married illuminator Margaret Holsewyther, the English-born daughter of the king’s German-born goldsmith (Returns, 1900–07, p. 8). The couple had separate spaces for living and working. By 1534–5 Lucas and Margaret owned a tenement in Charing Cross, probably their family workshop, together with a house near St. Margaret’s, Westminster, where they lived (Auerbach, 1954, p. 50). Lucas was also granted the right to hire four foreign journeymen, indicating that his was a large and flourishing business. Although they operated from several physically distinct centers, the artistic interactions discussed below demonstrate that as a family, the Horenbouts considered themselves one contiguous family workshop.

The works examined in this paper include three illuminated manuscripts that date between 1525 and 1529, four miniatures dating from 1525–6 to 1541, illuminations done for Anne Boleyn both before and after she became queen and the 1535–6 construction of the royal chapel at Hampton Court, together with additional collateral material. Some of the works on this timeline have been given a slightly altered dating from the one that is currently en vogue. Such dating is provisional and subject to future discoveries, but what is certain is that these years of outpouring of Horenbout invention and production in England begin with Susanna.

Susanna’s artistic gifts were apparent from an early age and while she was still a teen-ager her work drew praise from no less a notable than German artist Albrecht Dürer whose own work she appeared eager to emulate. Kren and Gay have raised the possibility that Gheraert Horenbout and his family played host to Dürer when he visited Ghent in April 1520 (Kren & Gay, 2003, p. 427), and he certainly visited them in Antwerp a year later in May 1521 when he noted in his diary that, “Master Gerhardt, the miniature painter [illuminist], has a daughter about eighteen years old, called Susanna, who has illuminated a little page with a Saviour, for which I gave her 1 florin. It is a great wonder that a woman should be able to do such work” (Dürer, 1956, p. 172). Dürer, one of the most influential artists of the age, may have been captivated by Susanna’s illuminations as her style, reflected in the Wolsey manuscripts discussed below, seems to have been an homage to him. While their father’s art harkeden back to the century that had just passed, the younger Horenbouts, living where they did, could hardly help being exposed to the emerging Mannerist style championed by Dürer. In August 1521, less than three months after Dürer’s visit, Cardinal Wolsey was in Flanders as Henry VIII’s representative to conclude the Treaty of Bruges with
Horenbout’s patron, Margaret of Austria. Wolsey has been called “the greatest English art patron of his age” (Gunn, 2017). A well-known aesthete and art collector, it is impossible to imagine that the regent of the Netherlands, who owned an outstanding collection of illuminated manuscripts, Gheraert Horenbout’s recently completed Sforza Hours among them, would not have shown her collection to a man who was voraciously acquiring them.

Wolsey’s familiarity with Gheraert Horenbout’s work may have begun even earlier, and commissioning works from him or even hiring the artist himself for the English court may have been on his Flemish agenda. Already contracted to the regent, although this was near the end of that contract, it is possible that Gheraert offered instead the services of his most promising pupil, his daughter Susanna. His pride in her abilities is underscored by the inscription on the funeral brass which Gheraert, possibly in collaboration with his daughter, designed for her mother in 1529. On it, of their six children, the only one mentioned is Susanna, who is described as her mother’s crowning achievement (James & Franco, 1999/2000, pp. 90, 97–9). Hiring her would have appealed to Wolsey on several levels. She was not only a gifted artist but also a curiosity, as “it was a great wonder” that a woman could “do such work”.

Susanna appears to have had the advantage of both an artistic education in traditional Flemish illumination gained from her father and an ability to amalgamate that aesthetic with more modern artistic ideas represented by Dürer, an artist Wolsey also admired (Gunn, 2017). It was almost certainly through Wolsey’s contacts and influence that during his visit to Flanders Susanna was hired to work as an artist at the English court, and where, as Giorgio Vasari proclaimed in 1568, “she lived in honour during [Henry’s] reign” (Vasari, 1963, p. 254). As Susanna was still very young and unmarried, it would be reasonable to conclude that her brother accompanied her to England. In the event, surviving miniatures of Princess Mary, Henry VIII and Catherine of Aragon, painted between 1522 and 1527, are evidence of the siblings’ early careers under the Tudors.

One miniature by Lucas outside the circle of the royal household (Figure 1, discussed below) is identified here as Henry Percy, 5th Earl of Northumberland (1477–1527). It was painted when the earl was 48, May 1525–May 1526, and so falls within the same time frame as Lucas’ royal commissions. This miniature would have been a corollary to the collaborative creation of 18 illuminations executed for the earl during that same period by Gheraert and Lucas for what is known as the Troy Book (Royal MS 18 D II). Gheraert’s hand in this manuscript indicates that he was working in England by 1525–6. As for Susanna, evidence suggests that while at court she, too, undertook commissions beyond the royal family. These were done for her presumed patron Cardinal Wolsey. Illuminations for two manuscripts were executed for Wolsey between 1528 and

Figure 1. Henry Percy, 5th Earl of Northumberland, 1525–6 (V&A E 401–2013). Drawing of Percy's effigy (by P. Brears) of BL: Addit. MS 4513 fo. 89 v (©British Library Board).
1529, the Epistle-Lectionary (Christ Church MS 101) and the Gospel-Lectionary (Magdalen College MS Lat 223; Wolsey Manuscripts, 2021). Design motifs and patterns discussed below connect these illuminations securely to the Horenbout workshop, but the artistic choices of expression and composition evidenced suggest a hand that is not Gheraert’s but may be Susanna’s. Such a proposed chronology of work points to the conclusion that in the first eight years of the Horenbout family’s residence in England their skills were exploited by the cognoscenti at court where workshop production was commissioned not only for the royal family but also for two of England’s greatest aesthetes, Cardinal Wolsey and the 5th Earl of Northumberland.

3. *A commonality of illuminated designs and motifs*

Before turning to a discussion of the actual illuminations, it would be helpful to establish some of the design elements common to the family’s artistic output which can be isolated in the Horenbouts’ work. In order to do that, designs appearing in the 16 illuminations and two borders by Gheraert Horenbout in the *Sforza Hours* (BL: Add. MS 34,294) are used as a reference point. It should be stressed that individually these elements are not unique to the Horenbouts, but combined they form a Venn diagram of artistic vocabulary particular to the family production, acting as visual signatures on that production. Four are architectural elements and four are idiosyncrasies of lettering. The first and most common among the architectural elements is
a decorative band of repeating recessed rectangles, or inverse dentil molding, that highlights the outward face of an arch, the circumference of a dome, the trim of a support platform or bench, or a part of a column. In the Sforza Hours, this design element can be seen in folios 10 v, 61 r, 104 v and 212 v (Figures 2a, 2b, 3a). The earlier illuminator of the Sforza Hours, Giovanni Pietro Birago (ca. 1490), also employed this element on occasion (fo. 7 r), but it was the Horenbouts who made it a signature stamp on their work.

A second design common to the Horenbout output is a set of concentric ovals or circles. This motif is used architecturally, as background decoration and even fabric patterning. In illuminations from the Sforza Hours, for example, “The Presentation at the Temple” (Figure 27) and “St. Mark in his Study” (Figures 3a, 3c), concentric oval decorations highlight the capitals of the columns and appear on the frame of Mark’s seat. They form the surround of the profile portrait of Charles V (Figure 4) and the decorations on the vase lids which flank it, and as concentric circles ornament the architrave in “The Adoration of the Magi” (fo. 97 r).

A third identifying Horenbout element can be found in a pattern of floor tiles composed of a colored circle within a square, visible in folio 10 v of the Sforza Hours (Figure 3b) and varied as a lozenge within a square in folio 212 v (Figure 4). A final design element, a field of six-pointed gold stars on a deep blue ground, which initially appears on folios of the Sforza Hours painted by Birago (Figure 5 and folios 13 r and 24 r), was carried forward by Gheraert in folio 212 v (Figures 4) on the...
The recognition of such repeating design commonalities in the Sforza Hours helps to determine the relationship of later illuminations to the Horenbout workshop.
4. Alphabetic signifiers

Four benchmarks of lettering can help to further isolate the hand of individual Horenbouts. One of the most significant things that differentiates their handwriting is the way in which they drew their capital A’s. Three forms of the initial letter appear in their work, a simple Roman A (two oblique strokes with a connecting crossbar), a fancy A (two oblique strokes with a crossbar and an upper parallel crossbar at the letter’s apex, usually with ornamented ends) and third, a flourished Gothic-style A (two oblique strokes with two parallel crossbars flourished, the lower of the two drawn as a bird’s wing in the center).

The second form of the letter can be seen in the calendar illuminations attributed to Gheraert for the Spinola Hours, ca. 1510–20, (Figure 6, Getty MS Ludwig IX 18 [83. ML. 114]), and fos 6, 7, 71) and in the Wolsey manuscripts attributed below to Susanna (Figure 7). Gheraert’s lettering that survives in England, however, as evidenced by his miniature of the Duke of Richmond (Figure 8) and his monogram on The Ecclesiaste (Figure 32a, b) is simple, precise and straightforwardly Roman. The miniature of Henry VIII (Figure 9), identified in an earlier work by her monogram as Susanna’s hand, follows her father’s lead. Like his, her lettering is neat and unobtrusive, favoring the simple Roman A, the gold of the letters being laid on an underpainting of black over a dark blue ground (James, 2009, pp. 271–2).

As a young artist still experimenting during the mid-1520s, Lucas uses all three iterations of the capital A in lettering that was generally oversized, free-form and often uneven. In his miniature of the king (Figure 10), identified earlier by his monogram in the royal hat badge and a possible companion miniature to that of Catherine of Aragon (NPG 4682, 1526–7), and in the posthumous miniature of Margaret Beaufort (Private Collection, 1526–7), the lettering is messy, the inscriptions broken and uneven and the capital A’s vary (James, 2009, p. 272). Another miniature of the king by Lucas painted at nearly the same time (Figure 11) is inscribed with a Roman A with the bird’s wing crossbar appearing in the initial H. In a third contemporary example, the miniature of the Earl of Northumberland (Figure 10a), Lucas employs the form that ultimately became his signature, a flourished Gothic-style A with bird’s wing crossbar laid, unlike Susanna’s black underpaint, directly on a dark blue ground. It is the bird’s wing crossbar, evident on nearly all of Lucas’ surviving work, that marks that work as his. These are small but quite distinct differences that identify the hand of each painter.
Figure 8. Henry Fitzroy, Duke of Richmond, 1534–5 (RCIN 420019 Royal Collection Trust/© Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II 2021).

Figure 9. Henry VIII, 1526–7 (RCIN 420640 Royal Collection Trust/© Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II 2021).

Figure 10. Henry VIII, 1526–7 (RCIN 420010 Royal Collection Trust/© Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II 2021).
The second identifier used by all three Horenbouts is the Flemish N, a reversed, mirror-image capital that appears in the Sforza Hours on the inscription above St. Mark (Figure 3a) and on the baldachin over the priest in “The Presentation in the Temple” (Figure 27). This reversed N appears in other Flemish inscriptions as well, such as folio 71 of the Spinola Hours, attributed to Gheraert (Figure 6), and even in the inscription on Peter Paul Rubens’ chair at the Rubenshuis in Antwerp. It can be seen in the lettering on Susanna’s miniature of Henry VIII (Figure 12b), as well as the Fitzwilliam miniature of the king by Lucas (Figure 11). The Horenbouts also shared another form of the letter, the incomplete or slighted capital N, where the oblique stroke connecting the two uprights is painted as a thin line from one upright and does not quite meet the foot (or head) of its opposite number (Figures 10, 12a-c). This handwriting singularity appears both in the Spinola Hours (Figure 6) and in the Sforza Hours, in the inscription above the saint in “St. Mark in his Study” (Figure 3a), on the inscription embroidered on Gabriel’s robe, on the incipit of “The Annunciation” (Figure 12a), as well as in both Susanna and Lucas’ miniatures of Henry VIII in the Royal Collection (Figures 9, 10).

After Lucas’ death in the spring of 1544, when his wife Margaret Holsewyther took over control of the workshop, she continued to employ her husband’s distinctive lettering on the workshop’s production of miniatures, including the use of the Gothic A, the slighted N and the tiny idiosyncratic, star-shaped spacers that flanked them (Figure 13). The continuation of such emblematic
lettering even after Lucas’ death must be considered an early example of product branding. With few exceptions, from woodcarving in Yorkshire for the 5th Earl of Northumberland to metal working in London for Sir Ralph Felmingham to stone carving at Hampton Court for Anne Boleyn, and portraits and illuminations for the powers that be at court, Lucas “signed” all of his work with this particular and immediately recognizable lettering. Its appearance on such a variety of artifacts acted both as his trademark and signaled to the select audience of patrons, clients and potential customers who commissioned items from the Horenbouts that these were legitimate products of their workshop (James, 2020).

The third alphabetic identifier in the work of the Horenbouts is the device of the girdled letter that appears repeatedly in the Sforza Hours (Figures 14a, c), is visible in the Earl of Northumberland’s coat-of-arms in the Troy Book (Figure 20) but was used most frequently in the
Wolsey illuminations suggested as work by Susanna (Figure 14b). Here, the body of an historiated or ornamented initial letter is generally formed from stylized organic elements such as acanthus leaves or vines and then girdled by bars, belts of cameos, plain ovals or jewels, often pearls. Examples in the Sforza Hours appear both in the banderole with the incipit at the bottom of folio 10 v (Figure 14a) and in partial form at the top of folio 12 v (Figure 14c). Another instance of this usage can be seen in the initial h of the Forster letters patent, dated 28 April 1524 (Figures 15a, c), attributed to Susanna, where both the bifurcated upright and the finishing curve of the small-case h are formed from acanthus leaves and girdled with a circlet of cameos (James, 2009, pp. 275–9).

From their father both siblings, too, seem to have adopted a motif formed from a monogram, the letters of which are connected by a looped cord tied in a lovers knot. While this device was not invented by the Horenbouts, it was an integral part of their artistic repertoire (Parker & Parker, 1859, p. 108). An early illuminated example dating sometime after 1519 can be found on folio 46 r of the Benedictional of Robert de Clercq (UL: MS Nn. 4.1) by Gheraert’s occasional collaborator,
Simon Bennick (James & Franco, 1999/2000, p. 99). Gheraert, possibly in collaboration with Susanna, used a version of the form to connect a G and an M together at the bottom of the 1529 funeral brass designed for his wife, Margaret Saunders, in All Saints Church, Fulham (James & Franco, 1999, p. 90). Lucas used the same device to connect an H and a K for Henry and Katherine at the top and the bottom of the painted framing surround on the Fitzwilliam miniature of the king (Figure 11b). It is a motif that Susanna appears to have chosen as a way to flatter the cardinal by incorporating it lavishly in both of the Wolsey manuscripts. As with the architectural identifiers, these alphabetic singularities and the way in which each painter used them help to establish the various hands of the Horenbout workshop.

5. Gheraert and Lucas Horenbout and Henry Percy, 5th Earl of Northumberland

Henry Percy, 5th Earl of Northumberland, was born on 13 January 1478, the son of Henry Percy, 4th Earl of Northumberland, and his wife Maud, daughter of William Herbert, 1st Earl of Pembroke (Hoyle, 2004). A well-educated and highly cultured nobleman and one of the richest peers in England in his youth, he was “a liberal patron of such genius as [his] age produced” (Percy, 1827, p. xxi). His reputation was such that “his dress, furniture, equipage and attendance was more like that of a prince than a subject” (Jeffery, 1808, p. 18). Although he had placed his young son in Cardinal Wolsey’s household, the cardinal saw the earl’s wealth and his potential power in the north as a threat and in 1519 wrote to the king questioning the earl’s loyalty to the crown. Unpopular with Henry and deprived of the offices formerly held by his family, Percy was confined mostly to ceremonial appearances at court. He was part of the English deputation to the Field of Cloth of Gold in 1520 and in June 1525 he was in London to participate in the investiture of the king’s illegitimate son, Henry Fitzroy, as Duke of Richmond and Somerset. It is probable that his commission to Gheraert and Lucas was negotiated at that time.

Northumberland’s patronage of the Horenbouts, father and son, occurred during what has been called “a brief, but lavish revival” of investment and expenditure in the last two years of his life (Brears, 2010, p. 56). In addition to commissioning the final illumination programme for the Troy Book, he had his portrait painted (Figure 1a) by Lucas and spent expansively on two of his properties in Yorkshire, Wressle Castle and Leconfield Castle. For these, he ordered the refurbishment of the decorations in various of his private apartments, including the addition of ornate paneling, together with “a large series of Poetical Inscriptions . . . [which he] caused to be written on the Walls and Ceilings of the Principal Apartments” (Percy, 1827, p. xxii). A study of the surviving carved oak panels originally installed as the new ceiling of the Carved Chamber at Leconfield, 13 of which are now at Syon House in Middlesex, leads to the conclusion that together with their work in illuminating the Troy Book, the Horenbouts were also commissioned to create the paneling designs.

Work for the earl, however, would have begun with the illuminations for the Troy Book, a storybook with a long pedigree. Dating as far back as 1455, the Troy Book was originally created for the earl’s grandfather, the 1st Earl of Pembroke. Its principal part is a compendium of John Lydgate’s works, including his English translation (1412–20) from the Latin of Guido delle Colonne’s Historia Troiana, and from the French, Roman de Thèbes. It already contained a few earlier illuminations and the final programme of 18 folios by the Horenbouts can be divided into two groups, 16 by one artist, suggested here as Lucas, and two—“Lydgate and the Pilgrims Departing from Canterbury” (Figure 16) and “St. Michael and the Demons” (fo. 161 v)—by Gheraert (Kren, 2003, pp. 431–2). The group proposed as the work of Lucas focuses on the story of Troilus and Cressida (fos 87 r-108 v) and Lydgate’s telling of the siege of Thebes (fos 151 r-162 r).

Of the design benchmarks discussed above, two of the four appear in the Troy Book. The border of repeating rectangular indentations is richly spread across the faces of all the interior architectural elements on folio 157 v and decorates the door arch of the left-hand tower of the upper ward on folio 158 v (Figure 17). There is even a pentimento of this motif in the upper right-hand corner of this last illumination. The square floor tiles enclosing a colored circle appear on folio
Figure 16. Troy Book, “Lydgate and the Pilgrims Leaving Canterbury”, fo. 148 r (©British Library Board).

Figure 17. Troy Book, “Jocasta and Adrastus”, fo. 158 v (© British Library Board).

160 r, and although the gold stars on a blue ground in the skies of folio 66 v are from an earlier hand, as with Birago’s work in the Sforza Hours, the image would have been familiar to both Horenbouts. Thomas Kren has analyzed more esoteric aspects of the work that reinforce the Horenbout attribution, including “the style and technique” between “Lydgate and the Pilgrims” (Figure 16) and “Christ Nailed to the Cross” in the Sforza Hours (fo. 12 v), together with the feature of small colored stones strewn under the hooves of the pilgrims’ horses in Figure 16 that reproduce those in multiple images both by Birago and by Gheraert in the Sforza manuscript (Kren, 2003, pp. 431–2).

Another interesting aspect of the proposed Horenbout illuminations is the inclusion of personal portraits. When Gheraert executed his work for the Sforza Hours, he added personal portraits of Margaret of Austria as St. Elizabeth (Figure 2a), her nieces (fo. 104 v) and her nephew, Charles V, in
a border decoration (Figure 4), a not uncommon practice among illuminators for illustrious clients (Bovey, 2007, pp. 124–6). Two additional proposed instances of this practice in the Sforza Hours personal to Gheraert can be found in the illuminations of St. Mark (Figures 3a, 18a) and “The Raising of Lazarus” (Figure 18b). The carefully written inscription on the crossbeam above Mark’s head, ‘NRVAS: FNQARVIMI: 1519’, has been suggested as an encoded Horenbout signature on the work (Debriel, 1895, p. 35). If this is true, and it has yet to be deciphered or proven, it might also be considered that the distinctive portrait of Mark at his desk is in fact a self-portrait of the artist at the age of 54. It is also suggested that Gheraert’s inclusion of the witness to the raising of Lazarus, carefully individualized, dressed in contemporary Flemish clothing and bearing a close resemblance to Mark, himself, may in fact be a portrait of his prize pupil, the 18-year-old Susanna.

In the Troy Book another personal portrait seems to be intended and one appearing to be an unflattering caricature of Northumberland’s nemesis Cardinal Wolsey. Compared with known portraits of Wolsey, particularly what is probably a drawing of him by Holbein (Getty 84.GG.93), the cardinal’s features stand out clearly. On folio 148 r (Figure 16), attributed to Gheraert, Wolsey appears among the pilgrims leaving Canterbury. In the place of the Benedictine monk Lydgate, who should be wearing the black habit of his order, Wolsey rides out instead in his distinctive cardinal’s robes. While the rest of the Canterbury pilgrims ride horses, the cardinal rides an ass, a conceit the Earl of Northumberland would no doubt have enjoyed.

Figure 18. A & b. Sforza Hours, details of “St. Mark in his Study” and “The Raising of Lazarus”, fos 10 v & 257 v (© British Library Board).
The connection among all of these images to Flemish illumination in general is obvious. Flemish crow-stepped gables rise above Trojan and Theban walls (fos 87 r, 158 v), and the cathedral tower of Canterbury behind Wolsey/Lydgate and the departing pilgrims owes far more to the single soaring spire of the cathedral of Our Lady in Antwerp than to the square solidity of Canterbury’s twin towers which Gheraert may never have seen. The connection to the Horenbout workshop in particular is also demonstrable. The signature scatter of pebbles on the ground, so prominent in Birago’s illuminations for the Sforza Hours and later emulated by Gheraert (Figure 2a), can be seen in both folio 156 r by Lucas and folio 148 r by Gheraert (Figure 16). It is evident that Gheraert’s two proposed illuminations for the Troy Book are substantially more sophisticated than the remaining 16 paintings which show a lively but less mature style with pop-eyed faces, shaky perspective and shifting proportions drawn by a less refined hand (Figure 17). Although Susanna has been suggested as their creator, it is difficult to imagine Albrecht Dürer enthusing over such work as “a wonder” or Lodovico Guicciardini calling it skill “beyond believing” (Backhouse, 1997, p. 229). The contrast with the Wolsey manuscripts discussed below proposed as representative of Susanna’s abilities would rather appear to demonstrate why it was she and not her brother whom Dürer praised and why it was she who was initially hired for the English court.

Finer than any of his proposed illuminations in the Troy Book and tying Lucas firmly to the Northumberland project is the miniature that he painted at the same time of his employer, the earl (Figure 1a). This miniature inscribed with Lucas’ distinctive lettering and signature Gothic A, and in a style recognizable similar to his miniatures of Henry VIII, shows the earl a year or so before his death on 19 May 1527 wearing a costume very like that described in his wardrobe accounts as “a gown of velvet furred with budge” (L&P, 4, no. 3378). Gheraert’s work for the Troy Book harkens back to earlier images identifiable from the Sforza Hours while the suggested work by Lucas shows an enthusiastic but less polished adaptation of the Flemish illuminating tradition (Kren, 2003, p. 432). Nowhere does the Dürer influence appear. The miniature of Northumberland, however, presents Lucas at his best, demonstrating a more capable delicacy of line and the ability to produce a recognizable and sympathetic portrait.

In addition to the programme of illuminations for the Troy Book and the miniature of their patron, the third project that the Horenbouts appear to have undertaken for Northumberland was the design work for the carved oak paneling used in the redecoration of the Carved Chamber of Leconfield Castle. Brears suggests a date of 1514 for the work, calling the inscribed paneling old-fashioned, an impression made by Horenbout illumination patterns dating from a decade or more earlier (Brears, 2010, p. 87). Yet, an exact match between the carvings created for Leconfield (Figure 19) and the illumination of Northumberland’s coat-of-arms in the Troy Book, (Figure 20), suggested here as the work of Lucas, show initials with notched, girdled uprights and girdled curves, making the Horenbout attribution reasonably secure. These also match exactly the drawing of the coat-of-arms in the earl’s household book, maintained through at least 1525 (Longstaffe, 1860, p. 228).

The carving on the Leconfield panels, featuring lovers knots, winged cupid heads and concentric circles enclosing a dot, a motif Brears calls a ringed-pellet design, all conform to the Horenbout artistic canon, as does the distinctive lettering with its slighted N and in particular Lucas’ signature Gothic A (Brears, 2010, p. 87). The formation of the uprights with their “bullet hole” notches at the ends and the “bullet holes” in the stems of the letters are the same decorative device used in the lettering for the royal monograms and armorial plaques at Hampton Court and Henry VIII’s monogram in the Tower of London, discussed below. The combination of these elements offer evidence supporting the argument that, in addition to illumination, part of the Earl of Northumberland’s commission to the Horenbouts included designs for the Carved Chamber.
6. Susanna Horenbout and Cardinal Wolsey
Not long after her father and brother completed their commission for Northumberland, Susanna seems to have embarked on a project for Cardinal Wolsey, the illuminations for the Epistle-Lectionary (Christ Church MS 101) and Gospel-Lectionary (Magdalen College MS Lat 223) commissioned between 1528 and 1529. These years at the end of his life were particularly fraught ones for the cardinal, who was caught in the crosshairs of the king’s efforts to force the papacy to agree to an annulment of his marriage with Catherine of Aragon. Although it has been postulated that these illuminations were done by Flemish artists on the Continent (Morrison, 2003, pp. 503–10), they show quite clearly the hand of the Horenbout workshop from the crow-stepped gables of ancient Bethlehem to the parrot-colored wings of angels to the ubiquitous flights of distant birds visible as well in the skies of the Troy Book (fos 87 r, 108 v). And on folio 40 r of the Epistle-Lectionary (Figure 21), tucked into a crowd of the Blessed, flanking the pope wearing a blue cope decorated with Brears’ ringed-pellet design, are the personal portraits on the left of Wolsey, supported by St. Lawrence, patron of the church in Ipswich where he was baptized, and the
king, supported by St. George, together with Catherine of Aragon in a red gown standing next to St. Barbara, patron saint of Aragon, on the right. These identifiable likenesses argue an artist who must not only have been personally familiar with all three but also with the saints who were special to them.

The inclusion of illuminations of two other English saints special to Wolsey in the manuscripts, St. Frideswide and St. Thomas Becket (Epistle-Lectionary, fo. 12 r; Gospel-Lectionary, fos 10 v, 14 v), also points to direct personal knowledge. The shrine of St. Frideswide in the suppressed Oxford priory dedicated to her was intended to be a fixture in Wolsey’s foundation of Cardinal College, to be built on the site of the priory. Thomas Becket, Wolsey’s personal patron, appears both separately and with the cardinal in the Gospel-Lectionary (fo. 40 v). His importance to Wolsey is also evidenced by his appearance with the cardinal in a vidimus for a stained glass window, possibly intended for the never completed Cardinal College chapel, and on the 25 May 1529 letters patent for the founding of the college (Figure 54a).

Albrecht Dürer, who was in the habit of bestowing gifts of his prints—“Dined with the treasurer, Herr Lorenz Sterk . . . I have given him a whole set of prints. I also gave a whole set to Herr Adrian, the Antwerp town orator”—recorded his visit with and approval of Susanna Horenbout and her work in 1521. The artistic influence of his “Small Passion” cycle of woodcuts published in 1511, which may well have been owned by the Horenbout family, is apparent in the Wolsey manuscripts, most strikingly in those like the “The Last Supper” (fo. 36 r) in the Gospel-Lectionary with the fainting form of John clasped in the arms of Jesus and the distinctive face of the saint standing behind him (Hanna & Rundle, 2017; Neagu, 2017). As mentioned above, it may have been Susanna’s very use of Dürer models that sparked the artist’s enthusiastic approval of her work.

The distinguishing hallmarks of the Horenbout workshop laid out above are abundantly spread throughout both manuscripts. Multiple examples appear of the girdled letter (Figures 14b, 22b-c) (Epistle-Lectionary fos 3 r, 9 v, 23 r, 25 v, 27 r, 45 r; Gospel-Lectionary fos 7 r, 15 v, 19 r-v, 37 r, 43 r), the border of repeating recessed rectangles (Figure 22a) (Epistle-Lectionary fos 4 v, 10 r, 13 v, 27 r, 32 r, 33 v; Gospel-Lectionary fos 19 r, 28 v, 32 v, 38 r, 39 r), the square floor tiles with enclosed circles (Epistle-Lectionary fos 15 r, 23 r), the concentric ovals or circles (Epistle-Lectionary fos 1 v, 4 v, 10 r, 40 r, 43 r; Gospel-Lectionary fos 40 r, 41 v) and the gold stars on a deep blue ground (Gospel-Lectionary fos 10 r, 11 r, 35 v; Epistle-Lectionary fos 24 v, 30 v, 32 v, 39 r). The quality of the work, particularly in each exquisitely rendered capital letter, combined with a color palette that includes the sublime greens, blues and turquoises of the Sforza Hours, an ox blood red used to
shade folds of turquoise and a singular use of delicate gold highlighting (Figures 27 & 28, left-hand figures) also conform to the Horenbout output.

Another technique visible in the Wolsey manuscripts that was inherited by both Horenbout siblings from their father is a stippling effect that adds depth and texture to a two-dimensional surface. Birago, too, used this technique in the Sforza Hours (fo. 7 r).

Under magnification on folio 10 v of the Sforza Hours (Figure 3b) this stippling can be seen on the circular sections of the floor tiles, on folio 41 r on the band of blue lining Gabriel’s cloak, and on folio 133 v highlighting the Virgin’s robes.

In the Troy Book, it has been used liberally in the illumination of Northumberland’s coat-of-arms (Figure 20). In folios 7 v, 15 v (Figures 14b, 15a) and 25 v (Figure 22b) of the Epistle-Lectionary it highlights the background of an initial, while on folio 13 v it covers the small blue pillow at the back of Virgin’s chamber (Figure 23a). On folios 19 v, 26 v, 34 v (Figure 22c) and 47 of the Gospel-Lectionary it provides the background for the girdled capital letter I and on folio 44 r for the capital S.

Other commonalities between the Sforza Hours, the Horenbout miniatures and the Wolsey manuscripts include the use of a distinctive Omega-shaped mark of omission (Figure 23a-c), used by all three Horenbouts, as well as a star-shaped spacer used to separate letters (Figure 55a, b, d, e). Additionally, there is the similarity of design in the divine doves messaging the word of God (Figure 24a & b) and the striking similarity of delineation between the angels with their Cross-crowned diadems in the Wolsey manuscripts, Gheraert’s illumination of the Archangel Michael in the Troy Book and Margaret Saunders’ funeral brass at All Saints, Fulham (Figure 25a-d). These complimentary diadems crowning flyaway hair in all four iterations show a singularity of imagery,
together with cloaks fastened with similar round brooches. The front of the jeweled bands of the diadem in the Troy Book (Figure 25b) and of the left-hand angel on the funeral brass (Figure 25c) are studded with an identical pattern of pearls. There is also a definite relationship, too, between the fleshy features of the Wolsey Gabriel (Figure 25a) and Margaret’s right-hand guardian angel (Figure 25d), suggesting once again that Susanna may have contributed to the design of her mother’s memento mori.

Other repeating usages between the Sforza Hours and the Wolsey manuscripts include the “fleshy older male with large jaws” who appears in both crucifixions of St. Andrew (Kren & Gay, 2003, pp. 428, Sforza Hours, fo. 189 v, Epistle-Lectionary, fo. 1 r) and the recurring image of a piper at the Nativity, bagpipes tucked under his arm, present at the manger on folio 4 v of the Epistle-Lectionary and accompanying the shepherds on folio 91 r of the Sforza Hours. This particular image, which appears occasionally in Flemish illuminations, is an iteration of an Italian folk tradition that the zampogna or double-chantered pipes were played by shepherds at the Nativity.
Early on Gheraert was suggested as Wolsey’s illuminator and the striking similarities between the Wolsey ornamented capital letters and those known to be by Gheraert in The Ecclesiaste (below) are evidence of an intimate artistic relationship. Yet when the Wolsey narrative illuminations are compared side by side with those of the same scenes by Gheraert in the Sforza Hours—for instance, “The Presentation in the Temple” (Figure 27, Sforza Hours; Figure 28, Epistle-Lectionary;
Gospel-Lectionary fos 12 r, 13 v) or “The Adoration of the Magi” (Sforza Hours fo. 97 r; Epistle-Lectionary fo. 10 r; Gospel-Lectionary fo. 12 r)—there is a distinct difference in composition and draftsmanship. Two examples demonstrate this. Gheraert’s madonnas have sweet, serene faces with full rosebud mouths while those in the Wolsey manuscripts have pinched, anxious faces with high foreheads and are often cross-eyed. When Gheraert paints foliage he uses a wash of luminous greens overlaid by dots of darker color to indicate leaves. The Wolsey illuminator has a freer brush, using the wash itself to create the leaves with brown and black lines stroked through to indicate branches (Figure 26a-d).

The naturalism depicted in the borders of the Wolsey manuscripts, decorated with botanic specimens and closely observed fauna, continues the Flemish illuminating traditions represented by Gheraert’s artistic canon as do the pastoral pleasantries that fill the backgrounds of so many of the exquisitely produced tiny scenes. This quiet staging stands in marked contrast to the visual performance of the Christian narrative shown in the more dramatic, Mannerist style represented by Dürer. Gheraert’s illuminations depict the chronicles of Christianity as set pieces, presented with a formal inevitability that places the narrative firmly in the past while the Wolsey manuscripts convey a nervous dynamism that draws the story into an emotional and recognizable present. The tension between these two styles in the Wolsey illuminations is the pivot point of artistic change where the stoicism of the medieval moves into a more agitated Renaissance creating an uneasy amalgam of images marking the transition from the old way of seeing to the new.

Liberally inserted in the borders of both manuscripts and, based on their usage in other earlier Horenbout works, such as Figure 11, another indication of a Horenbout hand, is the device of the corded monogram of Thomas Wolsey, “TC” for “Thomas Cardinalis” in the Epistle-Lectionary, and “TW” for “Thomas Wintoniensis” or “Thomas, Bishop of Winchester” in the Gospel-Lectionary (Willoughby, 2017, pp. 125–6). Some of these appear with girded uprights and tied with lovers knots (Figure 29a & b). The scribal hand in the texts is that of Wolsey favorite Pieter Meghen and
the current identification of the illuminator is the “Master of Cardinal Wolsey” (Morrison, 2003, pp. 503–7; Neagu, 2017). Yet it appears more than possible that the master may in fact be a mistress, Wolsey’s putative protégée, Susanna Horenbout.

A number of factors connect the illuminations directly to Susanna, two are techniques she learned from her father. One is the use of black underpainting to highlight initials limned in gold (Figure 30a-c). Related to this is a second technique, the use of a distinctive red underpainting evident in her illumination of the 1524 Forster letters patent (Figure 31a-b, James, 2009, pp. 275–6). This presents the primary element outlined or purfled in black ink and set against a deep red shadow creating a three-dimensional effect. While a variety of deeper colors were used in the two manuscripts to create shadows, the red underpainting, defined as it is by the Forster letters patent as characteristic of Susanna, is special. Examples can be found on multiple folios of the Epistle-Lectionary (for instance, Figures 14b, 22b-c and fos 1 r, 4 v, 19 r, 27 r), as well as the Gospel-Lectionary (for instance, Figure 29a and fos 10 v, 12 r, 28 v, 32 r, 40 v).
The same approach is used prominently in the Spinola Hours (1510–20) whose principal illuminator has been identified as Gheraert Horenbout (Figure 6). As a technique, she would have learned in her father’s workshop it is another clue suggesting that it was Susanna who produced the later illuminations for the cardinal.

Traditionally, it has been theorized that the Wolsey manuscripts were intended as a gift to his planned foundation of Cardinal College, Oxford. More recently, however, based on their contents, James Carley has proposed that they were actually intended for Wolsey’s personal use, a conclusion supported by the imagery discussed above which was so intimately connected to the cardinal (Carley, 2017). Such an assumption stresses the strong personal relationship that Susanna must have had with Wolsey, that he would choose her from among the artists available to him to illuminate manuscripts for his own private devotions. This close relationship and Susanna’s work for Wolsey came to an abrupt end with Wolsey’s fall shortly before the final completion of the illuminations for the Gospel-Lectionary as can be seen from incompletions in the text. For instance, on folio 27 v of the earlier Epistle-Lectionary, the inscription on the cross reads “INRI” while its later companion piece, folio 32 v in the Gospel-Lectionary, reads only “I” with the rest of the space left blank.

7. The Horenbout Workshop and Anne Boleyn
As a very young girl, Henry’s second queen, Anne Boleyn, spent a year (1513–1514) at the court of Margaret of Austria, patron and employer of Gheraert Horenbout, before moving to the French court of François I. Although Gheraert’s official contract with Margaret began in 1517, it would have been impossible for Anne, whose love of Flemish art is a matter of record, not to have been aware of Horenbout’s work. To quote Anne’s biographer, Eric Ives, she “would have known Margaret’s collection of illuminated manuscripts” and they would have given “Anne a taste that lasted for the rest of her life” (Ives, 2004, p. 24). When Anne returned to England in 1522, she almost certainly carried a knowledge and appreciation of Horenbout art with her, for as early as 1526, long before she became queen, she had begun a personal patronage relationship with both Gheraert and Lucas that would last until her death.

One of the earliest indications of this relationship is documented in a letter written to Anne by the king in July 1527. In it, the king noted that he had sent her “my picture set in a bracelet, with the whole device you already know” (Ives, 2004, pp. 87–8). At this point in time, the only royal miniaturists at the court known to be producing pictures small enough to be set in jewelry were the Horenbouts. Anne’s familiarity with and preference for their work led to a host of commissions for illuminations, architectural decorations and devices, as well as miniature portraits that date from the last decade of her life, 1526–36. That this was so can be proven by a manuscript illuminated for her by Gheraert after she became queen, the only extant illumination by him.
bearing his signature. Beautifully wrought and known as The Ecclesiaste (Percy MS 465), Gheraert has signed his monogram, “G H”, in the background of the historiated letter on folio 34 r. This letter, misinterpreted as the number 6 or a Greek sigma, can be compared with the G used at the bottom of Margaret Saunders’ funeral brass which shows a similar formation (Figure 32a-c; Ives, 2004, pp. 240–1).

The Ecclesiaste, a text in French and English formally entitled, Annotations Upon the Ecclesiastes, is, according to Ives, “the most splendif of the illuminated manuscripts produced for Anne that combined Flemish-style illumination and a French text.” Like the Wolsey manuscripts, it contains both small illuminated initial letters and eight larger, 40-mm-square ones, all “superbly executed” (Ives, 2004, p. 241). With its historiated capital letters, an E with a twisted bannerole shaded in gold along its length ending in a green bar of Horenbout recessed rectangles (Figures 32a and 33b, f), and the Horenbout mark of omission above the “IHS” (Figure 33d, e), the work is so closely related to that of the Wolsey manuscripts, including the same brilliant blue and dusty rose backgrounds, gold stippling (Figure 33a, b, c, d) and girdled letters growing from acanthus leaves, it would be forgivable to judge them as coming from the same hand. Yet Gheraert’s signature on the work makes The Ecclesiaste unarguably his.
An examination of other works owned or commissioned by Anne show contributions by both Gheraert and Lucas. Anne’s coat-of-arms on the frontispiece of Le Pasteur Evangélique (BL: MS Royal 16E XIII) may also be by Gheraert. The choice of colors, the quality of the draftsman with the queen’s crowned falcon on his tree-rooted stump repeating the form on folio 23 r of The Ecclesiaste, and the acanthus leaves girdled by Tudor roses sprouting acorns, all forming a wreath trimmed with knotted ribbons, would seem to signal the hand of Gheraert. But it was Lucas, who produced the majority of surviving Horenbout work for the queen. Work done between September 1532 and January 1533 for The Pistellis and Gospelles for the LII Sondayes in the Yere (BL: Harl. 6561) with a full-page illumination of the Crucifixion and illuminations of Anne Boleyn’s coat-of-arms as Anne, Marchioness of Pembroke, is almost certainly by Lucas, quoting the patterns of his father but without the refinement of line so characteristic of the elder Horenbout (Figure 34a-c).
The courtship of Anne Boleyn by the king lasted seven years and stretched the tempers of all involved. The would-be queen’s defiance of courtly criticism before finally achieving her goal of a royal marriage received additional public airing when at the end of 1530 she had the livery coats of her servants embroidered with the motto: “Ainsi sera, groigne qui groigne” or “It will be thus, grumble who will” (Ives, 2004, p. 141). Another set of illuminations created by Lucas for Anne about this time are those for a psalter that Anne commissioned between 1529 and 1532. Two full-page illuminations, one Anne’s coat-of-arms on the frontispiece and one a complicated monogram of Henry and Anne’s initials facing Psalm 110, are included together with nine historiased capitals with Anne’s arms in miniature (Figure 35a & b). The psalter is in French and first surfaced at a Paris book sale in 1976. The text has been attributed to a scribe in Rouen or possibly Paris and the illuminations to the Master of the Ango Hours (Psalter of Anne Boleyn, 2000). But an examination of the work, particularly of the monogram facing Psalm 110 (Figure 35a), suggests instead the hand of Lucas Horenbout. In addition to his signature Gothic A, set in a frame that features the Horenbout design of repeating recessed rectangles, the armorial shield repeats motifs from the Wolsey manuscripts by presenting two putti against a background of corded lovers knots.

A close comparison of the draftsmanship of the putti with the illuminations attributed to Lucas in the Troy Book (Figure 36a-d), all exhibiting pop eyes and sketchy proportions suggests that although Anne’s psalter may have been custom-made in France, the illuminations were added later to the work by the artist to whom she had given her patronage, Lucas Horenbout. The work shows the younger Horenbout at his most impatient or perhaps most pressed for time. While the painted frames in both full-page illuminations have been drawn with holes in them to loop through strings of garlands, only the frontispiece displays that decoration. A pentimento of the right leg of
the putto in Figure 35a is still awkwardly visible while the ground of green wash in Figure 35b runs right across the toes of the left-hand putto. A hurried production, perhaps, but more significant for Anne is the way in which Lucas has illuminated the monogram facing Psalm 110. While the king’s monogram “HR/LS”, interpreted by Ives as “Henricus Rex, liege souverain” (Ives, 2004, p. 242), fills the middle of the armorial shield, one of Anne’s emblems, the black lion of Rochfort, lays claim to the capital R by nibbling on its foot, and a thin line connecting the bottom of the R to the top of the L creates a Flemish mirror-image N. At a glance the initial H all but disappears leaving Anne’s initial A, in Lucas Horenbout’s singular style, placed in a superior position presenting a monogram that may alternatively be read as “AR/SL” or “Anna Regina Sovereign Lady”. This formula of “Anna Regina Sovereign” appears among other proposed Horenbout designs for Anne discussed below.

Illuminated books were not the only works created for Anne by the Horenbouts. Of the body of miniatures attributed to them in England, nearly all are of known members of the royal family, the Earl of Northumberland being one exception. Among these are the portraits of Henry’s various queens. Those of Catherine of Aragon are certainly the earliest and evidence shows that Henry’s first queen, as with his later ones, presented small portraits of herself to members of her chamber (TNA: PROB 11/24/153). As with Northumberland, Anne’s employment of the Horenbout workshop, besides illuminations and architectural embellishments, included orders for her likeness, and at least one by Gheraert (Figure 37) and one by Lucas (Figure 38) survive. Holbein, too, drew the queen (Figure 39, BM: 1975, 0621.22).

The identification of these portraits as Anne Boleyn is supported by two factors, one that the Horenbouts were enjoying Anne’s personal patronage long before she became queen and two, the fact that three of them survive. If this early in the development of Tudor portraiture three extant images of the same woman by three official royal artists exist, two in her employ, it is difficult to know who else she might be (James, 2009, pp. 123–8). They were, as so many likenesses were in the 16th century, part of a broader commission intended for both personal and political purposes. Portraiture, especially among the royal family, was generally not a sentimental act of remembrance but a political tool. Like Henry’s gift to Anne of his 1527 portrait set in a bracelet, miniatures were a way to engage on a personal level, but by wearing the gift publicly, giver and receiver made a political statement. Royal likenesses provided the means to message power and for Henry’s second queen, as with his first, the Horenbouts created the vehicles for that message.

Two miniatures of Anne survive but it would not be beyond the realm of possibility to assume that there were once many more. There is only one securely identified miniature, now at Sudeley Castle, of Anne’s successor on the throne, Kateryn Parr, yet from that queen’s chamber accounts
we know that she ordered dozens of them to pass out to friends and political allies (James, 2009, pp. 142–51). Anne appears to have applied the same strategy in her use of portraiture. By wearing the bracelet bestowed by the king, she announced her enhanced agency to the Tudor court and by commissioning work from the king’s three most prestigious royal painters to celebrate that enhanced agency, she engaged in an exercise of public relations that announced “Ainsi sera” to one and all. Her expanded prerogative also included additional forms of personal branding, not only in the embroidered jackets of her minions but, after her marriage, in the many monograms and coats-of-arms decorating the emerging architectural installations in which she and the king were involved. Hampton Court and King’s College Chapel, Cambridge, discussed below, show examples of this.

One unresolved question regarding the two Horenbout miniatures is the year in which they were painted. There has been on-going controversy between two groups of historians over Anne’s birth date. The first group believes she was born in 1501 on the basis of a letter written by her from the

Figure 38. Anne Boleyn by Lucas Horenbout, 1526–32 (© Royal Ontario Museum, 978.357).

Figure 39. Anne Boleyn by Hans Holbein, ca. 1533 (© BM: 1975, 0621.22).
court of Margaret of Austria in August 1514. These historians believe that in order to have written the letter Anne must have been at least 13 at the time, 12 being the official age required for a demoiselle d’honneur. It should be noted, however, that there were exceptions to this rule. Anne Boleyn’s English contemporary at Margaret’s court, Anne Brandon, daughter of Charles Brandon, future Duke of Suffolk, was born in 1506–7 (Warnicke, 1989, pp. 12–13). Other historians have stuck to a previously suggested birth date of 1507, one attested to by Mary Tudor’s lady-in-waiting, Jane Dormer, Duchess of Feria, and the antiquarian William Camden (see Gareth Russell’s excellent analysis of both positions and their champions, 2010). It is not intended here to enter the lists in defense of either date but as the miniature of Anne by Lucas records her age as 25, two very different scenarios emerge when considering the two portraits.

Anne returned home from France and joined the English court at roughly the same time as the Horenbouts themselves, 1522. By 1523 she was interacting with two Horenbout patrons when she briefly entered into an engagement with the son of the 5th Earl of Northumberland, an engagement that was abruptly ended by Cardinal Wolsey in January 1524. During the period from 1525 to 1526, the years the Horenbouts were producing miniatures of Henry and Catherine of Aragon, the king was actively pressuring Anne to become his mistress and by late summer 1527 it was widely known that the king was seeking to shed his first wife in favor taking a second. If Anne was born in 1501, then the production of these two Horenbout miniatures commissioned by her from the official royal painters were produced in 1526. This was the very year that Henry, himself, publicly proclaimed his passion at the February Shrovetide joust wearing the motto Declare ie nos (“Declare I dare not”). The distribution of an array of Anne’s small portraits at the same time would have acted both as a personal answer to the king and as an open announcement to the court of her ambition to become queen. This scenario puts the Horenbouts squarely into the Boleyn camp as early as 1526, turning the male portion of the workshop into Anne’s publicity agency.

The second scenario, based on a birth date of 1507, places the miniatures in 1532 just before Anne married Henry and became queen in January 1533. While this is certainly possible, the preponderance of evidence from surviving illuminated work done by the Horenbouts for Anne, almost all of it before her marriage, as well as the symbolism in the miniatures, themselves, favors the earlier date. In Gheraert’s portrait, Anne wears an English gable headdress of gold brocade with pinned up lappets, long under-lappets trimmed in lace and hanging veil. Cut low to expose the embroidered edge of her shift, cross-stitched with black thread, her gown is styled with a square-necked bodice of black cloth studded with alternating gold buttons and pearls with sheer lawn insets at the shoulders. She wears a gold brooch that emulates a Tudor rose, mounted with a cameo carved with what appears to be a figure enthroned, as well as two chains, one of silver and one fashioned from tiny, linked daisies or marguerites made of gold with a small pearl in the center of each. To the Tudors, the daisy represented innocence or virginity, an interesting symbol for Anne to choose at a time when the king was pressing her to become his mistress. Tucked into her headdress is a sprig of yellow wallflowers (erysimum) whose meaning in the Tudor language of flowers is “perseverance”, a chivalric virtue. This floral symbol is particularly significant as Lady Perseverance was the role which Anne played at her first court pageant in March 1522 upon her return to England from France and would therefore have been the first time she was brought to the king’s attention (Ives, 2004, p. 37).

Lucas’ portrait is a bit stiffer and less life-like, yet it is so similar that it would be easy to take it for a copy except for subtle differences in costume, jewelry and headdress. Anne’s under-lappets are now studded with gold buttons, and her shift is fringed with metallic thread. The brooch appears to be identical, but the chains are slightly different and a pendant of gold set with pearls and turquoise has been added. Lucas, too, has inscribed the portrait with his signature Gothic A and his slighted N, giving Anne’s age as 25. The significance of these two miniatures demonstrates several things, one being, that as with her successors, Anne Boleyn understood the use of the image as a statement of power and was fluent in the symbolism that conveyed that message.
The miniatures also underscore her patronage connection to the Horenbouts, a relationship that would continue throughout her short-lived time on the throne.

A third miniature of a possible Tudor queen bearing a relationship to those of Anne is one of two portraits previously proposed as the teen-aged Katherine Howard (Figure 40, James & Franco, 1999/2000, pp. 123–5). The treatment of the figure with its signature matchstick arms is in the style of another painter in the Horenbout workshop, Margaret Holseyther (James, 2020). Yet it is noticeable that it is inscribed with Lucas Horenbouts trademark Gothic A and slighted N punctuated by distinctive small gold spacers shaped like hollow stars. Holseyther’s use of this characteristic lettering is again proof that the Horenbouts employed it as a product trademark of their workshop.

If the miniature is of Katherine Howard, it would have been painted in the spring of 1541. It mimics the Boleyn miniatures by posing the queen in a black gown whose bodice is trimmed with gold buttons and the edge of whose shift is finished with metallic fringe.

She is shown wearing a sprig of oxils (primula elatior) rather than wallflowers, a flower that at this period was particular to East Anglia, the seat of the Howards, and rather fittingly symbolized bewitchment in the Tudor language of the flowers. Caught in an oval gold brooch, rimmed with rubies and set with a carving of jet or onyx, the oxils are paired with a cluster of acorns symbolizing England’s royal oak, Henry VIII, a symbol the Horenbouts used in several illuminations for Anne Boleyn. Another noteworthy aspect of this miniature besides the continued patronage of the Horenbout workshop by Henry’s successive queens is that the unfortunate fifth of that number appears to be wearing the same chain of golden marguerites as her cousin and predecessor is wearing in Gheraert’s miniature, a circumstance which suggests a descent of royal jewelry from Anne to Katherine in the same manner that Katherine’s jewelry later became the property of Henry’s sixth queen Kateryn Parr (Figure 41a & b).

Illuminations and portraits were not the only works that the Horenbouts created for Anne Boleyn. Her initials, ciphers and devices appeared everywhere on the architecture that was being constructed during her time as queen. The monogram “ARSL”, mentioned above in the queen’s psalter, appears in variant forms in the monograms on the choir screen at King’s College Chapel, Cambridge (Figure 42b). Carved between 1533–6, the choir screen has been called “the purest work in the Early Renaissance style in England” (Pevsner, 1954, p. 87). Henry’s name, inscribed in broken blocks as “HENR CVS 8’, reiterates Lucas’ broken inscription “HENR ICVS OCT AVVS” on his miniature of the king (Figure 10).
Henry and Anne’s initials in the Horenbout style as “HRexAS” or “Henricus Rex Anna Sovereign”, joined by a lover’s knot decorate the screen as do the solo initials “RA” or “Regina Anna” under an imperial crown (Churchill, 2014a, pp. 1–2). The Horenbout decorative band of recessed rectangles arches above the head of the Green Man in bay 5 (Figure 42a). Anne’s claim to elevated status before she had even become Anna Regina is reflected in her personal psalter, and afterward, myriad architectural announcements of her royal agency were incorporated at every opportunity, such as in the king’s expansion of Hampton Court.

Three applied monograms of Henry and Anne survive at Hampton Court, one in wood in the Great Hall (Figure 43a) and two in stone in the Anne Boleyn Gateway (Figure 43b & c). The one in wood on the screen of the Great Hall shows the A overlaying the H, carved in Lucas Horenbout’s signature style with a crossbar at the A’s apex and a bird’s wing crossbar beneath. Those carved in stone show the initial letters standing side by side joined by a corded lovers knot. All are quintessentially Horenbout forms with the initial letters having notched ends and “bullet hole” piercings, and all are emblematic of the Horenbout workshop. The most startling of these examples of Anne’s announcement of royal privilege is the form in Figure 43c. Here in a complete break with tradition, the A precedes the H, whose crossbar has been turned upside down. The presumption is startling. Henry would hardly have sanctioned such a form nor is it likely those who designed and carved it made such a revolutionary choice. The decision for the design must lie with the queen, herself, “groigne qui groigne”. Only in one other public space, the repainted right-hand plaque before the door of Hampton Court’s royal chapel, does the
initial of the queen precede that of the divinely anointed head of English church and state, and here, too, the I for Jane has simply replaced the original, strikingly assertive A. For Anne’s allies, such self-promotion would have seemed like a bold statement of status; for her enemies, it would have been a brazen arrogation of power. It was at once audacious and foolish and on the evidence, the instrument of this expression of the queen’s entitlement was Lucas Horenbout.

9. The Horenbouts and Hampton Court Palace
When Cardinal Wolsey began building work on his great palace of Hampton Court in 1515, like the art he collected, he envisioned the architecture he commissioned to be a statement of wealth, status and power. During the reign of Henry VIII, both fields of art and architecture represented the physical manifestations of a changing culture moving from expressions of the medieval with roots in Catholicism to the modern grounded in Henry’s new Church of England.

With the religious revolution and the advent of the printing press, illuminated books like the Wolsey manuscripts were an art form in their final florescence, and, while externally Wolsey’s original vision for Hampton Court paid attention to popular Italian models, internally, like the Earl of Northumberland’s Carved Chamber at Leaconfield, it waivered on the border of old-fashioned. But forward-looking or backward glancing, together with the manuscripts ordered by him, Wolsey’s new palace was stamped with emblems of ownership. The cardinal’s armorials ornamented the façades of his emerging buildings and among the artists who created these designs appear to have been those Wolsey had already sponsored at the English court, the Horenbouts.

This period, 1525–29, was a particularly busy one for the family. Gheraert still maintained a workshop in Ghent while periodically working in England with his children. Susanna was illuminating manuscripts for Wolsey; Gheraert and Lucas held commissions from the Earl of Northumberland and Anne Boleyn. All three Horenbouts were completing commissions as well for the king and his first queen.

As art historian Richard Gay surmises, the description of Lucas as a “pictor maker” in September 1525, “suggests that he worked in a variety of media” (Gay, 2003, p. 434). His versatility
is unsurprising given that his father also had a similar reputation and the evidence that Lucas had been chosen by Anne Boleyn to design a range of illuminations and installations focused on promoting her rise in status underscores his centrality to artistic production at the Tudor court. Maintaining a delicate diplomacy among the hostile factions warring over the king’s divorce, besides the royal circle and together with Susanna, at this time the entire family appears as well to have been engaged on various projects for Wolsey.

One Horenbout design for the cardinal’s new palace that survives is a terracotta plaque dated 1525 installed above the gatehouse (Figure 44, Law, 1900, p. 23; D. Berri, 1869, pl. 6:13). Now much defaced, at the top of the armorial shield, presented by two putti, Thomas Wolsey’s monogram once appeared with the T overlaying the W. The W had notched ends and, together with the T, “bullet hole” piercings in a style strikingly similar to the designs for the lettering of the Earl of Northumberland’s Carved Chamber and the royal monograms for Henry and Anne Boleyn. Like the Wolsey manuscripts the letters were joined by a corded lovers knot. Although this work has been attributed to either Pietro Torrigiano or Giovanni da Maiano, who created the terracotta Roman roundels for Hampton Court, the work is so similar to that created by the Horenbout workshop that there is little doubt the Wolsey plaque was designed by Gheraert and Lucas. (Rawlinson, 2017, p. 42).

Two replicated versions of Wolsey’s plaque restyled in 1535–6 for Henry’s new chapel at Hampton Court now flank the chapel door and are listed in the accounts as: “The new payntyng, gyldyng, and garneslyng of the too peces of armes at the Chappell dore, with the Kynges and the Quenys armes, cost pryce the pece, 20s” (Cole, 1843, p. 44). The plaques feature once again Horenbout designs of paired angels presenting the royal arms caught in a pattern of pleated ribbons that reference similar designs for the choir screen in King’s College Chapel (Churchill, 2014c). The angels stand on a banner of “the Kynges wordde”, “Dieu et mon Droit” (Figure 45). The initials H and R (Henricus Rex) on the left-hand plaque and I and H (Jane/Henry), “new payntyng” from its original A and H, on the right-hand one, display girdled, notched uprights, punctuating “bullet holes” and are bound together by corded lovers knots. Similar angelic formats can be found on Margaret Horenbout’s Fulham funeral brass and on multiple folios of the Wolsey

Figure 44. Terracotta plaque with Cardinal Wolsey’s coat-of-arms, 1525, Hampton Court Palace.
manuscripts, as for instance, folios 4 v and 34 v of the Epistle- Lectionary and folios 3 r, 7 r, 12 r and 40 v of the Gospel- Lectionary. The pop-eyed faces of the angels when compared to those proposed as the illuminations of Lucas Horenbout in the Troy Book show a remarkable similarity as well (Figure 46a & b). Together with the work done on the interior of the chapel itself, the plaques would appear to be part of a larger commission.

Wolsey was forced to relinquish Hampton Court to the king in 1528, and Henry subsequently moved to expand the complex in partnership with Anne Boleyn. The king and his new queen spent their honeymoon at the palace and Anne’s involvement in the on-going construction work was personal and enthusiastic (Thurley, 1988, p. 28). Together the royal couple oversaw the enlargement and ornamentation of what would become one of the king’s favorite royal seats and again evidence suggests that the Horenbouts were employed in the work. The family’s earlier involvement with Wolsey’s construction at Hampton Court, combined with the patronage relationships they enjoyed with both the king and his second queen, perfectly positioned them to carry on Henry’s grand plans for his growing site. Significantly, not long before construction began on Hampton Court’s royal chapel, on 22 June 1534, Lucas received a patent for life as the king’s official painter. In confirming that grant, the king is quoted as stating: “For a long time I have been acquainted not only by reports from others but also from personal knowledge with the science and experience in the pictorial art of Lucas Horenbolte and I nominate, constitute, and declare him … to be my painter” (TNA: E315/236, fo.37).
According to Auerbach: “No other contemporary patent relating to a painter reveals the same personal contact between grantee and the royal patron” (Auerbach, 1954, pp. 50–1), and it is tempting to conclude that one of the “others” promoting Lucas’ pictorial art was the king’s new bride, Anne Boleyn. Henry’s elevation of Horenbout at this particular time reinforces the suggestion that Lucas, probably in collaboration with his father, was given the commission for an important addition to the magnificent new palace, the decoration of the royal chapel, the ceiling of which, all that survives of the original Henrician installation, still demonstrates the power of their artistry (Figure 47a & b).

The men who created Henry’s royal chapel were a tightly-knit group of elite artists and craftsmen, many of them Flemish immigrants, who had been selected by the king for their special skills. The Horenbout workshop with its four active members was linked to other multi-generational royal workshops, such as the Redman family of master masons, the Hone family and their partner James Nicholson, master glaziers, the Hethe family of painters and gilders, and Harry Corant (also Currunt or Corrand), the master carver responsible for the work on the chapel roof. Over the years, together with the Horenbouts, these men had worked on a variety of projects both for the crown and for Cardinal Wolsey. One member of this craft community who came from Cologne, Harry Blankston (d.1540), was, like Gheraert and Lucas, a man of many parts. Together with John Hethe (d.1553), he was the master painter of the chapel ceiling. He also painted target butts for the king to practice his shooting (Spielmann, 1882, pp. 85–86) and painted and gilded the king’s “bestes”, carved by Harry Corant, to be set up in the king’s “new garden” at Hampton Court (Amherst, 1896, p. 93).

Many of these royal craftsmen, too, were connected by family networks (James, 2009, p. 235). Blankston’s daughter Alice was married to Gheraert Hone, the son of Gheraert Horenbout’s Flemish

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Figure 47. A & b. Chapel Royal, Hampton Court Palace, 1535–6 (© Historic Royal Palaces).
contemporary Galyon Hone and Horenbout’s probable godson. Galyon Hone (ca. 1467–1551/2), who came originally from Bruges and trained in Antwerp, had worked for Cardinal Wolsey and became Henry VIII’s official glazier. Together with another Fleming, James Nicholson, the two were responsible for the fabrication of the new stained glass in Hampton Court’s chapel (Curd, 2010). In addition to Hampton Court, work done a year or two earlier for King’s College Chapel, Cambridge, also connects the two families.

Beneath a set of stained glass windows produced by Galyon Hone stands the choir screen with monograms of Henry VIII and Anne Boleyn carved to Horenbout designs, possibly by Hampton Court’s master carver, Harry Corant. In the central panel of bay 1, the “Kynges wordde” appears in the same script, connected by the same design of pleated ribbons that can be seen on the plaques of the king’s coat-of-arms at the entrance to Hampton Court’s chapel (Churchill, 2014b). These work and kinship ties between interconnected families, particularly those with Flemish roots, provided strong networks whereby the king’s glaziers, the king’s carvers and the king’s painters and gilders formed elite teams of skilled specialists who moved from project to project. From conception to installation, they formed the production line that created visual presentations of majesty in a variety of media, symbolizing to the world the wealth and power of the English monarchy.

Although Galyon Hone fabricated new windows for Henry’s royal chapel, the original windows were installed between 1515 and 1521 for Cardinal Wolsey. It has been proposed that 24 designs or vidimuses for a set of stained glass windows pasted in a sketchbook once belonging to the Victorian stained glass artist, Thomas Willement (1786–1871), and now in the collection of the Musées Royaux des Beaux-Arts, Brussels (no. 1868), represent Wolsey’s original windows (Figures 48–53, Wayment, 1985–6, pp. 503–17, 569–87). Small sketches intended for translation into full-sized cartoons, they show lights of the cardinal supported by his patron saints, as well as panels of Henry VIII, Catherine of Aragon and Princess Mary. The sketchbook has been attributed to Nuremberg engraver Erhard Schöhn but this attribution has been challenged with James Nicholson, Galyon Hone’s partner, proposed as the possible designer. Notes in Nicholson’s hand have been identified beside the drawings (Marks, 1993, p. 25). Here, the Horenbout workshop’s

Figure 48. Vidimus of “The Crucified Christ appearing to Mary”.

![Image of a vidimus of the Crucified Christ appearing to Mary](image-url)
Figure 49. A & b. Details of vidimus (Wayment, 1985–6, plate 4) & Sforza Hours, fo. 124 r (© British Library Board).

Figure 50. A & b. Details of the vidimus of the “Annunciation” & Epistle-Lectionary, fo. 15 r (© The Governing Body of Christ Church, Oxford).

Figure 51. A & b. Details of the vidimus of Cardinal Wolsey at prayer & Gospel-Lectionary, fo. 32 v (Reproduction by permission of the President and Fellows of Magdalen College).
connection to the Hone-Nicholson workshop, the former as designers and the latter as fabricators, is of significance, for a comparison of the elements in 18 of the 24 vidimuses suggests that the designs are neither by Nicholson nor Schön but by the illuminator of the Wolsey manuscripts.

As with those illuminations, the artistic influence of both Gheraert Hornbout and Albrecht Dürer is evident, and certain features in the drawings show that they postdate Wolsey’s original chapel. Wayment’s comments on the subtle religious differences in the two vidimuses of the “Crucifixion”,

Figure 52. A-c. Vidimus of “The Annunciation” & detail; Epistle-Lectionary, fo. 32 r detail (© The Governing Body of Christ Church, Oxford).

Figure 53. A-b. Details of the vidimus of the “Annunciation to the Shepherds” & Epistle-Lectionary, fo. 4 v (© The Governing Body of Christ Church, Oxford).
Figure 54. A-d. Letters patent for Cardinal College, Oxford, 25 May 1529, & detail (a, c) (© The National Archives); Gospel-Lectionary, fo. 43 r (b) (Reproduction by permission of the President and Fellows of Magdalen College) & Epistle-Lectionary, fo. 16 v (d) (© The Governing Body of Christ Church, Oxford).

Figure 55. A-e. Detail of the ceiling of the Chapel Royal; details of Figures 1a, 9, 39 & Epistle-Lectionary, fo. 4 v (© The Governing Body of Christ Church, Oxford).
demonstrating “a world torn by controversy over the Real Presence”, was not the world of 1515 nor even really yet the world of 1520 (Wayment, 1985–6, p. 504; Wayment, 1991, pp. 116–130). In the drawing of the crucified Christ appearing to Mary (Figure 48) signature Horenbout devices appear. The Virgin kneels above a Horenbout border of recessed rectangles. Behind her, a small pillow set on a piece of furniture leans against the wall (Epistle- Lectionary, fos 13 v, 15 r; Gospel-Lectionary, fo. 13 v) beneath a round window crossed by iron bars (Epistle-Lectionary, fo. 15 r, variation; Gospel-Lectionary, fo.13 v), while a convex reflecting glass hangs beneath the bed canopy (Epistle- Lectionary, fo. 13 v; Gospel-Lectionary, fo. 13 v).

In the drawing of the “Annunciation” set above another Horenbout border of recessed rectangles (Figure 52a), the same signature pillow reappears (also visible in Figures 50a-b, 51a), together with a high, round window and a tunic-clad angel (Epistle- Lectionary, fo. 13 v; Gospel-Lectionary, fo. 17 r). An aureoled dove bursts through the window of the vidimus of Mary’s chamber and shines above her in both lectionaries, while similarly drawn angels hover in the skies of the vidimus of the shepherds and of the Nativity in the Epistle-Lectionary (Figures 52a-c, 53a-b). A Horenbout bordered platform shaped like a prone Omega (Figure 51a-b, Epistle-Lectionary, fo. 27 v; Gospel-Lectionary, fo. 32 v) and a variant round form (Epistle-Lectionary, fo. 32 r) appear in a number of the vidimuses (Wayment, 1985–6, plates 9, 10, 17a). Human characters, too, mimic the Horenbout output. A bald-headed old man with white beard who appears in the “Raising of Lazarus” (fo. 124 r) in the Sforza Hours reappears in the vidimus “Betrayal” (Figure 49a & b). These are a sample of the numerous design elements in the vidimuses imitating those that found in the Wolsey manuscripts, which can hardly have been coincidental.

It is proposed here that rather than Wolsey’s chapel at Hampton Court, these window designs, reflecting the growing religious schism in Europe, were intended instead for Wolsey’s never completed chapel at Cardinal College, Oxford. And if so, they would form a group of works connected to Wolsey’s great and never completed foundation that come arguably from the hand of Susanna Horenbout. A study of the two sets of letters patent for Cardinal College, one dated 5 May 1529 and one 25 May 1529 (Figure 54a), and one for Ipswich College, dated 26 May 1529, are so closely related to the Wolsey manuscripts that they must certainly be by the same hand (Auerbach, 1954, plates 12a & 13a & b). The head of a winged cherub on the 25 May patent for Cardinal College reproduces similar images from the Wolsey manuscripts (Figure 54b-d). The Cardinal College cherub with its date-bearing placard rises from a lotus-like pendant that replicates those supporting the carved cherubs on the ceiling of Hampton Court’s royal chapel. The enthroned king, with his forked beard (see image in Figure 21), is flanked by the cardinal and his patron saint, Thomas Becket, standing to the left. A Horenbout border of recessed rectangles arches above his head and decorates the right side of the star-shaped platform on which his throne rests.

Of the Wolsey manuscripts, James Carley has proposed that they were intended not for Cardinal College but for the cardinal’s London residence of York Place. This may be so, yet the connection between them, the vidimuses and the letters patent for Cardinal College and Ipswich College, almost certainly drawn by the same hand, is suggestive and presents a persuasive argument that Wolsey had no need to hunt for an artist in Nuremberg or anywhere else on the Continent when he had a fully functional workshop of artists and illuminators at home (Carley, 2017, pp. 51–2; Kren & McKendrick, 2003, pp. 432–33).

While Italian Renaissance models are referenced in the exteriors of Henry’s building work at Hampton Court, the stylistic references for the king’s new chapel and for Hampton Court’s great hall with its massive hammer beam roof reflect the opulence of an earlier Gothic aesthetic, an artistic language in which Gheraert Horenbout was fluent. Like the designs for the Earl of Northumberland’s Carved Chamber, the designs drawn from the Horenbout illumination pattern
book may have been considered old-fashioned by the more forward-thinking aesthetes at court, yet they were the ones the king chose. The interior plans for the decoration of Hampton Court’s chapel would have been approved by early 1535, shortly after Lucas was appointed king’s painter for life, and while much is known from contemporary documents about the actual construction of the ceiling and the master craftsmen who produced it, little has been written of the artist or artists who designed it.

The chapel roof was constructed from mature oak felled in Windsor Forest in Berkshire, timber originally ordered by Wolsey for the construction of his proposed chapel at Cardinal College, Oxford (Thurley, 1988, p. 2). The lumber was being held at a purpose-built work-yard in Sonning, 30 miles up-river from Hampton Court, and as each section was completed by master carver Harry Corant and his team, it was floated downstream to the palace. The carving took place between August and December 1535 and nine months later the ceiling had been installed and was ready for decoration. The king’s accounts for 1535–6 list £451 paid

For payntyng, gylytyng and varnessayng of the vought in the Kynges New Chappell:—Payd to John Hethe and Harry Blankston, of London, gylders and painters, for gylytyng and garrneshynge of the vought in the Chappell, with great arches bourd, great pendaunts, with angels holding schochens wyth the Kynges armes and the Quenes, and wyth great pen- dontts of boyes playing wyth instruments, and large battens set wyth antyk of leode, gylt, wyth the Kynges worde also gylt wyth fyne golde and fyne byse, sett owtt wyth other fyne collers, and for casting of the antyk and letters of lead, and for the pyn nowll, with all other necessaries belowngyng to the forsayd chappell rowff … (E. Law, 1890, p. 360)

A repeating theme in the Horenbout artistic lexicon, the original “angels holding schochens wyth the Kynges armes and the Quenes”, must have been quickly replaced as Anne Boleyn was tried and executed and Jane Seymour made queen in May 1536 before the chapel was completed. Evidence that this was done for the window above the chapel’s high altar can be found in the royal accounts for 23 September-21 October 1536 when 13s 4d was paid “for the translatynges” and removal of images of the late queen’s patron, St. Anne, and Wolsey’s patron saint, Thomas Becket (TNA: E39/289). The fact that the entrance plaques also required “new payntyng, gylydyng, and garrneshyng” suggests, too, the change of queens.

Notice of payment to the Horenbouts for their work would not have been included in the list of carvers, painters and laborers but would have been a function of their salaries reflected in their higher status as the king’s official painters (Campbell & Foister, 1986, p. 720).

With its brilliant blue background spangled with rows of golden stars, the chapel roof seems to leap from the pages of a Horenbout illumination. The ceiling’s color palette arches above the head of Gheraert Horenbout’s St. Mark in the Sforza Hours (Figure 3) and colors the corners of the vault above the penitent David (Figure 4), while the same blue and star motif bordered by egg and dart molding, “the antyk”, is visible in Birago’s illuminations in the same work (Figure 5). This ornamentation also appears in multiple early illuminations in the Troy Book and in the Wolsey manuscripts, together with instrument-playing cherubs and angels presenting official coats-of-arms. All of these similarities are relevant, yet another motif that ties the design of the ceiling particularly to

![Figure 56. Miniature of a royal courtier, detail, Hans Holbein, 1534, (© Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna).](https://doi.org/10.1080/23311983.2021.1915933)
the Horenbout family is the idiosyncratic use of the Horenbout mirror-image N together with its slighted crossbar in the lettering of the motto “Honi Soit Qui Mal Y Pense” spanning the ceiling’s crossbeams.

Although the explanation for this lettering in the official chapel brochure claims that: “The letter ‘N’ is as the Tudors wrote the letter N” (it was not), and the online explanation adds that: “the “N”s reversed in (sic) a fine example of the sixteenth century’s casual attitude to orthography”, neither is the reason for the formation of the letter. Rather, the mirror-image letter with its distinctive diagonal suggests the design hand of a Horenbout (Figure 55a, c). Used as spacers between the words are both gilded Tudor roses and hollow golden stars with elongated sides, the same usage found on both the inscriptions of Lucas Horenbout’s miniatures and in Susanna’s inscriptions on the Wolsey manuscripts (Figure 55a-b, d-e). That so many designs connected with the Horenbout workshop are incorporated in the surviving decorations of Henry’s chapel make it impossible to believe that they are merely random circumstance.
Gheraert was known to have created decorative ironwork and the accounts for the construction of the chapel offer another possible creation of his, a “branche of irne curiously wrought standing over the high aulter to hold the canaby and pyx over the blessyd sacrament” (Thurley, 1993, p. 230). This raises the possibility that more than just the design for the ceiling was left in the creative hands of the Horenbouts. It suggests that perhaps the entire plan for the chapel’s royal decoration was the work of Gheraert and Lucas. If so, it would have produced for its congregants the effect of stepping from the real world directly into a Horenbout illumination predicated upon some earlier mythic golden age that appealed so greatly to the king. Rather, significantly, the first major event held in the completed chapel mimicked the many Horenbout illuminations of “The Presentation in the Temple”.

On 15 October 1537 a magnificently orchestrated christening was held for the three-day-old Edward, Prince of Wales, celebrating the new heir apparent to the Tudor dynasty under the aegis of his father as both sovereign of the nation and head of the Church of England (BL: Add. MS 6,113 f. 81; L&P, 12:2, no. 911). A special stage was built to support the baptismal font so the crush of nobles and notables would be able to view the solemn event. Uncle to the new prince, Edward Seymour, Viscount Beauchamp, carried in procession the four-year-old Elizabeth, who was charged with holding the “richly garnished” bottle of chrism oil, followed by the Princess Mary, as Edward’s godmother (Anonymous, c.1537-90). The participants in the ceremony may have been more richly dressed than the Holy Family presenting the infant Jesus at the Temple in Jerusalem, but just as certainly those participants would have felt the same religious awe as the heir to the English crown passed through the rituals that also prepared him for the crown of Heaven.

9. Conclusion
For 500 years, the artistic reputation of the Horenbout family in England has played a supporting role to those of better-known sixteenth-century artists like Hans Holbein and Nicholas Hilliard. That they were unarguably foundational in the creation of the miniature tradition at the English court and in the use of repetitive portraiture as a political tool has been generally marginalized in art histories.

Gheraert has maintained his well-earned reputation as a Flemish illuminator par excellence, but despite appearing on the royal payrolls, identification of the corpus of his work in England has been murky at best and usually dismissed in a sentence or two. The 25 or so extant miniatures attributed to “Horenbout” have traditionally been given to Lucas even when internal evidence is completely persuasive that they belong to another Horenbout hand. This includes the anomalous, matchstick-armed miniatures of Margaret Holtswyther and the miniature of Henry VIII that Susanna Horenbout actually signed with her own monogram.

Besides the group of miniatures attributed to Lucas and the possibility that it was he who taught Holbein the miniature technique, the expansive contributions of the rest of the family have not been fully recognized. Exceptionally, in the extensive work done by art historians Thomas Kren, Scot McKendrick and others for the 2003 exhibition catalogue, Illuminating the Renaissance: The Triumph of Flemish Manuscript Painting in Europe, significant research was done analyzing the breadth and depth of the Horenbout workshop, connecting illuminations done in England with the body of work Gheraert created on the Continent. This paper owes much to that research.

The Horenbouts were more than simply a family of miniaturists cranking out little portraits of the king and his current queen for their patrons’ personal amusement. They were principal players in the visual campaigns of propaganda and self-promotion undertaken by Henry VIII and his successive queens, by Cardinal Wolsey and by the 5th Earl of Northumberland. Although Holbein has received the lion’s share of the credit, as a family the Horenbouts were the starting point for the emerging mask of royalty that defined the way in which the Tudor monarchy presented itself visually to the world. It was the Horenbouts, who created an artistic language embodied in objects large and small that conveyed messages of power to all who observed them. They were the creators of many of the images and symbols that became the common currency of Tudor identity.
Who was it, for example, that designed the embroidery for the tunics of Anne Boleyn’s servants announcing to the world that she intended to be queen, grumble who would, or the embroidered message on the king’s costume that announced Henry’s feelings for her at the Shrovetide joust of 1526? The lettering on the jacket of a royal servant preserved in a Holbein miniature of 1534 suggests the answer (Figure 56). The advent of the Horenbouts and their wide-ranging artistic vocabulary developed at the Tudor court, “reflect a significant change that took place in how English monarchs were officially portrayed—indeed the transformation of medieval king to Renaissance prince” (Kren & McKendrick, 2003, p. 433). It was through the Horenbout workshop door that the Renaissance made its first appearance at the English court.

Horenbout images, developed first for Henry VIII and Catherine of Aragon, were refined and expanded both by the artists, themselves, and then by others for Henry’s successive queens and heirs. Between 1526–36, Gheraert and Lucas acted as the engine of publicity for Anne Boleyn, producing both public works announcing her agency at court and private works for use in her devotions. The purpose and form of the miniature which, together with Susanna, they introduced into England was later politically exploited by Anne’s daughter and Henry’s most significant successor, Elizabeth I, who kept a chest of the small portraits in her bedchamber and presented them as tokens of loyalty.

Inherent, too, in the commissions, the Horenbouts undertook was a deep understanding of diplomacy and the ability to work for competing factions at court while keeping above the political fray. Susanna Horenbout was producing illuminations for Wolsey and Catherine of Aragon while her brother and her father were chosen to create public statements of authority for Anne Boleyn. At that queen’s fall, Margaret Holsewyther produced miniatures for her successors, Jane Seymour and Katherine Howard, while Susanna moved on to become a valued member of the households of Anne of Cleves and Kateryn Parr. Henry’s fourth queen was godmother to Susanna’s daughter, Anne, while the king may have been godfather to her son, Henry (James, 2009, 249–53).

Taking into consideration the vast experience Gheraert had before his move to England with designs in oil paint, watercolor, tapestry, needlework, iron, wood and stained glass, the search for his production at the court of Henry VIII should have cast a much wider net than his wife’s funeral brass at Fulham, two or three illuminations or the four miniatures attributed to him (James, 2009, 284 n. 38; Kren & Gay, 2003, pp. 432–33). And rather than sideling Susanna, her long career, together with the fact that Albrecht Dürer, Lodovico Guicciardini and Giorgio Vasari, men who might claim some knowledge of skill and technique, held a deep admiration for her art, should have encouraged further analysis of the entire “Horenbout” œuvre. It was, after all, she and not her brother who was lauded in contemporary literature, was recommended by her father as his prize pupil, was singled out on her mother’s funeral brass and was almost certainly recruited by Cardinal Wolsey as a royal artist for the English court (Vasari, 1963, p. 254).

When the identifying signifiers of individual Horenbout hands are studied, the potential corpus of their work can be expanded exponentially. For instance, a silver-gilt belt chape or metal tongue for the end of a belt, now in the Museum of London, was found on the Thames foreshore in 1989 (Figure 57a-b). It was created ca. 1525–29 for Henry VIII’s sergeant-at-arms, Sir Ralph Felmingham, possibly as a New Year’s gift from the king. The metal is incised on the ends with the badges of Henry and Catherine of Aragon, the Tudor rose and the pomegranate, together with an image of St. Barbara, reminiscent of the image of the saint with that queen in the Wolsey manuscripts. An abbreviation of Felmingham’s name is engraved on it in which the capital A appears in Lucas Horenbout’s signature lettering with the top bar and bird’s wing crossbar. The G is formed in a manner similar to that on the Fulham brass and the letters are separated by crosses in imitation of the Horenbout star space. A second example (Figure 58) is the 1540 painted headboard of the marriage bed of the king and Anne of Cleves which features the monogram of the couple in a signature Horenbout design although the upper crossbar on the capital A appears to be badly rubbed (Thurley, 1993, pp. 206, 237).
A broad spectrum of production for the royal family and for a selection of the powerful at court seems to have been a major part of the output of the Horenbout workshop. Gheraet created miniatures and illuminations for Anne Boleyn, the Duke of Richmond and the 5th Earl of Northumberland, while at the same time undertaking commissions for Henry’s brother-in-law, James IV of Scotland. Working simultaneously for crown and cardinal in 1520s, the family continued as the architects of artistic reconfiguration when Wolsey’s works, large and small, became the property of the king. And although Susanna’s designs for the stained glass windows of Cardinal College chapel were never realized, her manuscript illuminations intended for one of Wolsey’s many chapels passed into the collections of the royal library at his death.

In 1531, Lucas was paid 6s 5d for supplying paint pigments and brushes to pointers working on the royal palace of Whitehall, once Wolsey’s York Place and site of Henry’s wedding to Anne Boleyn two years later (Auerbach, 1954, p. 50). In 1534, he was working on Wolsey’s great manor of the More in Hertfordshire with these same men, including John Hethe and Gallyon Hone, who a year later would build the royal chapel at Hampton Court. Like Hampton Court and York Place, the More had been taken over by the king at Wolsey’s fall and redecorated for Henry and Anne Boleyn. The team filled it with Anne’s emblems and ciphers and it is no stretch to suppose that these were to Horenbout designs.

From 1522 onwards, Horenbout designs were everywhere Henry expanded, repurposed or built. A panel of stained glass in St. John’s Chapel in the Tower of London containing the king’s “HR” monogram utilizes Lucas’ designs with “bullet holes” punctuating the stems of the letters in exactly the same manner as the wood carvings created for the Earl of Northumberland at Leaconfield. Long after the Horenbout workshop was gone, their influence on courtly decoration and script continued to be seen in fashionable modes of expression. Proof of this can be found in the Beauchamp Tower at the Tower of London where mid-16th century graffiti by its many noble prisoners is peppered not only with Lucas Horenbout’s slighted N and signature A but even with the appearance of the Flemish mirror-reverse N (Figure 59a-b).

At the beginning of this article, the question was posed as to whether it could be shown that there exists a body of work beyond the miniature tradition arguably connected to the Horenbout workshop and, if so, how that work might have impacted the visual world of the Tudor court. Evidence laid out above suggests that as a family the Horenbouts practiced their art as miniaturists, illuminators, designers of architecture, architectural ornamentation, interior design and furniture, as pattern makers for personal devices and adornments, for stained glass, armorials, monograms and mottoes, and possibly for “curiously wrought” ironwork. The look of Tudor England, during Henry’s reign and long after, was stamped with the mark of their workshop, and the miniature tradition that they established created portraits that were more than just toys but were often utilized as tools of political manipulation. Their work positions them not as a sidebar in the cultural conversation of the English Renaissance but as a pivotal statement in its creation.

The scope of their invention surely deserves greater recognition and acknowledgement. That other commissions besides the ones discussed above probably exist offers opportunities for further research.

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