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Keeping in line with this theme, chapter 3 has as its subject the works of two artists—namely, Gil de Siloé and the Master of Rimini. Woods suggests that the latter artist, renowned but anonymous, lived in Bruges and might be linked to Gilles De Backere. The high status of the material is discussed in chapter 4, and the fame of the lustrous stone even had Van Eyck imitating it convincingly in his paintings. Woods goes into much detail when discussing numerous works of art in alabaster, which were almost all examined firsthand. Next to historic elements she pays great attention to material technical elements, such as the type of alabaster and the presence of polychromy.

In chapters 5 through 9, the selection of examples and case studies is very balanced, devoting attention to different regions. (In fact, this can be said about the entire book.) Chapter 6 deals with conventional alabaster tombs, and the following chapter talks about bespoke tombs. The court of France influenced other parts of Western Europe in the conventions regarding the use of white lustrous altarpieces in royal tombs, as described in chapter 8. It was England that popularized the alabaster altarpiece, leading to a large spreading of the artwork. On the Continent, altarpieces remained in general elite bespoke commissions. The last chapter gives an overview of different genres of alabaster sculpture in the public and in the private environment. England was clearly most successful in the manufacturing of small-scale devotional work for private use. But different genres, such as Saint John's heads and the Virgin of Pity, were also being produced on the Continent in the fifteenth century. Throughout the book Woods succeeds in showing us the bigger picture. She reclaims the importance of alabaster in the history of sculpture in Northern Europe between 1330 and 1530. This book is to be recognized as an important new benchmark for any further study on the topic.

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Nicholas Hilliard: Life of an Artist. Elizabeth Goldring.
Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2019. xiv + 338 pp. $55.

The exquisite miniatures, "little pictures to be held in the hand," painted in watercolor on vellum by the English artist Nicholas Hilliard, are for many the quintessential images of the Elizabethan and Jacobean ages. On the four hundredth anniversary of his death, Elizabeth Goldring's excellent and beautifully illustrated monograph brings together important new research on Hilliard's life and work, adding considerably to our understanding of the challenges and opportunities that existed for painters in sixteenth-century London.

Hilliard was born in Exeter ca. 1547 into a staunchly Protestant family of goldsmiths. In 1555, during the reign of the Catholic Mary I, Hilliard and his family

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went into exile, first to Wesel, then Frankfurt, and finally Geneva, before returning to London in 1559, the year after Elizabeth I became monarch. He was apprenticed to the goldsmith Robert Brandon (eventually marrying his daughter), and subsequently set up his own workshop. How and with whom he trained as a miniaturist is unknown, but by 1572 he was commissioned to paint his first miniature of Elizabeth (National Portrait Gallery, London); its round format, with the sitter's head and shoulders turned slightly to right, positioned against a blue ("bice") background and framed with calligraphic gold lettering, established the key characteristics of Hilliard's style.

In 1576 he traveled to France, partly to seek new patrons, but also, as Goldring suggests, perhaps to provide the queen with miniatures of the Duke of Anjou, with whom she had an unsuccessful ten-year courtship. He may also have been an intelligencer—a spy—with the French he had acquired in Geneva potentially useful. Two years later he was back in London working from his Gutter Lane workshop that would be his base for the next thirty-five years. He began to establish himself as the leading painter in England, producing not only numerous miniatures for the Queen and leading courtiers but also paintings in large, designs for seals and medals, and prints and miscellaneous decorative paintings, although seemingly no goldsmith products. By the mid-1590s, perhaps from competition from his former pupil Isaac Oliver, Hilliard widened his clientele to include prosperous city merchants and their wives, and experimented with different backgrounds and formats. After Elizabeth's death, in 1603, he was appointed limner to her successor, James I, but not to the new queen, Anne of Denmark, or Henry Prince of Wales, who both preferred the more avant-garde Italianate work of Oliver.

Financially inept, with frequent money shortages and schemes to make himself rich, such as a failed investment in a Scottish gold mining project, and probably living beyond his means with a large family to support, Hilliard was much more fortunate in his powerful patrons, such as the Earl of Leicester and Robert Cecil. His aspirations to be seen as a gentleman are evident in his 1577 *Self-Portrait* (Victoria & Albert Museum, London), as well as from comments in *The Arte of Limning*, which he wrote between 1598 and 1603, although never published, about the superiority of miniature painting.

Hilliard was celebrated in his own lifetime both in England and on the Continent at a time when, Goldring notes, the identities of many contemporary artists were unknown and when art production in London was dominated by émigré artists, and his work was collected soon after his death. To his friend, the writer Richard Haydocke, who produced a partial translation of Lomazzo's *Trattato dell'arte della pittura, scoltura et architettura* in 1598, he was (rather pretentiously) the Raphael of his age, while the poet Pierre de Ronsard, whom Hilliard knew in France, considered his work to be of "high perfection."

Nicholas Hilliard: Life of an Artist is a richly rewarding addition to the already extensive published material on Hilliard and, benefiting from recent technical discoveries, it

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also contributes meticulously researched new archival information, as, for example, the early period of Continental exile. The backdrop of London's development as a cultural and artistic center, and the growing opportunities to see European art in aristocratic collections such as Leicester's, are skillfully contextualized. Goldring wears her extensive scholarship lightly and is to be highly commended for writing a book that makes a significant contribution to early modern studies.

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Die Tafelwäsche des Ordens vom Goldenen Vlies. Mario Döberl, ed.
With Anna Jolly, Daniela Sailer, and Agnieszka Woś Jucker. Riggisberg: Abegg-Stiftung, 2018. 168 pp. + 1 foldout pl. CHF 120.

It has to be every curator's dream: rediscovering a long-lost treasure of a legendary knightly order. It happened in the Kunsthistorisches Museum, in Vienna, where a set of table linens woven in 1527 for the Order of the Golden Fleece came to light in 2012. To textile historians the set, consisting of three linen damask tablecloths and three dozen napkins made in the workshop of the Malines weaver Jacob Hoochboosch, was only known through archival evidence. In a bill dated June 1528 the set is described in detail and even though scholars had never seen it, there was general awareness that it represented the high point of sixteenth-century Flemish damask weaving. The recent monograph by Mario Döberl confirms it is no less than that.

The largest tablecloth of the set was designated for the knights' table. It measures a startling 17.25 x 2.99 meters and boasts a design that consists of fifty-seven fields in three rows showing the coat of arms of the Grand Master Charles V flanked by the apostles Andrew and Jacob in the center, surrounded by the coats of arms of the knights belonging to the Order. Columns bearing Charles V's device *plus oultre* divide the fields. Two smaller tablecloths were used to cover the table of the four officers and a credenza. The thirty-four surviving *plus oultre* napkins were probably either used as hand towels or to wipe greasy fingers during dinner.

It is hard to imagine now just how extraordinary this set was. The knights' tablecloth is not only exceptionally large; it is also a technical masterpiece, as explained by Jolly and Woś Jucker in their section on its production. The design shows hardly any repeat, which means setting up the loom was extremely challenging and labor intensive. This is reflected in the cost of the set, mounting up to 1,750 livres. Döberl makes an interesting comparison with the cost of other luxury goods that come nowhere near this sum, such as two gilded silver jars and a basin and ewer worth 620 livres. Even two tapestries of silk, gold, and silver by Pieter de Pannemaker, sold to Charles V in 1531 for 1,026 livres, were considerably cheaper.

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