LMH
Lady Margaret Hall

The Brown Book

A Commemorative Edition for the
500th Anniversary of the Death of
Lady Margaret Beaufort

December 2009

UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

Lady Margaret Hall

Oxford

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A Commemorative Edition for the 500th Anniversary of the Death of Lady Margaret Beaufort

2009

Editor

Carolyn Carr
Gable End, The Mount
Tetsworth, Oxfordshire, OX9 7AB
cacarr1996@aol.com

Assistant Editors

Alison Gomm
3 The College
High Street
Drayton St Leonard
OX10 7BB

Mary Haynes
40 Edwardes Square
London
W8 6HH

Lady Margaret Hall

Oxford OX2 6QA
Telephone: 01865 274362
development@lmh.ox.ac.uk
www.lmh.ox.ac.uk

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Cover illustration:
Miniature of Lady Margaret by Lucas Horenbout, circa 1530. The original is painted on vellum stuck on to a playing card and is only 3 centimetres in diameter; there is one diamond showing on the reverse. This is probably the earliest painted portrait of Lady Margaret. It is a pair to another miniature by Horenbout of Henry VIII. The reference to Henry VII in the inscription either side of Lady Margaret's head appears to be missing the 'N'; however the symbol over the 'E' is an abbreviation mark showing that a letter has been left out. This was common practice in Latin script, mostly used in frequently used words where the sense helps the understanding.
Private collection.

Contents page illustration:
Lady Margaret's tomb in Westminster Abbey, circa 1514.
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Introduction

Lady Margaret Beaufort, Countess of Richmond and Derby, mother of King Henry VII, in whose honour our Founders named this College, died 500 years ago, on 29 June 1509. She died a few days after having the satisfaction of witnessing the coronation of her grandson, Henry VIII. The President of the Lady Margaret Hall Association, Mary Haynes, and I represented LMH at a brief and intimate commemorative service held at Lady Margaret's tomb in Westminster Abbey on 29 June 2009. Professor Frank Kelly, Master of Christ's College, and Professor Chris Dobson, Master of St. John's (formerly Fellow and Chemistry Tutor at LMH, and now Honorary Fellow), represented Lady Margaret's two great collegiate foundations in Cambridge. The Lady Margaret Professors of Divinity at Oxford and Cambridge both participated. It was a very appropriate and moving service of thanksgiving.

It was Elizabeth Wordsworth who proposed in 1878 that the first academic foundation for women in Oxford, of which she had been appointed Principal, should be named after Lady Margaret Beaufort. Miss Wordsworth described her as a scholar and a saint. She was, indeed, both learned and devout. Lady Margaret Beaufort sponsored the printing of early books, built up a substantial library, and was herself a translator of major devotional texts from French into English. She was a great educational philanthropist, most notably as founder of two Cambridge Colleges and the Lady Margaret Professorships of Divinity in Oxford and Cambridge. Our own Founders fully shared her dedication to learning, and generations of benefactors have emulated her far-sighted generosity.

There are many other ways, too, in which Lady Margaret Beaufort is an inspiration to members of Lady Margaret Hall, not least today, when global economic and political circumstances are very challenging for so many. She was one of British history's great survivors. Her personal tribulations included bearing her only child when she was only 13 years old and already a widow. She survived personal insecurity, political turbulence and civil war through a combination of steadfast courage and wisdom. She was a consummate politician who protected her son's often precarious position with single-minded determination, laced with some skilful plotting and scheming. Without all of these qualities of hers, sustained through many years, his accession in 1485 as King Henry VII would never have happened and the Tudor dynasty would not have been established. Lady Margaret was also a shrewd developer of her own estates, and a conscientious, even tough, administrator of justice.

Over many decades and often in most difficult circumstances Lady Margaret combined a life of learning and scholarship with tireless engagement in public responsibilities. That is her great legacy to this College and to our students past and present.

We are proud to bear Lady Margaret's name, and in this 500th anniversary year of her death we salute her. We have been fortunate in the course of the year to hear interesting and instructive reflections about Lady Margaret and her life from expert speakers. It is a pleasure to make these, together with a study of the portraiture of Lady Margaret, available to a wider readership in this special issue of *The Brown Book*.

Frances Lannon
Principal

Lady Margaret Beaufort: 'Of singuler wysedome ferre passynge the comyn rate of women'

This talk was presented at the Gaudy on Sunday 28 June 2009

My title is taken from the 'month's mind' sermon preached for Lady Margaret Beaufort by her confessor, John Fisher, Bishop of Rochester.[1] Lady Margaret had died on 29 June 1509, and her month's mind sermon was preached a calendar month later, 29 July. Fisher was not only her confessor but her close adviser and friend to whom, since their first meeting, she had been 'verely determined (as to my cheffe trustye Counselloure) to owe myn obedyence in all thynges concernyng the well and profite of my sowle'.[2] He is therefore important in his influence on Lady Margaret from the time they first met in 1494 or 1495, but I hope that I will make it clear that the relationship was one of equals, not of master and disciple.

My own interest in Lady Margaret Beaufort began with my research into the Bridgettine nuns of Syon Abbey. The interest was fuelled by the appearance in 1992 of the first modern biography of Lady Margaret by Michael Jones and Malcolm Underwood,[3] which drew extensively on the household accounts and material, much of which is housed in her foundation, St John's College Cambridge, where Malcolm is archivist. I am indebted to that book in this article. My own investigation of the household accounts led to significant discoveries about Lady Margaret's involvement with the printed book trade which I published as 'Lady Margaret and her Books' in 1998,[4] and from October 2009 I will be spending the term in Cambridge, transcribing the accounts for eventual publication by the British Academy.

Lady Margaret Hall, founded in 1878, was, of course, named in honour of Lady Margaret Beaufort. As an inspiration to women for whom the college was founded, she was an excellent choice, presumably inspired by the recent (1874) publication of a full biography by C. H. Cooper.[5] In fact, for the period, the only comparable choice would be her grand-daughter, Elizabeth I, who in her independence of character and grasp of public affairs resembled Lady Margaret. In terms of education, Elizabeth was trained (despite the vicissitudes of her life) as a Renaissance prince, and so surpassed Lady Margaret. She could read and write Latin and Greek, whereas Lady Margaret herself (as Fisher says in the same sermon) 'complayned that in her youthe she had not gyuen her to the vnderstondynge of Latyn'.[6] However, it is in terms of Lady Margaret's specific support of education (not parallelled by Elizabeth) that she is honoured by the college name. As an LMH alumna, Enid

Routh, said in a memoir published on behalf of the college's Appeal Fund in 1924: 'The founders of Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford, chose her as the adopted patroness of the Hall because she was ever a friend to "poor scholars", a pioneer in education, and "as a mother to the students of both Universities"' (Routh was paraphrasing from Fisher's sermon).[7] It is this role (one only among many, I must say) that I will focus on here, but first a brief biography is necessary.

She was born on 31 May 1443. A year later her father was dead and Henry VI gave her wardship and marriage choice to William de la Pole, Earl of Suffolk. A marriage took place with his son, John, when she was seven, but that was later revoked and at the age of ten she was given by the king to his Pembrokeshire half-brothers, Jasper and Edmund Tudor. She married Edmund and gave birth to her first, and only, child on 28 January 1457, at the age of 13, two months after her husband's death from plague. Her youthful motherhood and the trials of her early life are significant in terms of the forming of her character and her relationship with her son, who was to become Henry VII after the Battle of Bosworth in 1485. Another marriage was arranged for Margaret at once, and a year after the birth, still only 14, she was married to Henry Stafford, second son of the Duke of Buckingham. After the Yorkist victory in 1461, Edward IV gave the wardship and marriage of the infant Henry to William, Lord Herbert, and mother and son were separated. Nevertheless, their relationship was very close throughout their lives (after all, there were only 13 years between them in age), and Margaret did all she could for Henry, perhaps most especially during his exile in France from 1471 to 1485, when she was involved in plans for his prospective match with Elizabeth of York, sent him money, and organised part of the 1483 rebellion against Richard III. Although that was unsuccessful, when Henry became king after Bosworth in 1485, the two became close confederates. Her death-day 500 years ago was just two months after that of her son.

I have spent time on the biography here, because I think it gives an explanation of why and how Lady Margaret came to achieve her fierce individualism, independence, and autocracy. One might see how a young girl, separated from her mother, her father dead, made pregnant in the depths of Wales at the age of 12, and thereafter pushed from pillar to post would develop both a fierce loyalty and love for the one thing that was her own, her son, and for her own personal independence. After Stafford's death in 1472 she married Thomas, Lord Stanley, technically her fourth husband, and it may seem hard to argue for her independence as her estates were passed at the whim of others from one husband to another. However, her machinations in manoeuvring her

son towards the throne give plenty of evidence of both independent action and determined resolve, and after his success at Bosworth, she gained power, status and lands in her own right.

After 1485 she no longer needed to be dependent on any man other than her son, with whom there was a mutual dependence, that between 'my derest and only desyred joy yn thys world', my 'good and gracyous prynce, kynge, and only beloved son' and 'your humble servant, bede-woman and modyer'.[8] In 1485 she was legally declared *femme sole*, a single woman within the married state – a state of independence and control over one's own property normally achievable only on a husband's death. She developed her own system of estate management, separate from her husband, and ran her own mobile household as she moved between the Stanley homes in Lancashire, her inherited house at Woking, and her son's palaces in the south. Finally, in 1498, at the age of 55, she separated from Stanley and set up her own establishment at Collyweston, 4 miles south-west of Stamford in Lincolnshire. The couple were not estranged and he had his own rooms at Collyweston, but when he died in 1504, she confirmed before Fisher a vow of chastity which she 'had before purpossed in my lorde my husbandes dayes' and which she undertook now in the hope that God would 'this my poor wyll accept to the remedye of my wreched lyff and releve of my synfull sowle'.[9] Fisher in his month's mind sermon recorded that she had obtained permission from Stanley for this arrangement 'longe tyme before that he deyede'.[10]

It is with the separate establishment that Lady Margaret fully comes into her own, for us at least, because it is from then that we have most evidence of her life: several of her household accounts (from 24 June 1498 to 29 June 1509) and inventories of her chapel and household goods taken at her death in 1509, as well as her executors' accounts. The household accounts are those of her Secretary and Dean of Chapel, later Chancellor, Henry Hornby; her respective cofferers,[11] James Clarell (1498–9), Miles Worsley (1499–1509), and Robert Fremingham (1509); the treasurer of her household, William Bedell (1493, 1498–1509); and her chamberlain, Roger Ormeston (from 1501 to 1504, when he died).[12]

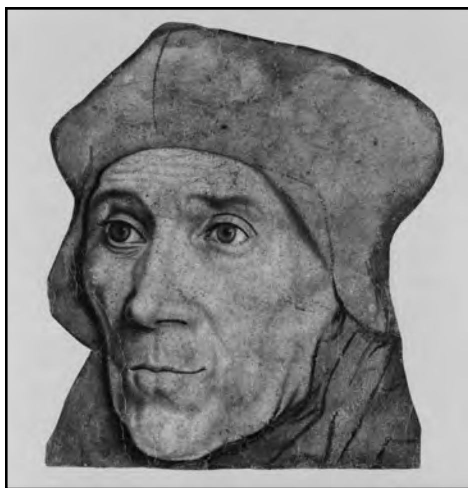
I use these household accounts to illustrate the first aspect of her contribution to education, as 'a friend to "poor scholars"'. From there I move on to look at her role as what Routh called 'a pioneer in education' and 'a mother to the students of both Universities'.

There is ample evidence in the household accounts of her support of young men in their schooling and their university training. For a start, she kept a chapel 'egall with the King her sonne',[13] where divine service

was heard daily 'with grete nombre of preestes, clerkes and chyldren to her grete charge and cost'.[14] She was prepared to send her officers far and wide to find suitable singing boys for the chapel, as the large expenses payment of 66s 8d indicates in a 1504 entry: 'Item delyuered to Mr Dean [her Dean of Chapel, Henry Hornby] for a reward yeuen vnto Mr Couper [Master of the Children] towardes his costes and charges ridyng to London, Wynesoure, and into the west parties to make serche for chyldren for my Ladys chappell with the costes of ij chyldren which he brought with hym the said tyme'.[15] Once she acquired the chapel children (in what may seem, but of course we do not know, rather a ruthless manner), they were assured of a decent education (they had to sing Latin, after all). Her accounts record purchase of grammar books,[16] and perhaps even their publication.[17] If they proved academic, the boys were sent on for further training,[18] as was Richard Moyne, for example, at the Charterhouse in London, or John Mason at Tattershall. Other boys were trained elsewhere – Christopher Freston at the other Charterhouse at Sheen, Thomas Bury at Eton, John Sedington at St Alban's. She maintained older scholars at both Universities: Cambridge (Robert Bekinsall, Thomas Pellet, Thomas Whetely) and Oxford (Thomas(?) Burgon, John Jackson, Christopher(?) Pepur, Maurice Westbury), and even in Paris (Roger Collingwood and Richard Stanbank) and Orléans (James Denton).

Such support goes beyond the normal duty of the aristocracy to support their household servants and dependants, to find appropriate members of the chapel benefices, or to find posts for the family of others (all of which she did as well, to the extent of providing for the confinement of a woman that Hugh Latimer, one of her preachers and a name for the future, 'hade a chylde by').[19] But her support of scholars shows an awareness of the value of education, of the purpose of leading out young men who would be useful to her (of course) but also to society. In fact, Lady Margaret had shown this facility from an early stage. If we look at the members of her household who are responsible for these household accounts, or are in positions of other responsibility, we should note the names of Hugh Ashton, her receiver-general and then controller; Hugh Oldham, her receiver and later chancellor, who left her service in 1504 to become bishop of Exeter; Roger Ormeston, her chamberlain till his death in 1504; Christopher Urswicke, her agent until he became dean of Windsor in 1495; and Miles Worsley, her cofferer.[20] As their names suggest (at least to a northerner), they were all from Lancashire,[21] and all, except perhaps Oldham, were men she had acquired in her service during her years in the north-west with Stanley.[22] Ashton and Urswicke at least became known to her through her involvement with the collegiate church in Manchester,

where Stanley's son, James, was warden.[23] These men were imported to positions of responsibility when she set up her own household. She was clearly adept at picking out promising young boys – Henry Hornby, her Secretary and Dean of Chapel, and then her Chancellor, was the son of the keeper of her husband's horses at Deeping in Lincolnshire. He was to emulate her example by founding a grammar school in Boston, as did Oldham by the important part he played in developing what was to become Manchester Grammar School.



John Fisher 1469–1535, Bishop of Rochester and Lady Margaret's close friend and confessor. After Hans Holbein the Younger, oil on paper, circa 1527.
© National Portrait Gallery, London

Once Lady Margaret had met John Fisher (a meeting which took place, perhaps significantly, a few years before she separated from her husband),[24] she became much more ambitious in her promotion of learning. Rather than targetting individuals known to her, she provided the means of education to large numbers of young men, known and unknown. This was, of course, through her establishment of preacherships and readerships at the Universities and her foundation of Christ's and St John's Colleges, Cambridge, which Fisher recorded in his sermon:

> she that ordeyned ij contynual reders in bothe the vnyuersytes to teche the holy dyuynyte of Ihesu; she that ordeyned prechers perpetuall to publysshe the doctryne & fayth of Cryste Ihesu; she that buylded a college royall to the honour of the name of Crist Ihesu & lefte tyll her executours another to be buylded to mayntayn His fayth & doctryne.[25]

Fisher was a northerner, like Ashton and the others, and it is tempting (if fanciful) to think that there was a frankness and pragmatism about him and the others which appealed to Lady Margaret's own nature. (At least she certainly had a fondness and respect for northerners – at both Christ's and St John's preference was given, by her wish, to candidates from nine northern counties in the contest for fellowships

and scholarships.)[26] Fisher had been brought up in Beverley near Hull and studied at Cambridge where he was senior proctor of the University at the time he met Lady Margaret. Just as he must have seen *her* potential (because the impetus for these projects was his), so she saw *his*. He became vice-chancellor of the University after taking his Doctor of Divinity in 1501, chancellor in 1504, shortly after he had been made Bishop of Rochester, and then life-chancellor in 1514. His life, in fact, was cut short in 1535 for his refusal to endorse the Royal Supremacy, and he died on 22 June, a fortnight before Thomas More, who refused to endorse the Act of Succession. But that was a future unthinkable for Lady Margaret.

It is with Fisher that the action starts. Her first move to found lectureships in theology (whose incumbents were known at the time as readers and now as professors) was soon after her first meeting with him in 1494–5, and she funded them out of her own income (as her accounts record).[27] They were not established until 1502, by which time a system had been set up for direct payment by Westminster Abbey out of lands she granted the abbey for that purpose.[28] Lectures were to be given for one hour each teaching day, and the lectureships were available in both Universities. However, her affiliation was with the east of the country (her main route was from Collyweston through Cambridge to Hatfield, or to Croydon, her principal homes at this time, or to Richmond, her son's principal home).[29] Moreover, her household was dominated by Cambridge men: Fisher was Chancellor; Hornby was master of Peterhouse; John Fothede, her controller, was master of Michaelhouse and Robert Bekinsall, her almoner, a fellow; Ormeston was steward of the University. Even before the foundation of Christ's and the plans for St John's, she was associated with the king and queen in the foundation of Jesus College,[30] and secured lands from her kinsman, Edward Stafford, for Queens' College. And so it's not surprising perhaps that in 1504 she endowed the University preacherships only at Cambridge.

She placed a high value on preaching. A household like hers would regularly hear preaching, but she may have been unusual in the variety of preachers she called to preach before her and her tenants: for example, Mr Gabryell of Clare Hall on the 3rd Sunday in Lent 1503, a monk of Ely on the 4th,[31] or a friar on the 2nd Sunday in Lent 1505, and a priest of Fotheringhay who preached later in the year at her parish church in Collyweston.[32] These are among the details recorded by payments in her accounts. It is significant, too, that only one set of sermons in English was printed in the first 50 years of English printing, apart from the large sermon collection, *The Festial*, which was the staple orthodox preaching book. That one other set of sermons was printed for Lady Margaret Beaufort and had been preached by Fisher.

The University preacherships she founded ordained that the preacher was to preach six sermons a year, one at St Paul's Cross or elsewhere in London, and at 11 other named places (all in Lady Margaret's compass of authority, in Hertfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Northamptonshire and Lincolnshire).[33] This concern, not just for scholarship in theology, but for high-class preachers, and not just for high-class preachers, but for preachers who would preach beyond the University, is characteristic of Lady Margaret's understanding of inclusiveness and outreach.[34] It leads me on to her involvement with the printed book trade and her appreciation of the potential of the vernacular and of print for disseminating religious teaching throughout the country. We are into the rather narrow area of my own research now, so I will try not to be too prolix.

Lady Margaret was an early patron of the printing press. She commissioned the translation and printing of a romance in 1488,[35] but after that she devoted herself only to religious works. She had a book of prayers printed (in a commission together with the queen) in 1491 and an edition of the *Scale of Perfection*, a widely read English devotional work, in 1494.[36] I shall say more in a moment about her two commissions of the *Imytacyon* and *Miroure*, where she was to different extents getting her own work published. Otherwise, I only want to point out the work of Fisher from among the works she commissioned:[37] the set of sermons I mentioned just now (*The Fruytfull Saynges*, sermons on the penitential psalms) and his two sermons preached after the deaths of Henry VII and Lady Margaret herself. (I am assuming, perhaps cheekily, that she commissioned her own memorial sermon, as she commissioned her son's funeral sermon.) The list is only of those editions which have her name attached to them – I have argued elsewhere that several more may have been actively encouraged by her. Even those on the list here take her beyond any other English patron of the time. Indeed, her remarkable liaison with print shows an unparallelled engagement with what we would today call the 'publication' of religious and devotional material. In this, she appears to have been influenced by her relationship with the nuns of Syon Abbey just over the river from her son's palace at Richmond.

Syon was a Bridgettine house, the only one in England dedicated to the order founded by the queen and saint, Bridget (Birgitta) of Sweden.[38] The Bridgettines were therefore a royal foundation, as was Syon itself, founded by Henry V in 1415. It attracted a social élite for its nuns (a maximum of 60), and an intellectual élite for the 13 brothers who were their priests. St Bridget's emphasis was on preaching (as, we have seen, was Lady Margaret's), and the Syon sermons were a crowd-puller (together with the Syon pardons offered 12 times annually). As I have said, the abbey

was over the river from Richmond (fig. 1), and when Lady Margaret was visiting her son, she was rowed over to Syon regularly. (Syon, the charterhouse at Sheen next to the palace of Richmond, also founded in 1415 by Henry V, and the Observant Franciscan house which Henry VII was building on the other side of his palace, formed an intellectual and spiritual powerhouse for the King and his government.)

In 1503 Lady Margaret arranged the translation and printing of Books 1–3 of the *Imytacyon and Folowynge the Blessed Lyfe of our Sauyour Cryste* (what we know today as the *Imitation of Christ*), Book 4 of which she herself then translated and had added to the original print (*Short Title Catalogue* (*STC)* 23954.7). The *Imytacion* was a book which the proactive abbess of Syon (Elizabeth Gibbs, 1497–1518) had arranged to be copied for her in 1502 by William Darker, a Carthusian at Sheen.[39] Elizabeth Gibbs might be seen as another influence on Lady Margaret Beaufort, alongside John Fisher.

The nuns of Syon had a vocation of reading and divine office. Although not, of course, educated as their brother-Bridgettines were, they were committed to the intellectual, that is, spiritual life which books opened up to them. Abbess Gibbs' duty was to find the books for them – the Carthusians over the river had a vocation of copying books, and were therefore ideal providers of material for the sisters. However, print offered the greatest possibilities. One copy of a manuscript might take many months to complete and would be read normally by just one nun; multiple copies meant that each sister could have one of her own, as could many others in the wider world.

I have argued at some length – but I promise I will not do so now – that the impetus for Lady Margaret's involvement with the printing press came from Syon.[40] I want to argue here for a direct connection between Abbess Gibbs's interest in the *Imytacyon* and the fact that in the following year Lady Margaret had it translated afresh and printed. I would like to see this as a commission of Abbess Gibbs, to which Lady Margaret responded, much as she responded to suggestions from Fisher. The new translation (by a fellow of Jesus College Cambridge) might indeed have been a suggestion of Fisher, with whom she must have discussed the book. Perhaps he also encouraged her to attempt her own translation of the fourth book as a spiritual and pastoral, as well as intellectual, exercise. He certainly commended these translations and wrote of them as if there were more than the two that were printed.

All this is of interest in itself, but it is her dissemination of these books which I want to focus on. Her accounts record payment on 6 July 1503 'to a prynter in London for pryntyng of my Ladies bokes', clearly the *Imytacyon*.[41] Later in the same year she was making payments for the

binding of 76 copies of the book,[42] and in late December 100 printed books, presumably also of the *Imytacyon*, were carried from London to her palace at Collyweston.[43] In 1505 she paid the same printer, Pynson, for another 100 printed books which he would appear to have delivered to Syon when she was staying over the river at the King's palace at Richmond.[44] These may well have been further copies of the *Imytacyon*, now with the fourth book of her own translating. Such large numbers indicate that she was engaged in the distribution of the work, and the chance reference to the delivery of 100 books to Syon seems to suggest that those particular volumes were for distribution there.

In 1506 she had printed her own translation of *The Mirroure of Golde for the Synfull Soule* (*STC* 6894.5), another devotional book but, unlike the *Imytacyon*, one which was barely known in England at the time, apart from to the Bridgettines and Carthusians with their continental links. On successive journeys in 1506 the printer, Pynson, brought to Hatfield 50 printed books, 'a calender and other bokes', more unspecified books, and then, in the New Year, another 50 books, these at least very clearly the translation of *The Mirroure of Golde*: 'the whiche my Ladys grace translatyd owte of French into Englysshe'.[45] Again, the numbers appear to suggest a planned distribution, certainly, in the case of the last entry, of copies of the *Mirroure*, perhaps as New Year gifts to her household.

Although Christ's received its charter on 1 May 1505, the College was not fully complete at the time of Lady Margaret's death in 1509. During this period she focused almost exclusively on this foundation (actually, a re-foundation of a college for grammar students called God's House). Later in the period she turned her attention to St John's. Although she continued to commission printed works,[46] her time was very much taken up in ensuring the financial stability of both Colleges, and, among the numerous business transactions recorded by payments in her household accounts, there is the copying, binding and embellishing of appropriations, charters, indentures, statutes, and so on. She was also, however, acquiring books for Christ's. The accounts do not record titles. Chapel books are recorded, so that, for example, the cofferer's summary of expenses in January 1507 notes the previous year's expenditure on three antiphoners and two grails for Christ's.[47] But otherwise it is on the lines of 'dyuerse bokes' or 'certen prynted bookes bought for the said Colledge', with frequent mention of Cambridge booksellers. Fisher, too, was clearly playing an active part in the acquisition of books,[48] and there were others involved as well – for example, she bought books in Paris through an agent, the bookseller Inghelbert de la Haghe.[49] Only 40 books of her donation (all printed and all in Latin) are recorded in the Christ's College donations register (but this dates from as late as 1623).

Presumably there were actually many more, at an earlier date at least. Of these 40 books, just over half can be traced to holdings today.[50] A further six are said to be Fisher's donations, of which perhaps three are extant.

St John's fared less well. Although there is clear evidence that Lady Margaret was actively involved at the time of her death in the founding of her other college (on the site of St John's Hospital),[51] she was ill herself at the start of the year and then preoccupied until his death on 21 April by the illness of her son. She based herself in her London house of Coldharbour and travelled regularly to Richmond, staying there with him for the last weeks of his life. Her accounts recording these journeys and the transactions after his death are interspersed with details of the preparation of books for Christ's and the arrangements for the printing of Henry's funeral sermon, preached by Fisher.[52] In early June she was at court in Greenwich for the wedding of her grandson, Henry VIII, to Katherine of Aragon (11 June), and on 23 June she stood at an upper window in Cheapside to watch the coronation procession. In this year of Henry VIII (who is receiving more attention than his grandmother) we may be inclined to see her mixed emotions at the time as prescient: 'And at the laste coronacyon wherin she had full grete ioye, she let not to saye that some aduersyte wolde folowe'.[53]

Lady Margaret Beaufort died on 29 June 1509, and it was left to Fisher to carry through her intentions, with considerable difficulty and opposition, since the scheme was so little developed.[54] Her grandson, the new king, was at first lenient, but by November 1512 he had taken over the revenue of her estates, as Hornby, her chancellor, had warned he would.[55] Property sales and benefactions helped, in which Fisher and Hornby, as executors of her will, were prominent, and the king provided compensation for the withdrawn revenues, but it was not until 29 July 1516, seven years to the day from his month's mind sermon, that Fisher was to see St John's formally opened.[56] Certainly without his efforts that would never have happened. Between 1521 and 1524 he had to establish his own personal foundation just to support the fellows, scholars and lecturers. Faithful to the wishes of Lady Margaret, he fell foul of Henry VIII at an early stage, and a memorandum he made of the difficulties in fulfilling her wishes records that Henry became 'a very heavy lord against me'.[57] The inventory of college goods in 1516 includes 14 books received from Fisher – six of these are still in the College library. Many more had been intended for St John's after his death. However, after his attainder and execution in 1535, all his estates were forfeit to the crown, and his library at Rochester, intended for the still sparse library at St John's, was taken away in '32 great fats, or pipes'.[58] Fisher was subsequently written

out of the history of St John's, whereas his role was certainly, inevitably, more active than that of Lady Margaret herself, who remains (not unjustly, I hasten to add) revered by the College. But in actual fact they were a dream team, and the lectureships, preacherships, and colleges would not have happened without Fisher – nor, indeed, could they have happened without Lady Margaret. I quoted previously her statement that since their first meeting she had been 'verely determined (as to my cheffe trustye Counselloure) to owe myn obedyence [to Fisher] in all thynges concernyng the well and profite of my sowle', and I said that I hoped that this article would make it clear that the relationship was one of equals, not of master and disciple. Fisher certainly believed that he was not her master:

> I freely admit that once she had adopted me both as her confessor and her moral and spiritual guide, I learned more of what leads to an upright life from her rare virtues than I ever taught her in return.[59]

I have tried to give a picture of Lady Margaret Beaufort's contributions to what may broadly be called education, that is her keenness: to educate promising young men; to provide, not just the nuns of Syon or the students of Oxford and Cambridge, but the people at large with the best of reading and preaching; and to provide colleges well stocked with books in the latest editions. The emphasis in all this has been on theology, on spreading the word of God and the teachings of the Church. It is not so single-minded a focus in the world, nor indeed in the schools and universities of today. In her memoir of Lady Margaret for LMH, Enid Routh painted Lady Margaret as a patron, as someone who used her wealth and power to good educational purpose. Her portrait began with a quotation in which the Founding Principal of LMH, Dame Elizabeth Wordsworth, said of Lady Margaret Beaufort: 'She was a gentlewoman, a scholar, and a saint, and after having been three times married, she took a vow of celibacy. What more could be expected of any woman?'[60] I do not wish to poke fun at LMH's first Principal (who was herself a gentlewoman, a scholar, celibate, and perhaps a saint), but I think today we ask more (as well as less) of women – and even for Dame Elizabeth's day, Lady Margaret Beaufort was much, much more than she suggested. I hope I have given some inkling of what one aspect of that 'much, much more' consisted in.

Professor Susan Powell
Professor in Medieval Texts and Culture at the University of Salford

[1] *The English Works of John Fisher*, ed. J. E. B. Mayor, Early English Text Society, Extra Series 27 (London, 1876), I, 268–88.

[2] 'The Thin Red Book', f. 47r (St John's College Cambridge (SJC) C7.11).

[3] *The King's Mother: Lady Margaret Beaufort, Countess of Richmond and Derby*, Michael K. Jones and Malcolm G. Underwood (Cambridge, 1992).

[4] *The Library*, 6th series, vol. 20 (1998), 197–240.

[5] *Memoir of Margaret, Countess of Richmond and Derby*, Charles Henry Cooper (Cambridge, 1874).

[6] Mayor, p. 292, ll. 6–8.

[7] *Lady Margaret: A Memoir of Lady Margaret Beaufort, Countess of Richmond and Derby, Mother of Henry VII*, E. M. G. Routh (London, 1924), p. 12. The book was dedicated to Dame Elizabeth Wordsworth, Founding Principal of LMH from 1878 to 1909.

[8] Quoted in a letter of Lady Margaret, Cooper, pp. 66–7.

[9] 'The Thin Red Book', f. 47r.

[10] Mayor, p. 294, ll. 15–22 (particularly ll. 16–17).

[11] From 1506 called treasurer of the chamber.

[12] The dates indicate their service with Lady Margaret. Extant accounts are: Hornby 1499–1509, Clarell 1498–9, Worsley 1502–9, Fremingham 1509, Bedell 1506–7, Ormeston 1501–2.

[13] Henry Parker in London, British Library Additional MS 12060, f. 22r.

[14] Mayor, p. 300, ll. 13–14.

[15] SJC D91.20, p. 178.

[16] SJC D91.21, p.91. See, too, Powell, p. 230, fn. 209.

[17] Powell, p. 230, fn. 210.

[18] For the following names, see Jones and Underwood, *The King's Mother*, Appendix 3, pp. 268–87 *passim*.

[19] SJC D91.20, p. 184 (9 December 1504): 'Item paid vnto John Bradley for the Burde of a woman that hughe latymer hade a chylde by the space of xc daies iis, for ffechyng of hir chylde from Clyff iiijd, Item to a man that convayed hir to stampforth ijd.' On Robert Cliff see Malcolm Underwood, 'Politics and Piety in the Household of Lady Margaret Beaufort', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 38 (1987), 39–52 (p. 46).

[20] For all these names, see Jones and Underwood, *The King's Mother*, Appendix 3, *passim*, and Index. On her employment of northerners, see Underwood, 'Politics and Piety', pp. 45–6.

[21] Ashton is east of Manchester, Oldham north-east, Worsley west, Urmston south-west, while Great Urswick is farther north-west, near Morecambe Bay.

[22] According to the entry in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford, 2000), Lady Margaret did not know him in Lancashire, but it is worth noting that he was a cousin of Ormeston and was substantially involved in founding Manchester Grammar School. See, too, Underwood, 'Politics and Piety', pp. 44–5.

[23] He was Warden 1485–1506, after which he became bishop of Ely (Underwood, 'Politics and Piety', p. 45).

[24] 1494 (Malcolm Underwood, 'The Lady Margaret and her Cambridge Connections', *Sixteenth Century Journal*, 13 (1982), 67–81 (p. 68).

[25] Mayor, p. 308, ll. 14–20.

[26] Jones and Underwood, *The King's Mother*, p. 248; Underwood, 'Politics and Piety', p. 45, fn. 40; Underwood, 'Cambridge Connections', p. 78.

[27] Jones and Underwood, *The King's Mother*, p. 208.

[28] Rex, 'Lady Margaret Beaufort and her Professorship, 1502–1559', in *Lady Margaret Beaufort and her Professors of Divinity at Cambridge 1502 to 1649*, Patrick Collinson, Richard Rex, and Graham Stanton (Cambridge, 2003), p. 21. For the readerships, see Jones and Underwood, *The King's Mother*, pp. 206–10.

[29] Croydon was the residence of the archbishop of Canterbury and Hatfield of the bishop of Ely (her stepson, James Stanley). For Cambridge visits (which were frequent 1505–09), see Jones and Underwood, *The King's Mother*, pp. 223–4, 229–30.

[30] Underwood, 'Cambridge Connections', p. 69.

[31] SJC D91.20, pp. 13, 14

[32] SJC D91.21, pp. 11, 19.

[33] Jones and Underwood, *The King's Mother*, pp. 211. The preachership was rescinded in 1679 (*A History of the University of Cambridge: The University to 1546,* C. N. L. Brook *et al.*, p. 281, fn. 52). For Fisher's promotion of Cambridge and for the suggestion that Oxford tried to secure comparable largesse from her, see 'Cambridge Connections', pp. 69, 71–2.

[34] Fisher wrote into the statutes of St John's College that a quarter of the Fellows should preach public sermons in English (Jones and Underwood, *The King's Mother*, p. 248).

[35] *Blanchardin and Eglantine* (*STC* 3124, 1490).

[36] *The Fifteen Oes* (*STC* 20195, 1491), *Scala Perfeccionis* (*STC* 14042, 1494).

[37] The list consists of editions certainly attributable to Lady Margaret. Apart from the works mentioned at fns. 35 and 36 above, it listed: *The Imytacyon and Folowynge the Blessed Lyfe of our Sauyour Cryste* (*STC* 23954.7, 1503, Book 4 added 1504, transl. Lady Margaret), *The Mirroure of Golde for the Synfull Soule* (*STC* 6894.5, 1506?, transl. Lady Margaret), *Breviarium secundum vsum Herford'* (Hereford Breviary) (*STC* 15793, 1505), *Breviarium secundum vsum Sarum* (Sarum Breviary) (*STC* 15806, 1507), *The Fruytfull Saynges of Dauyd* (*STC* 10902-03, 1508), *The Lyf of Saynt Vrsula* (*STC* 24541.3, 1509?), *This sermon folowynge . . .* (Henry VII's funeral sermon) (*STC* 10900, 1509), *A mornynge remembraunce* (Fisher's month's mind sermon) (*STC* 10891, 1509), *The Shyppe of Fooles* (*STC* 3547, 1509).

[38] There is much recent scholarship on Syon Abbey and the Bridgettines, but essential first reading remains *The History and Antiquities of Syon Monastery . . .,* George James Aungier (London, 1840).

[39] See *What Nuns Read: Books and Libraries in Medieval English Nunneries*, David N. Bell, Cistercian Studies Series, 158 (Kalamazoo, MI, and Spencer, MA, 1995), p. 186. For other books copied by Darker for Sheen and Syon, see Bell, p. 191 (A29). Other Sheen monks who copied books were James Grenehalgh (for Joanna Sewell) and Robert Tailour (for Elizabeth Mounton). The translation Darker copied was a different one from that by William Atkinson that Lady Margaret had printed. For the *Scale* and the *Imytacyon* as two essential books for lay readers, see Thomas More, *The Confutacyon of Tyndales Answere* [Rastell, 1532, *STC*, 18079], f. Eeiij: 'For surely the very

best waye were . . . the people vnlerned to occupye themselfe besyde theyr other busynesse in prayour, good medytacyon, and redynge of suche Englysshe bookes as moste may norysshe and encrease deuocyon. Of whyche kynde is Bonauenture of the *Lyfe of Cryste*, Gerson of the *Folowynge of Cryste*, and the deuoute contemplatyue booke of *Scala Perfeccionis* with such other lyke'.

[40] See Powell, pp. 220–5.

[41] SJC D91.20, p. 104 (6 July 1503): 'Item paid the vjth day of July to Mr. Quytstones [James Whitstones] presydent of my ladys councell for money paid to a prynter in London for pryntyng of my ladies bokes. xls.'

[42] SJC D91.20, p. 122 (20 November 1503): 'Item paid the same tyme to Lenard of the vestry for byndyng of lxxvj bokys of Master John Gersons pryntyng at jd.ob. [a penny halfpenny] the boke. ixs iiijd.'

[43] SJC D91.20, p. 127 (27 December 1503): 'Item paid to the same [Hugh Ashton, her receiver-general] for cariage of a hundreth of prynted bokes with other of my ladys stuf from London. xviijd.'

[44] SJC D91.21, p. 27 (2 June 1505): 'Item to Richard Pynson for c prynted bookes price xs.' Later in June the item appears to have been recorded again (with a different price and the additional information about Syon) and then cancelled: SJC D91.21, p. 30 (20 June 1505): `Item to Richard Pynson at Syon by Mr. Chaunceller [Henry Hornby] for a c prynted bookes. ijl.'

[45] SJC D91.21, p. 123 (9 August 1506): 'Item the ixth day of August to Richard Pynson of London prynter for half a hundreth of prynted bookes bought at Hatfeld. xvjs viijd'; p. 125 (23 August 1506): 'Item delyuered to Mr. Countroller [John Fothede] for a reward yeuen Penson prynter for bryngyng of a calender and other bokes to Hatfeld from London. vjs viijd'; p. 142 (6 January 1507): 'Item paid vnto Pynson of London prynter of l bookes the whiche my ladys grace translatyd owte of French into Englysshe. xxvs.'

[46] See fn. 37 above and Powell, pp. 226–9.

[47] SJC D91.21, p. 159: 'Certen bokes bought for the seid collage [Christ's College], þat is to wit, iij antefeners (xviijl), ij grayles (iiijl vjs), an crosse of coper and gilt (lxs viijd), candelstokes (ixs iiijd), diuers other necessary stuff (xxxvjs iijd) and also wryting of certen statutes (xviiijs viijd) xxviijl xs xjd.'

[48] SJC D91.19, p. 110: 'Item paid the same day vnto Gerard Godfryde and Nicholas Spering of Cambruge stacioners for dyuerse bokes for my ladys grace . . . xxviij li. iij s. iiij d.', 'Item to the same stacioners for money paid by my lord of Rochester for other dyuerse bookes bought for my ladys grace . . . ix li. xix s. x d.'; p. 121, 'certen prynted bookes bought for the said colledge xxxviij li. iij s. ij d.' See, too, Jones and Underwood, *The King's Mother*, p. 226, fn. 82.

[49] SJC D91.21, summary for 1506, p. 164: 'Ingleberd bokebynder for money vnto hym prested to by certen bokes at pares for my ladis grace. vj li. xiijs. iiijd.' On Inghelbert de la Haghe, see Powell, p. 226.

[50] *The University and College Libraries of Cambridge*, ed. Peter D. Clarke, Corpus of British Medieval Library Catalogues, 10 (London, 2002), pp. 111–17.

[51] For example, SJC D102.1, f. 8r (March 1509): 'Item to Mr Assheton comptroller of my ladyes houshold for riding to London at iij dyuerse tymes and there abiding in all by the space of viij dayes aboute the alteracion of Sainte Johns house in Cambrige into a college of secular studentes'.

[52] SJC D102.1, f. 8v (April 1509): 'Item to Maister Richard Wyot for money by him paide for setting bullyons vpon diuerse bookes at London apperteynyng to Cristes College in Cambrige', fol. 13v (22 May 1509): 'Item to John Hasilby for going from Grenewiche to London to Wynkyn de Worde with a sermone to be enprinted and for Botchir conveying of a federbed from Coldherber to Grenewyche. ixd.'

[53] Mayor, p. 306, ll. 4–6. See Jones and Underwood, *The King's Mother*, p. 237 for darker forebodings reported later by Reginald Pole.

[54] For details of the obstacles, *ibid*., pp. 242–8.

[55] *Ibid*., p. 244.

[56] On St John's, *ibid*., pp. 241–50.

[57] Quoted *ibid*., p. 244.

[58] Quoted Richard Rex, *The Theology of John Fisher* (Cambridge, 1991), p. 192. In this Appendix (pp. 192–203) Rex constructs a list of several hundred volumes Fisher may have owned. Cf., too, R. Hall c. 1559 (*The Life and Death of . . . John Fisher . . .*, Thomas Bayly, 1655, xxii.186 (cited *OED*, *pipe* n.2): 'His Library, which they found so replenished . . . with Bookes . . . with which they trussed up, and filled 32 great fats, or pipes.'

[59] Quoted Jones and Underwood, *The King's Mother*, p. 249 from the Dedicatory Epistle to *De Veritate Corporis et Sanguinis* (first publ. Peter Quentel, Cologne, 1527).

[60] Routh, p. 11.

The Likenesses of Lady Margaret Beaufort

If any portraits of Lady Margaret were painted during her lifetime none has survived. Since her death, however, she has been the subject of an extraordinary number of portraits. The National Portrait Gallery (NPG) has photographic records of 36 oil paintings of her in its own and other collections; this compares interestingly with only 26 of Elizabeth of York, her daughter-in-law and the wife of Henry VII. That Lady Margaret (1443–1509) has been such a popular portrait subject, and for centuries after her death, must in part be recognition of her importance as the founder of the Tudor dynasty and also because of the desire of her educational and religious foundations to have portraits of their benefactor.

Did Lady Margaret ever sit for a portrait? The answer seems to be probably but not certainly. The inventories of the Royal Collection indicate that the collection once contained a contemporary portrait of her which seems to have been lost in the early 18th century.[1] The earliest surviving images of Lady Margaret are her tomb effigy in Westminster Abbey (fig. 1) by the Florentine sculptor, Piero Torrigiano, c.1514 and a very small miniature (enlarged on the cover of this *Brown Book*), painted on vellum and only 3 centimetres in diameter, by a Dutch artist, Lucas Horenbout (or in an Anglicised form, Hornebolte). This has been dated by Roy Strong to c. 1530 and is now in a private collection in the Netherlands.

Fig. 1 Lady Margaret's head and shoulders from her tomb effigy.
© The Dean and Chapter of Westminster Abbey

It is known from the still existing contracts for her tomb that Torrigiano depended for his likeness of Lady Margaret on work commissioned by her executors from another Dutch artist working in England and Scotland, Meynnart Wewyck. This work has not survived but Dr Frederick Hepburn has argued[2] that Wewyck was presumably chosen to provide the likeness because he had already painted Lady Margaret during her lifetime, or at least had a good memory of her. Dr Hepburn further feels that Horenbout's likeness of Lady Margaret, partly on account of its accurate portrayal of Lady Margaret's headdress which became gradually misrepresented in later images, was in all probability copied from the lost portrait in the Royal Collection. Perhaps, then, we at least have two images only one step removed from those made during Lady Margaret's lifetime.

So how likely are any of the images to represent a fair impression of how Lady Margaret looked? Charles Saumerez Smith[3] has recently remarked that the earliest portraits of her fall exactly into the period of transition from dynastic to real portraiture; a period during which it is difficult to be clear whether the portraits are genuine attempts at likenesses or formulaic representations, more concerned with dynasty and heraldry than capturing a true image. Many long galleries of the period required portraits to fill them and Lady Margaret was frequently included – at Windsor and Hatfield House, for instance. Dendrochronology has recently made dating more accurate and it has been found that many of the portraits thought even 40 years ago to have been painted at the turn of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries were in fact painted much later.[4] However, when looked at as a body of portraits, those of Lady Margaret have a convincing similarity. Her high cheek bones, heavy eyelids, long nose, tight mouth and nun-like dress are constant. Also, portrayals of Lady Margaret have tended to show her in one of just two poses: either on her knees (fig. 2) or holding a missal (figs 3, 4 and 5) and invariably gazing to her right out of the portrait; Dr Hepburn has suggested that this last characteristic may be because an early portrait had been intended as the right side of a diptych. This consistency makes the portraits seem likely to be copies or slight variations of a much earlier image or images, most probably the lost portrait or Horenbout's miniature. We feel that we have a good idea of what Lady Margaret looked like and this is reinforced by her considerable facial similarity to her son, Henry VII (fig. 6). The fact that this portrait of Henry, painted in 1505 and the earliest portrait in the NPG collection, really is a painting from life, and painted four years before Lady Margaret's death, further persuades us that we know what mother and son looked like. We recognise Lady Margaret's likeness not so much from one of her portraits as from their collective resemblance to each other.

Fig. 2 Lady Margaret kneeling, by Roland Lockey, late 16th century. By kind permission of the Master and Fellows of St John's College, Cambridge

Fig. 3 Lady Margaret holding a missal, mid 15th century, in the Master's Lodgings, Christ's College, Cambridge. By kind permission of the Master, Fellows and Scholars of Christ's College

Fig. 4 Lady Margaret, full length and holding a missal. By kind permission of the Master, Fellows and Scholars of Christ's College, Cambridge

Fig. 5 The National Portrait Gallery's earliest portrait of Lady Margaret, second half of 16th century. © National Portrait Gallery, London

Fig. 6 Henry VII, showing his facial likeness to his mother, Lady Margaret Beaufort. The inscription records that this portrait, the earliest in the National Portrait Gallery's collection, was painted in 1505. © National Portrait Gallery, London

The effigy of Lady Margaret in Westminster Abbey (figs 1, 11)

Lady Margaret was accorded almost regal status both in her lifetime and in death; not only is her fine tomb situated in the south aisle of Henry VII's Chapel, then being constructed at the east end of the Abbey, but the raised inscription around the black marble slab was composed by Erasmus.[5] The sculptor of the effigy of Lady Margaret, who is lying on her tomb chest, was the renowned Florentine master, Piero Torrigiano (1472–1528), who had come to England to sculpt Henry VII's tomb, which he began before the King's death. The contracts for Lady Margaret's tomb and her effigy, issued in 1511, still survive in St. John's College, Cambridge. From these we learn that the Dutch painter Meynnart Wewyck produced alternative designs for the of the tomb, one of which was chosen by the executors, and that he was also paid 33s 4d 'for makinge the picture and image of the seide lady' (Hepburn; see endnote 2). As indicated above, her tomb effigy therefore provides one of the earliest and most reliable images of Lady Margaret.

Lady Margaret is modelled in bronze and the effigy was once partly gilded and painted. She is shown as an old woman, her head on two cushions with a yale,[6] a mythical beast with large swivelling horns, at her feet. A yale was used in the arms of the Beaufort family and can be seen over the gateways of St John's and Christ's Colleges in Cambridge. The yale on Lady Margaret's tomb has now lost its horn. The effigy was protected with sandbags over wooden boards in the 1914–18 war and evacuated during the 1939–45 war.

LMH's images of Lady Margaret

The LMH Seal

The lovely pencil drawing (fig. 7) from which the LMH seal was cast was made in the spring of 1914 by Leslie Brooke, the same year in which he made a coloured chalk drawing of Bertha Johnson, who was in effect LMH's first domestic bursar, although the post was not then formalised. Brooke appears to have been introduced to Henrietta Jex-Blake, the second Principal of LMH, by Helena Deneke. Two years later he drew a crayon portrait of Eleanor Constance Lodge, LMH Vice-Principal 1899–1921, after whom Lodge building is named. Both of these portraits are in the LMH Collection.

Leslie Brooke (1862–1940) was best known as a children's book illustrator and writer, his most famous book being the much-loved *Johnny Crow's Garden*, published by Warne in 1903. It was Brooke who recommended to Frederick Warne that he publish Beatrix Potter. His younger son, Henry Brooke, who was to become British Home Secretary, published a book in 1981 about his father and Johnny Crow. Several of Brooke's sensitive portraits are reproduced in this.

Fig. 7 Pencil drawing of Lady Margaret Beaufort by Leslie Brooke, 1914, for the LMH seal. © The Principal and Fellows of Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford

Letters in the LMH archives[7] from Leslie Brooke show how much detailed thought was given to the shape of the seal – it was not to be round, but should it be oval or lozenge-shaped? Then, once the lozenge had been chosen, should there be a 'background' behind Lady Margaret's profile? What should

the lettering be and how should it be arranged to fit into the lozenge shape? The conscientious Brooke wrote:

> I am a little exercised about the inscription on the seal . . . without the 'SIG' [*sigillum*, the Latin for seal] is plain sailing for me, for it allows the Hall to go on the one side, and the motto on the other, with the 'Daisy' at the top. But the 'SIG' destroys the balance, and I find myself faced with alternatives [which he sketched] not quite so satisfactory.

As we see, a happy accommodation was reached. Brooke also went to considerable lengths to study earlier portrayals of Lady Margaret, making a 'careful drawing from the effigy in the Abbey' and asking whether the LMH committee commissioning him would prefer:

> to put Lady Margaret in costume more like that she is wearing in the portraits at the National Portrait Gallery rather than in the dress of the effigy, which has a more monastic look. This would be quite easy to do, though the effigy dress seems to me the more beautiful.

Happily the committee decided on the effigy as the model, and thus we have a drawing based on the earliest existing portrait of Lady Margaret.

Leslie Brooke recommended that the engraver Harold Stabler should cut the seal; he had apparently[7] also been recommended by Sir Reginald Blomfield, the architect of the Talbot and Toynbee wings of LMH and of Lodge building. LMH still has the seal but it is quite large, 8 centimetres in length, and heavy and requires a screw press rather than a simple hand lever. There appears to have been some confusion over the engraving part of the commission as, although Brooke had warned that this would be a slow process, Miss Jex-Blake and her committee became impatient, just two months after the project was first mooted, for it to be completed. Brooke had to explain that 'Mr Stabler's work is true seal-cutting on the actual metal – the traditional exacting method – and not merely taking a metal cast from a design modelled in plaster or wax, as is often done in these weaker days'. Henrietta Jex-Blake had already been Principal of LMH for five years in 1914; maybe the imminent outbreak of war accounted for the urgency.

Harold Stabler (1872–1945) studied metalwork at the Keswick School of Industrial Art. He designed metalwork, pottery and jewellery, was a master silversmith and also designed tiles and glass for the London Underground. In 1915, the year after this commission for LMH, he founded with Ambrose Heal and others the Design and Industries Association and in 1921 he was one of the founders of the Poole Pottery in Dorset, known until 1963 as the Carter, Stabler and Adam Pottery. In 1939 he was appointed the first Designer for Industry by the Royal Society of Arts.

The portrait in LMH Hall

The portrait (fig. 8) which hangs behind High Table, is a 1911[8] copy by Evangeline Jex-Blake,[9] sister of LMH's second Principal, Henrietta Jex-Blake, of a portrait in the NPG (fig. 9) long thought to have been of Lady Margaret Beaufort and long listed as such by the NPG. It is now listed as 'Unknown woman, formerly known as Lady Margaret Beaufort, by Unknown artist'. This portrait was also listed as being of Lady Margaret in the 'Catalogue of Oxford Portraits', Volume III', compiled by Mrs Reginald Lane Poole for the Oxford Historical Society in 1926. Mrs Poole incidentally seems to have mistaken the NPG catalogue number (1488) for the date of the painting, which she gives as 1488, making Lady Margaret look improbably young for a 45-year-old.

Sir Roy Strong has recorded the chequered history of the dating of this NPG picture.[10] Apparently it was purchased by Lord Powerscourt

Fig. 8 Portrait in LMH Hall by Evangeline Jex-Blake, 191I, copied from Fig. 9. Both these portraits were thought until recently to represent Lady Margaret. © The Principal and Fellows of Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford

Fig. 9 The National Portrait Gallery's 'Unknown Woman', long thought to have been Lady Margaret Beaufort. 19th century, artist unknown.. © National Portrait Gallery, London

in 1883 and shown to Sir George Scharf, the first Director of the NPG, who declared it 'a fabrication'. However, by the time of its acquisition by the Gallery in 1908 (just three years before Evangeline Jex-Blake

made her copy) this opinion had either been lost or was ignored and the second Director, Sir Lionel Cust, made much of it 'as a possible example of the work of a late 15th century English school'. Cust's successor, Sir Charles Holmes, apparently had his doubts and, in particular, suspected that the coat of arms had been added later. In 1939 the painting was x-rayed and it was revealed that two earlier portraits of different subjects had been painted over by the artist of the 'Lady Margaret' one. Nonetheless, the Gallery did not change its listing of the portrait until very recently, when paint and stylistic analysis dated it firmly to the nineteenth century.

When I asked Tarnya Cooper, the current curator of the Gallery's sixteenth century collection, why the subject could not nonetheless be Lady Margaret, albeit a very late image of her, she replied that there was simply no evidence for this; the portrait bore no real relation to earlier images of Lady Margaret and she thought the subject could quite possibly even be an imaginary one.

The effigy of Lady Margaret in LMH Chapel (fig. 10)

This stone effigy of Lady Margaret, lying in Chapel beneath the Burne-Jones triptych, was completed in 1978 and dedicated at the centenary Gaudy service that year.[11] As recorded on a plaque beneath the effigy it was given by the friends of Evelyn Jamison,[12] who had died six years earlier, in her memory. The effigy replaced a plaster cast made around 1883, in LMH's fifth year, by Mr Wright, Clerk of Works at Westminster Abbey from the Torrigiano effigy in Westminster Abbey and given by Dame Elizabeth Wordsworth.[13] Sadly this was becoming discoloured by damp and starting to crumble. The new effigy was made of stone from Richemont in Normandy and was the last work of Gerald Scott (1916–77) who had graduated from the Slade in 1952[14] and who died before the work was finished; his friend and colleague Edward Pascoe completed the work, hence the two sets of initials carved at the end of the base slab: 'G. Scott 1977' and 'E. Pascoe 1978'. It is surprising that Scott seems not to have consulted earlier representations of Lady Margaret. Instead he appears to have come up with his own idea of what she might have looked like. While he has shown her, as had become traditional, with her peaked hood and widow's 'barbe' (from 'beard', a modest cloth covering for neck and chest), and holding her prayer book, he has portrayed her as a young woman and made little attempt to echo the features depicted in the body of her previous portraits, from which historians have come to recognise her. L. H. Jeffery,[15] writing about the Centenary Gaudy in the December 1978 *Brown Book*, describes the face as fine and quiet and suggests that the statue combines the qualities of

Fig. 10 The effigy of Lady Margaret, by Gerald Scott and Edward Pascoe, 1977–78, in LMH Chapel. © The Principal and Fellows of Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford

sculpture and architecture 'perhaps because a recumbent figure in a long gown has the aspect of a fallen column'.

The portcullis on the shield at Lady Margaret's feet is the heraldic symbol of the Beaufort dynasty and since 1928 has been incorporated in the arms of LMH. The Beaufort name derives from the castle of Margaret's great grandfather, John of Gaunt, in Champagne. An earlier LMH symbol was a group of daisies or marguerites, a pun on Lady Margaret's name; daisies are shown on the LMH seal.

Mary Haynes
President of the LMHA

[1] Oliver Millar, 1963, *The Tudor, Stuart and Early Georgian Pictures in the Collection of Her Majesty The Queen*.

[2] Frederick Hepburn, 1992, 'The Portraiture of Lady Margaret Beaufort', *Antiquaries Journal*, pp. 118–40.

[3] Charles Saumerez Smith, 'Tudor Portraits: Icon or Mask?', Talk at Christ's College Cambridge, Lady Margaret commemorative event, 27 June 2009.

[4] Dr Tarnya Cooper, Curator of The National Portrait Gallery sixteenth century collection, in conversation.

[5] Westminster Abbey Library notes on Lady Margaret's tomb.

[6] Michael K. Jones and Malcolm G. Underwood, 1992, *The King's Mother, Lady Margaret Beaufort, Countess of Richmond and Derby*, Appendix 5. Appendix 6 is a summary of the sixteenth century portraits of Lady Margaret.

[7] Letters from the artist and from the engraver to Miss Jex-Blake in the LMH archives.

[8] The LMH Gifts Book.

[9] Evangeline Jex-Blake was a fluent watercolourist and the LMH collection has six landscapes by her.

[10] Roy Strong, 1969, *Tudor and Jacobean Portraits*.

[11] *The Brown Book*, Centenary edition, December 1978.

[12] Evelyn Jamison 1877–1972 (1920 History), subsequently LMH Bursar, Librarian, Tutor and Vice-Principal had been honoured in a similar way 46 years earlier when a group of her students commissioned a portrait of her by David Jones and gave it to the College.

[13] The LMH Chapel Gifts Book.

[14] UCL Records Office.

[15] Lilian Hamilton (Anne) Jeffery (1915–86, LMH Research Fellow, Tutor and Hon. Fellow 1945–80).

Fig. 11 Lady Margaret's face from her tomb effigy.
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Lady Margaret Beaufort

Sermon in LMH Chapel, 10 May 2009

> I beseech thee Almighty God . . . that whatever I shall say may first be to thy pleasure, for the profit of mine own wretched soul, and also to the wholesome comfort to all sinners.

These words were habitually used at the start of sermons by St John Fisher, Lady Margaret Beaufort's political counsellor, spiritual guide, personal friend and eventual executor. 1509 was a busy preaching year for John Fisher, by that stage bishop of Rochester. Within the space of a few months, he preached at the funeral of Henry VII (who died on 21 April 1509); the coronation of Henry VIII on 24 June 1509; and, after her death within a few short days after the coronation on 29 June 1509, at the funeral of Lady Margaret Beaufort, and again one month later at her 'Month's Mind' service, the equivalent of a modern Memorial Service.

Over there in the chapel is an effigy of the Lady Margaret. It is inspired by the original tomb effigy in Westminster Abbey by the great Italian humanist sculptor, Pietro Torrigiano. The inscription on the tomb, perhaps composed by Erasmus, reads in Latin:

> Margaret of Richmond, mother of Henry VII, grandmother of Henry VIII, who gave a salary to three monks of this convent and founded a grammar school at Wimborne, and to a preacher throughout England, and to two interpreters of Scripture, one at Oxford, the other at Cambridge, where she likewise founded two colleges, one to Christ, and the other to St John, his disciple.

It is therefore above all as an academic founder that Margaret is memorialised at her tomb, rather than as the founding matriarch of the great dynasty of the Tudors. As her partner in the academic projects she instigated, especially in the last decade of her life, once her only son Henry VII had been securely established on the English throne, John Fisher tells us a lot about Margaret Beaufort's priorities, her personality, and her passionate engagements with the world of books and learning. Indeed, he was so involved with and influential on the Lady Margaret's views on books and education that he has recently been accused of shaping her behaviour through acts of what have been called 'transvestite ventriloquism', but this surely underestimates a woman whose whole life had been about overcoming challenges and obstacles to the fulfilment of her own family ambitions and her religious and intellectual priorities.

Fisher's own stress on pleasing God, profiting the soul and offering comfort to sinners epitomises a high-minded Humanist attitude to duty, hard work, high principles, and a search for the right thing to

do, a constant striving for excellence that eventually brought Fisher to execution for his principled objection to Henry VIII's divorce and remarriage, and the King's consequent breach with the universal church. But these same values also epitomise the high-minded idealisms of those who founded the new colleges of the nineteenth-century Oxford and Cambridge. Some colleges, such as Keble (whose Warden Talbot is commemorated as one of the founders of this Hall) sought to crystallise their mission by naming themselves after admirable role models from recent times. The choice of St Hilda as the patron for a college gestured further back in history to the Abbess Hild of Whitby, who had presided over one of the great centres of learning of Anglo-Saxon Britain, a double monastery of men and women, pledged to seek God through scholarship, service and meditation on the Scriptures, and who had allegedly fostered the first flowerings of English poetry in the scriptural poems of the cowherd Caedmon. Much later on, the choice of St Anne as the patron of the last of the women's colleges also marked a decisive gesture towards the importance of women as exemplars of learning and models of education. In choosing St Anne, the college's early fellows rather brilliantly combined myth and history. For the iconography of St Anne, which reaches its fullest and richest flowering during the lifetime of Margaret Beaufort, habitually shows her teaching the virgin how to read. It fostered an air of what has been called 'matronly respectability redolent of good linen and private sorrows'. The troubled and often turbulent life of the Lady Margaret showed plenty of private sorrows alongside her interest in good linen and elegant living, and above all demonstrates her growing obsession with fostering and supporting modern education and sound learning.

But that gesture of empowerment in the iconography of St Anne, that gift of literacy in the protected teaching environment of the home, reflected the way the medieval iconography of the Virgin Mary itself changes through the course of the middle ages. Annunciation scenes early in the middle ages often show the Virgin spinning or sewing when the Angel arrives with his unexpected free gift. By the end of the period, she is almost always shown reading a book, often a book of psalms, and doing so in one of the now increasingly popular cubicula or private spaces. Female empowerment and literacy therefore went hand in hand in late medieval representations of the Virgin and her mother, and increasingly in representations of other female saints, such as Margaret of Antioch and Catherine of Alexandria, whose legends often develop to show them learning from men, reading men's books, and then going on to confute the logic and arguments of the teachers from whom they had acquired their learning.

The growing literacy and intellectual emancipation of women in the fifteenth century, the late medieval broadening of intellectual horizons through early Humanism, that impacted decisively on the mind and outlook of Lady Margaret Beaufort, closely parallel the movements for the educational emancipation of women that begin in Oxford with groups such as the Association for the Education of Women, and effloresced into the early women's colleges, colleges that now lead the way in fighting for equality of educational opportunity. In both periods of history, that emancipation and literate empowerment was restricted, initially at least, to those who by virtue of birth, wealth and class could most easily take advantage of it. In both periods, however, provision was made from early on for 'poor scholars' to receive assistance in their studies. (Lady Margaret sponsored many poor scholars through their studies.) In both periods, that emancipation was fostered, supported and developed through the enlightened guidance of men who had already benefited from the riches of university learning and who sought to spread and broaden its reach in the wider community. Men such as T. H. Green and Warden Talbot in nineteenth-century Oxford have as their counterpart in the late medieval spread of female literacy men such as John Fisher, Thomas More, and other early humanists who saw little reason to exclude women from the riches of the more humane letters they were studying, and the developing New Learning being applied to the even richer and deeper seams of scholarship and scripture that the universal Church had accumulated in its 1,500 years of earthly labour. But in both cases, this new flowering of learning, and its development into new grammar schools and colleges, although aided and abetted by these men, was driven on and fired by the enthusiasm and the commitments of visionary women who wanted to make a difference, who wanted to change society.

The Royal charters of many of the former women's colleges define their primary role as providing 'the protection and training of an academic house'. In the case of Lady Margaret Hall, those two apparently understated but actually hugely ambitious objectives (protection to allow individuals to develop and to find their true identity, and training to form that identity and to guide it into worthwhile avenues of exploration, analysis, discovery and outreach) are embodied for me in the Beaufort portcullis that forms such a prominent feature of the college's coat of arms (along with the Talbot dogs, that are a rebus of Warden and Mrs Talbot, and the bell of the Wordsworth family). The portcullis represents protection and security: a doughty willingness to fight for and defend what matters and what is valued, which the Lady Margaret embodied in her political struggles on behalf of Henry VII, her only son, conceived

when she was merely 12 years old, and which must for us symbolise the values of a liberal education provided in the protected environment of a university, where we learn how to think and how to read, before we venture out to apply those skills for the good of society. Henry VII added to the Beaufort portcullis the motto: *altera securitas*. In his case this 'further security' was the strengthening of the Tudor claim to the throne provided by the Beaufort line, which descended from Edward III through John of Gaunt, whose children with Katherine Swynford were legitimated as Beauforts in the 1390s. In our case, the further security is provided by working and living in a collegiate environment dedicated to fairness, opportunity, humane values, academic excellence and the pursuit of truth. The other Beaufort motto, *Souvent me souviens*, equally powerfully links us to the academic and intellectual environment of which Lady Margaret was part. The essence of the New Learning of humanism, which she did much to support and encourage by her establishment of academic posts in both universities and by her role as founder of colleges, was to look backwards on the riches of the past, with a fresh and challenging eye; to ensure that mankind retained what Chaucer (to whom Margaret Beaufort was distantly related) calls 'the keye of remembraunce' so that the riches of past knowledge should not be lost, and so that those riches could be exploited for the creation of new learning and new understanding. And also to ensure that the best of the past got carried forward into the work of the future. Although the turbulence of the reformation swept away most of what Margaret Beaufort had known and valued, and swept away poor old John Fisher with it, her lecturerships and her Cambridge foundations weathered the storm and still offer that protection and training that is so expensive to provide but priceless to receive. Likewise, LMH, established with similar idealisms and objectives, has evolved and developed, has responded to the changing prevailing winds of changes in society, but has also stood firm in the core values of intellectual integrity, the search for truth and the pursuit of excellence.

By 'often remembering', Margaret Beaufort laboured to establish an *altera securitas* for her son, her dynasty, and her country. By often remembering, colleges such as this continually labour to create new securities for ourselves, for our society and for the wider world. Not by looking backwards or inwards, but by using the past to engage with the present and to shape the future. The real world is always visible through the protecting and permeable bars of the portcullis. For unlike the medieval monasteries from which many ancient Oxbridge colleges evolved, the Beaufort portcullis cannot represent a retreat from the needs of the world, a shutting out of the demands and challenges of society. That was not what Margaret Beaufort's direct foundations were

designed to do, and it was never what the great nineteenth-century foundations were designed to do either. In his Month's Mind sermon, John Fisher, perhaps surprisingly, used the story of Martha to structure his account of the life of the Lady Margaret. But a moment's reflection explains why. In the medieval tradition, Martha typified the active life, while Mary represented the life of the contemplative. In the Vulgate version of the Bible that Fisher and Lady Margaret would have known, the story goes like this in Luke:

> **40** But Martha was busy about much serving. Who stood and said: Lord, hast thou no care that my sister hath left me alone to serve? speak to her therefore, that she help me.
>
> **41** And the Lord answering, said to her: Martha, Martha, thou art careful, and art troubled about many things: **42** But one thing is necessary. Mary hath chosen the best part, which shall not be taken away from her.

But remember that Martha, busy about the work of the family and worried about many things, also loves and trusts Christ to bring back her brother Lazarus from the dead, and remains in close attendance on Christ to the end of his life. Fisher comments on Lady Margaret's anxiety, remarking that even in the glory of her grandson's coronation she was fretting about potential dangers and challenges to the succession. And we know from him that she was also a woman of great energy, busy about her estates, a generous host, a solicitous employer, and active about the welfare of her family. So in these respects she is appropriately likened to the biblical Martha. But Fisher is getting at something different here. One of the books that Margaret Beaufort arranged to have printed by Caxton's successor Wynkyn de Worde, was an edition of Walter Hilton's late fourteenth-century guide to the contemplative life called *The Scale* [or Ladder] *of Perfection*. But the version that Lady Margaret sponsored had, as an additional section, another work by Hilton called the *Epistle on the Mixed Life*. This had been written to a wealthy nobleman or gentry figure who had asked Hilton for guidance on how he could live a life of contemplation like that enjoyed by secluded monks and nuns. Hilton had told him that he could not live such a life, as his responsibilities and duties towards those in his family, household, estates, and businesses who depended on him for their welfare precluded his abandoning his public role. But, Hilton says, it is possible to combine elements of both lives in what he calls a 'mixed life'. He goes on to explain that this involves developing an intense and dedicated interior life of prayer and spiritual reading alongside the public roles to which he has been called:

> For since our lord hath ordained thee and sette thee in the state of sovereignty over other men . . . and lente the habundance of worldly goods for to rule and to sustain specially all these that are under thy governance and the

> lordship of thy might and understanding, . . . I believe that this middled or mixed life is the best and accordeth most to thee for to labour in.

I have no doubt that it was this work that was in John Fisher's mind when he wrote his sermon on the Lady Margaret. For he recounts in great detail not only the many anxieties she had undergone over her son's and her own safety and wellbeing throughout their life (he was, of course, only 13 years younger than her); the rigorous round of religious observance that Lady Margaret underwent on a daily basis, alongside her commitment to fasting and almsgiving; the relative austerity of her diet and her living arrangements; and the discomforts and pains she suffered from arthritis in her joints towards the end of her life. He also stresses her scholarly aspirations:

> A redy witte she had also to conceyue all thynges albeit thye were ryght derke. Right studious she was in bookes whiche she had in greete nombre . . . and for her exercyse and for the profyte of other she dyde translate dyuers maters of deuocyon out of frensshe into Englysshe.

She apparently regretted that she had not applied herself more vigorously to the learning of Latin in her younger days, which had left her with what he calls only a 'little perceaving' of the language, enough to follow the rubrics in her service books. Moreover he stresses her willingness to apply herself to learning, and to apply that learning to her life. She was 'good in remembraunce and in holdyng memorye', he says, which is both a recollection of her motto, and of the fact that, as a tough political operator, once crossed she was not likely to forget the offence easily, and looked on the idiocies of the world with a clear and sharp eye (one of the books she had translated was a pungent allegory of the follies of life in the world called *The Ship of Fools*).

The 'mixed life' as lived by Margaret Beaufort offers us a powerful paradigm for the continuously evolving and developing life of a college. Politically astute, financially careful, engaged with the world and alert to its traps and snares she undoubtedly was. But she was also an idealist. Studious, a lifelong learner, keen to get to the bottom of 'derke' matters, eager to develop and support talented scholars who caught her eye, quick to offer financial endowments, eager to work at translations for the exercise of her own mind and for the profit of others. Colleges need to be bridges between the life of the mind, fostered and developed in the protection of an academic house's portcullis, and the life of the world. Each of us has to be a bridge builder, going out through the portcullis, into the wider world, always mindful of what we have learned in terms of values, ideals, aspirations and attitudes, as well as what we have learned by way of subject knowledge or disciplinary skills. The college is, has no choice but to be, a modern and always evolving embodiment of the

Mixed Life as lived by Margaret Beaufort. 'All Englonde for her dethe had cause of wepynge', said Fisher in his sermon, 'especially the studyentes of both the universytees to whom she was a moder' and 'all the learned men of Englonde, to whom she was a veray patroness'. Five hundred years after her death, she still has much to tell us about the proper work of colleges such as this one.

In 1946 the then poet laureate John Masefield described the work of a university in these terms:

> It is a place where those who hate ignorance may strive to know; where those who perceive truth may strive to make others see, where seekers and learners alike, banded together in the search for knowledge, will honour thought in all its finer ways, will welcome thinkers in distress or exile, will uphold ever the dignity of thought and learning, and will exact standards in these things.

It is our responsibility to ensure that in this college named for Margaret Beaufort, it must and will continue to be so. I will end as John Fisher ended his sermon in her honour, seeing in it a prayer for our world as much as for our college:

> Therfore put we asyde all wepynge and teeres and be not sad ne heuy as men withouten hope. But rather be we gladde and ioyous, and eche of us herin comfort another. Alwaye praysinge and magnifynge the name of oure lorde to whom be praise and honour endlesly. Amen.

Professor Vincent Gillespie
J. R. R. Tolkien Professor of English Literature and Language, University of Oxford, Professorial Fellow LMH

Effigy of Lady Margaret Beaufort in LMH Chapel.
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Lady Margaret Beaufort

Sermon in LMH Chapel, 27 May 2009

> Some think there is no God at all . . . Some weneth at the least, he is absent, and asketh, where he is. Ubi est Deus tuus.

These words, spoken at the climax of a lengthy oration by Cardinal John Fisher at the 'month's-mind' of the death of Lady Margaret Beaufort, grandmother of the new king, Henry VIII, indicate that this was more than an exercise in political flattery. Rather, it was a personal testimony to how her life mirrored some of the great issues of Christian faith.

Fisher would say of her that 'She had in a manner all that was praisable in a woman, either in soul or body' and the more one reads about Lady Margaret Beaufort, the easier it is to understand why he said that. She was a remarkable woman by any standards, and would have had a remarkable impact on the world in any generation. As it was, her life coincided with one of English history's most dramatic periods: she was effectively the founder of a new royal dynasty that still today fascinates the world; she played an important role in the emergence in Oxford and Cambridge of a college system in recognisable continuity with what we know today; she was a patroness of early English printing; and she was close to the heart of the revolution in knowledge and learning taking shape at the start of the sixteenth century. And, finally, although she died nine years before the young monk Martin Luther took steps that would inaugurate the end of medieval Christendom, the first intimations of that crisis were already in the air, and Fisher himself, her confessor, friend, and remembrancer, would lose his own life in the upheavals that were shortly to follow. Although she belonged to the final hours of the late medieval world, Lady Margaret's gifts, interests, and energies enabled her to play a powerful role in the emergence of the new world of early modern England and to leave a legacy in relation to power, knowledge, and religion of which we are in a quite concrete sense, still the beneficiaries.

But what her life and works mean is a far more complex question. Saint? Neurotic religious maniac? Dynastic power player? Wise woman? Each event of her life seems to be open to very different interpretations. Take her famous dream. At the age of eight she was given the choice between two suitors, John de la Pole, the son of the Duke of Suffolk, and Edmund Tudor. Having prayed for guidance to Saint Nicholas she fell asleep and, at about four o'clock in the morning, a man dressed as a Bishop – Nicholas himself? – appeared to her and told her to take Edmund. Fisher does not quite see this as a miraculous revelation – although he hints that it might be.

Caroline Halsted, writing in 1845, comments differently:

> The superstition which in the fifteenth century had almost usurped the place of true religion, and so alloyed the purity of prayer and supplication, that miracles from pretended saints were considered as the test of God's especial grace, renders it by no means surprising that the overwrought imagination of the innocent Margaret Beaufort should have believed that her decision had resulted from supernatural agency.

Such a thing, she goes on to say, would not be possible

> in the present enlightened age, when, through the blessing of God, the spiritual tyranny of Romish priestcraft has been swept from the land, by force of that pure apostolic doctrine which was beginning to manifest itself through the immortal Wyckliffe.

E. M. G. Routh takes religion out of it altogether:

> Little John [the son of the Duke of Suffolk] must have seemed to her a mere baby, whom she had probably patronised in the nursery in an elderly-sisterly way, while Edmund was a soldierly young fellow of 19 or 20 . . . and son of a valiant mountain chieftain and a beautiful queen.

Clearly no contest!

Similarly, her work in founding colleges and readerships might be interpreted in terms of charitable feeling and a love of learning but it is also understandable as a matter of dynastic politics. After all, then, as now, such things require money and are often inextricable from the interests of powerful lobbies, and those whose lands were bought, sold, or transferred in order to enable her to make her great benefactions were perhaps less than entirely grateful.

But from whatever angle we approach her, there is no question as to the intensity of her religious devotion. Fisher's remembrance gives an impressive – we might even say terrifying – account of her observances, from first devotions at 5 a.m., listening to three or four masses a day on her knees, fasting, hairshirts, 'marvellous weeping', confession every few days, a vow of chastity undertaken even prior to her husband's death – in short, 'the works'. And, as Fisher emphasises, this was accompanied by hands-on works of charity, washing the wounds of the sick, putting the poor she kept in her household to bed and feeding them with her own hands.

She was a doer, and perhaps this is why Fisher chose especially to compare her with Martha, the sister of Lazarus. Martha has, of course, had rather an indifferent press in Christian history. When she reproached her sister Mary for sitting at Jesus's feet and listening to him talk while there was so much to do about the house, Jesus is reported as saying to her that Mary had chosen the better part: and Christian memory has consistently taken Mary's part. But Fisher sees it differently. The

fact that she was so busy about the house, he explains, was a sign of her hospitality, in connection with which he comments that if Lady Margaret 'did not receive into her house our Saviour in his own person, as the blessed Martha did, she nevertheless received them that doth represent his person'. A line that, perhaps, only a late medieval Cardinal could deliver with a straight face!

And yet, for all this, the climax of the comparison comes in Martha's anguish at the death of her brother and in Lady Margaret's own dreadful death agonies. 'Some think there is no God at all . . . Some weneth at the least, he is absent, and asketh, where he is.' This, Fisher says, is how we see Martha, in the moment when Jesus arrives at her house: 'Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.' It is a moment of inconsolable despair. And the same underlying question forces itself upon him in face of Margaret's last sufferings. How could a woman who had lived such an exemplary life be forced to undergo such terrible pains? Would she not have been justified in raging against a God who could so dramatically abandon her? In perhaps the most poignant lines of his address, Fisher speaks of the pitiful sight of the hands that had been occupied

> in giving alms to the poor and needy, and dressing them also, when they were sick, and ministering unto them meat and drink . . . these merciful and liberal hands to endure the most painful cramps, so grievously vexing her, and compelling her to cry, O blessed Jesu, help me! Oh blessed Lady, succour me! It was a matter of great pity.'

Lady Margaret's death was the death of a late medieval Catholic lady, attended by clergy and servants, accompanied by the administration of the sacraments. Yet in Fisher's words, if not in Lady Margaret's own thoughts, we cannot avoid sensing that that whole system of piety was being put to the test, and that its power to help even the most devout negotiate the passages of life and death was no longer unquestionable. Nine years later, that system would be challenged, and Europe, for good or ill, would never be the same.

Now, any great shift in cultural horizons, as happened at the start of the sixteenth century, as is happening in our own day, will shake the foundations of whatever belief is prevalent in a given society. In the crevasses that open up within the continuum of history, things fall apart, the centre ceases to hold, and men and women are left alone to face the ultimate issues of love, life, and death with uncertain cultural and symbolic resources. Even in her pitiful death agonies, surrounded by the weepings of her servants – 'All England for her death had cause of weeping', says the loyal Fisher – even *in extremis*, Margaret affirmed her faith that the sacrament offered to her 'contained' 'Christ Jesus, the Son

of God, that died for wretched sinners on the cross'. *And yet* her death left even Fisher with the question, where, in all this, is God?

We, too, are surely, in a very real sense, 'between the times'. The world that those of us over, let's say, 50 grew up in, has vanished. A new global order – or, it may be, disorder – new technologies, new paradigms of knowledge and learning, and new visions of what constitutes a good life are transforming the way we live and the way we feel about ourselves.

Those of us involved in university life know all this on the basis of daily experience and, as we move from Research Assessment Exercise to Research Excellence Framework, it is ever clearer that the model of university life to which Lady Margaret so greatly contributed is in the melting-pot. And so, once more, the question: we know a lot, we are capable of much, but *where is God*?

In such times, saying 'Yes' to God will demand much more than ticking a box in an opinion poll form. To say yes to God in any meaningful way is also to face fundamental questions about our own identities, aims, and values: to say 'I believe in God' is to make a basic decision about who I am, what I owe to my neighbour, what is worth knowing, and how I must be. Perhaps our Yes to God will not have to be tried by the kind of agonies that Fisher reports of Margaret's death-bed, but it will, nonetheless, be tried. And the trial will be all the more severe because so many of the resources of the religious traditions we have inherited have lost their power to support, console, and encourage – have lost it in whole, or in considerable part. The past is no more. The new is yet to come. Yet if we are honest in struggling with what, honestly, can in God's name be said and what, honestly, can in God's name be done, those of us who seek to preserve and interpret the memory of the old may hope to contribute to giving shape and direction to the new. Margaret's life, a life also lived 'between the times', indicates that those who live in the old can give much to the new. Her death reminds us that, in such times, our Yes to God will not absolve us from the question: Where is now your God?

Revd Professor George Pattison
Lady Margaret Professor of Divinity, University of Oxford,
Canon of Christ Church

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Lady Margaret Hall
Oxford OX2 6QA
Tel: +44 (0)1865 274362
Email: development@lmh.ox.ac.uk
www.lmh.ox.ac.uk

LMH
Lady Margaret Hall