

FULGENS AND LUCRES: An Historical Perspective

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Meg Twycross' 'Medieval Theatre' course at Lancaster University always includes the staging of a pageant or morality play, requiring both general research by the students and the solving of practical and technical problems raised by public performance of the chosen play. Medieval art, literature, and records supply the essential background knowledge for investigating a play's purpose, themes and sources, and for presenting the play in a manner which does not conflict with traditional or iconographical versions of the dramatised events. Sets and costumes are constructed by a combination of research, experimentation, invention, and hard work, while it is hoped that concentrated involvement in the matter of one particular play will develop the understanding and appreciation of unfamiliar beliefs, attitudes, language, and the acting conventions of medieval theatre, necessary for a convincing and intelligible dramatic performance for a modern audience.

With every production the current acting group makes several interconnected discoveries: that the text of a play and its stage performance are very different artefacts, that the dramatised version can be surprisingly at variance with the expectations of the students after their first reading of the play, and that accepted textual criticism or opinions about the theme and purpose of a play may prove incompatible with what actually happens on stage between the actors. Over a period, rehearsals and seminar discussions often reveal a kind of dramatic sub-text, intensifying the importance of certain themes, foregrounding some apparently secondary characters, or disclosing previously unsuspected topics and lines of research. This is what happened in the 1984 production of Henry Medwall's *Fulgens and Lucrez*. At the initial read-through, the play was summed up as 'full of long, boring speeches', partly because, at that point, it was not entirely clear to the students what the speeches were about, and partly because they were in an unfamiliar oratorical style. Even I expected that the tone of the debate between Cornelius and Gaius in the second part of the interlude would reproduce the declamatory rhetoric of Medwall's presumed source, John Tiptoft's *The Declamacion of Noblesse*.¹ But during rehearsals, the 'long boring speeches' became effective theatrical

scenes, and a comparison of Medwall's dramatic adaptation in the second part of his interlude with *The Declamacion of Noblesse* changed from a detailed rhetorical analysis into an accumulation of facts about fifteenth-century law and politics. This article is the product of both the dramatic and the textual discoveries, incorporating some earlier research into the debate form in medieval literature, and much expanded by afterthoughts and an extensive reading of legal history.

Set in Ancient Rome, *The Declamacion of Noblesse* consists almost entirely of a classical rhetorical disputation between Cornelius and Gaius on the theme of *virtus non sanguis* ('virtue, not [noble] blood'). Held before the Senate, and schematically conforming to Quintilian's five-part formula for forensic oratory,² the ostensible purpose of the disputation is to decide which of the two men can prove himself the more noble, thereby winning the hand of Lucesse. Actually, the real interest for medieval readers would lie in the demonstration of rhetorical techniques and the exposition of Aristotelian philosophy applied to an argument about true nobility. 'Nobility' in this case is defined mainly in terms of the qualities of liberality and magnificence associated with the Burgundian court; Cornelius is accused of the excesses of prodigality and vulgarity, in turn he claims that Gaius is guilty of the opposing defects of meanness and shabbiness. *The Declamacion of Noblesse* does not record whether the Senate chose Cornelius or Gaius, because that would be irrelevant to its literary purpose. In any case, the victor is self-evident. Tiptoft's disputation is weighted in favour of Gaius; he has the advantage of speaking second, and more importantly, he has been given superior oratorical skills, automatically selecting him as the more noble man, because it is axiomatic that only a good man can be a good orator (*cum bene dicere non possit nisi bonus*).³

Medwall condenses his version of the disputation into three hundred lines of verse, making it the thematic climax of the interlude, and creating dramatic tension through Lucesse's active supervision of the debate and her interventions in the speeches of the two men. Extending the cast list of *The Declamacion of Noblesse* to include a maid for Lucesse, and two low-life male servants, A and B, Medwall added a comic sub-plot, romantic interest, and musical entertainment, and gave his Lucesse an important, even dominant role in the interlude. He retained the Burgundian interpretation of nobility from his source, but kept only the personal names and passing references to the Roman background, reducing the extensive catalogue of Cornelius' heroic, noble, Roman ancestors to one brief mention of Scipio. Medwall also simplified the rhetorical structure of

the disputation, converting Tiptoft's model of Roman forensic oratory into an abbreviated form of English law-suit pleading. Using the language of English common law: *sentence, general precedent, equity, title, trespass, replication, man of witness, due evidence, common voice* etc., the debate follows a form of legal process associated with the development of certain courts and judicial procedures under Henry VII. Appropriately for the altered legal background of Medwall's debate, Cornelius is accused of the uniquely English offences of maintenance and retaining, exclusively connected with the illegal arrogation of power by the English aristocracy. Surprisingly for such a specific framework, the Senate's judicial function in the disputation is replaced, not by the expected bench of judges or jury of the English legal system, but by the single female character of Lucre, presiding alone over the argument between Cornelius and Gaius. Apart from this apparent anomaly, the introduction of the related juridical topics of judges, courts, procedures, and crimes, along with the changes made to the terminology, legal background, and some of the content of the disputation, set Medwall's debate firmly in late fifteenth-century England. In effect, although Medwall's Cornelius still refers to the deeds of his ancestors as if he were a Roman nobleman, he and Gaius represent two opposing factions in the English ruling classes: Cornelius as a member of the land-owning, lawless nobility, and Gaius, a commoner, as the ideal officer of state upholding the lawful authority of Henry VII and his council.

In spite of being separated by more than fifty years, both the declamation and Medwall's interlude were produced in a similar political and cultural climate. The clashes between the Crown and the powerful barons, who ruled their estates like autocratic princelings, were as much a problem in Tiptoft's life-time as they were in Medwall's, and the resplendent Court of Burgundy exerted the same cultural influence on the courts of both Edward IV and Henry VII. Consequently, when Medwall de-constructed *The Declamation of Noblesse* into an innovative romantic comedy, complete with music, singing, and dancing, he was able to apply the 'liberality and magnificence' motifs from the disputation to a more serious dramatic purpose: that of highlighting or illustrating the political and legal dissension between the government and the aristocracy in the reign of Henry VII. Medwall's use of Aristotle's concepts of the mean, excess, and deficiency of the qualities of liberality and magnificence⁴ will be discussed in detail later to show how they also contribute to the overall change of literary purpose and tone. Briefly, Tiptoft's moral, but abstract, rhetorical disputation has become an entertainment which critically

compares the behaviour of Henry's overbearing nobles with the standards of the Tudor court. In Tiptoft, the nature of true nobility and the notion of the equality of man are the commonplaces of courteous literature, and his accounts of the glory and honour of Classical heroes belong to the chivalric tradition, reflecting his own tastes and interests. Medwall's adaptation has different aims; serving as 'a defence of the Tudor "new man"',⁵ it is personal and sharply topical, quoting the language of contemporary legislation to identify the issue of order versus rebellion in the reign of Henry VII.

Medwall's Cornelius is unquestionably re-cast as an English aristocratic thug when he is charged by Gaius with the crimes of illegal maintenance and retaining, the joint causes of much of the civil unrest and armed quarrels in the reign of Henry VII. As evidence of his intention to curb and punish his rebellious nobles, Henry introduced the parliamentary Act of 1487 (later known by the title prefixed in Caxton's first printing: *pro Camera Stellata*), reviving or consolidating earlier legislation, and reinforced throughout the reign by additional statutes.⁶ The Act proscribed:

the onlawfull mayntenances gevynges of lyveres signes tokyns and reteyndres by endentur promyses othes wrytyng or other wise embraceries ... by taking of money by jurryes by greate riottes and unlawfull assemblez the polacye and good rule of this realme is almost subdued ... wherby the lawes of the lond in execucion may take litell effecte to the encres of murdres roberies perjuries and unsuerties of all men lyving and losses of ther londes and goodes.

Gaius' indictment of Cornelius, who:

... weeneth that by his proud countenance
Of word and deed with nice array,
His great oaths and open maintenance
Of thefts and murders every day,
Also his riotous disports and play,
His sloth, his cowardice and other excess,
His mind disposed to all uncleanness,
By these things only he shall have nobleness ... 2: 633—
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is actually a paraphrase of the offences contained in the Star Chamber Act. At the beginning of Gaius' accusation, 'proud countenance' might be taken to refer to the arrogant bearing and ostentatious overdressing of

Cornelius, but the phrase ‘open maintenance’ alters the context, and with it the entire meaning, of the passage. ‘Proud countenance of word and deed’, legally defined below, is the arrogant instigation and defence by Cornelius of the illegal actions of his servants and supporters. Their ‘nice array’, or livery, uniforms, badges, and payments, comprise the ‘lyveres signes tokens and reteyndres’ forbidden by the Star Chamber Act, which make his servants and supporters into indentured retainers to be used as a private army. In time of war, it was permitted and expected that servants and tenants who wore their lord’s badge, received his livery of clothes and food, and were paid wages, would form a military force for the Crown, under a lord’s authority. In peace-time, from the Wars of the Roses on, some disbanded soldiers without employment, property, or land, turned to crime, roaming the country at large. Others were taken on by a lord for his own purposes, augmenting the number of lesser gentry, tenants, and tradesmen retained by payments or sworn promises, who could be called on to help subdue the lord’s opponents, and enforce the lord’s own law over the local community. When a man well-provided with retainers wished, for example, to pursue a claim to his neighbour’s land, the last thing he thought of was his legal remedy. He simply collected his retainers, made an armed entry onto his neighbour’s property, drove him out and seized the land by force. Such forcible entries into land and property frequently resulted in the riots, thefts, and even murder, listed by the Star Chamber Act and repeated in Gaius’ indictment.

For Henry VII, as well as his predecessors, the main problem was that when charges of theft, riot, or murder, were brought against retainers, they could rely on their lord’s protection in the courts of law from the legal consequences of crimes committed in his service. This was the ‘open maintenance’ of Cornelius, explained as ‘an unlawfull upholding of the Demandant or Plaintiffe, Tenant or Defendant in a cause depending in suit, by word, action, writing, countenance or deed’,⁷ and juries were usually so intimidated by a lord who testified for his servants, that the accused were dismissed. With his ‘proud countenance of word and deed’ of ‘thefts and murders’, Cornelius was typical of those land-owning magnates whose activities are recorded in the cases brought before the Star Chamber and the King’s Council.⁸ They used their retainers in illegal armed assaults and then swore ‘great oaths’ in court that the men were innocent of the crimes initiated by the lords themselves. However, unless a higher authority intervened, there was little chance of illegal activities being brought before any court where the local Justices of the Peace were either

the same nobles who were involved in the violent acts, or were retained by them. The problem is illustrated by a letter sent in 1488, in the King's name, to Richard Gardener the mayor, and to the bailiffs of Lancaster, complaining that the town was in great ruin and decay because of 'variaunces that amonges you hath been by meane of takying of liveryes and conysaunces, and by reteyning with divers and several lordes ... contrary to oure lawes'.⁹ With the law often administered and controlled in country areas by the same men who broke it, an alternative system was needed to prevent the subversion of justice by local magnates.

To ensure the safety of the state, the King could not suffer the nobles of his realm to 'rune at riot as to punisse or revenge there owne quarelles',¹⁰ or to challenge the power of the monarchy by ruling their estates like principalities because of the number of men at their command. Henry's Star Chamber Act gave the executive authority of Council in Star Chamber the power to check the King's overweening subjects, who acted like Cornelius, by imposing harsh fines on them. The case of Lord Bergavenny (see note 11 below) may have been typical of the way Henry's arrogant nobility behaved, and of the way they could be dealt with under the powers of the Star Chamber Act. In Kent, Lord Bergavenny retained a small army drawn from a consolidated area of eighty-six towns and villages in the middle of the county, comprising twenty-five gentlemen, four clergy, 440 yeomen, one cobbler, and one tinker, all sworn to be obedient to him all their lives. These men did not belong to the manual servant or labouring class, and because of their standing and influence in the community, and because they owed their allegiance to Lord Bergavenny before the Crown, they constituted a grave threat to the security of the state. When he was tried in the King's Bench, Lord Bergavenny was charged with retaining the four hundred and seventy-one men for thirty months, from June 1504 to December 1506, and fined £70,650.¹¹ Henry 'considered that whenever [his nobles] gave him offence, they were actuated by their great wealth'¹² so they must be harshly fined, and his attitude to wealthy law-breakers was unaffected by familial or past political obligations. When James Stanley was indicted for illegal retaining and fined £145,610 at Lancaster Assizes, and his retainers a total of £58,644,¹³ the fact that he was the son of Thomas Stanley, Earl of Derby, the King's own stepfather and one of his earliest political allies, was not allowed to influence the court's decision. The King's stated intention was to make the men of substance 'less well able to undertake any upheaval and to discourage at the same time, all offences'.¹⁴ Depriving those who

broke his laws of their fortunes restricted their ability to either finance their private armies, or to attempt to emulate the magnificence of the royal court.

It was equally challenging to Henry's supremacy, if not criminal *per se*, that the extravagant life-style of those noblemen and highly-placed churchmen, and their households, servants and dependants, often competed in size and splendour with those of royalty. In the winter of 1507, when the Duke of Buckingham was already an object of jealousy to the Crown, his household accounts show that he celebrated the feast of the Epiphany with a party of 459 guests, entertained by four players, two minstrels, six trumpeters, four waits, and eighteen singers and nine boys of the chapel. This hospitality followed the feast of the Nativity when he had already given hospitality to 294 of the local gentry and friends.¹⁵ To stress the unsuitability of such display for anyone other than the King, Cornelius, representing fifteenth-century aristocracy, is condemned for waste and ostentation as well as his pretensions to a royal life-style. Where, in *The Declamacion of Noblesse*, he is said to have been 'prodygal vnto wanton and shamefaste creatures, wasted his apparel and goods' (fol. 45), and therefore guilty of the prodigality, extravagance, and vicious over-indulgence said to be the excesses of liberality (*Ethics* 4:1), in Medwall's interlude, B explicitly claims his master is 'worthy to be a king / For liberal expenses in all his dealing' (1: 715–716). But his description of Cornelius' behaviour as typically royal is a travesty of the Tudor concept of liberality. Cornelius, having inherited 'great goods':

wot never what to do withal,
 But lasheth it forth daily, askance
 That he had no daily remembrance
 Of time to come, nor maketh no store,
 For he careth not which end goeth before. 1: 700–5

Such profligacy was the opposite of Henry's attitude to wealth and possessions; his inheritance on becoming king was an almost bankrupt royal Treasury, and he encouraged his administrators to become efficient, even ruthless, in collecting fines and generating income from various sources to build up the Crown's reserves. Where Cornelius wasted his wealth, Henry's revenues were invested in material objects which would keep or increase their value: jewellery, plate, cloth of gold, buildings etc., but he also practised kingly liberality when he made 'a princely use of his wealth, and encouraged scholarship and music as well as architecture'.¹⁶

Cornelius has the same misconception about the true nature of magnificence, and his ostentatious spending reveals the vulgarity or bad taste which is the excess of that virtue (*Ethics* 4: 2). In the interlude, his hose are said to be

striped all this way
 With small slips of colour gay,
 A codpiece before — almost thus large ... 1: 732—4

He pays twenty times the fair price for the making of his hose (1: 721—3), he clothes his servants in the same outrageously fashionable gowns as he himself wears (1: 760—61), and as an incentive to Lucre, he promises that: ‘About your person ye can do none excess / In my company that should displease my mind’ (2: 549—50). Such extravagance would be particularly despised by Henry and the members of the court circle who had been in exile with him. They had all known the reality of poverty as dispossessed fugitives, and experienced ‘the threadbare living / With wretched scarceness’ (2: 572—3) said to be Gaius’ way of life, and seen by Cornelius as shabbiness, the opposite extreme or defect of magnificence. Conversely, the Tudor court would probably approve of the frugality and economy of Gaius, and consider his ‘moderate richesse’ (2: 695) much more praiseworthy and appropriate than Cornelius’ conspicuous consumption. At the same time, Henry and his council knew that a display of magnificence was both fitting and necessary *for a king*, and they intended to keep it as a royal prerogative. It was made clear from the start how the outward trappings of Henry’s monarchy were to be presented, when the preamble to Henry VII’s Act of Resumption in 1485 declared that:

your Honorable Houshold must be kept and borne Worshipfully and Honorably, as it accordeth to the Honour of your Estate and said Realme, by the whiche your Adversaries and Enemyes shall fall into the drede wherin heretofore they have byne.¹⁷

Those who were not Henry’s enemies or adversaries were also to be shown ‘magnificence, impressive ceremonial, lavish display of costly clothing. Festivity on appropriate occasions, pageantry, banquetting, jousting, music, dancing, disguisings, revels ... and the like’ in order ‘to impress his courtiers, his subjects, and the ambassadors of foreign potentates’.¹⁸ Ironically, in a Tudor version of poetic justice, it is possible that Henry’s liberality and magnificence was funded principally from monies extracted by exorbitant fines levied on the kind of rich ill-doer typified by Cornelius.

The violence of the landed gentry in pursuit of their own quarrels and in defiance of the law did not, at first, seem to be part of Cornelius' dramatic persona. In the Lancaster production, early discussions by the cast of how the various rôles should be played allotted to Cornelius the character of an over-dressed idle fop, arrogant if somewhat stupid — until rehearsals of the debate scene altered this assessment. On stage, Cornelius' speeches became transformed into an actively menacing confrontation threatening bodily assault against Gaius, not due to any deliberate decision by the actors, but imposed on them by Medwall's textual changes to the disputation when combined with the dynamics of acting. There is no suggestion of physical intimidation in the speeches of the disputants in *The Declamacion of Noblesse*, so that its introduction by Medwall apparently confirms that the theme of *virtus non sanguis* has become, in his interlude, equated with the issue of order versus rebellion. Naturally, in keeping with the reputation of the English aristocracy, the blame for violence is laid entirely on Cornelius, whose high-handed aggression is established even before the debate begins. While waiting for Gaius, Lucesse warns Cornelius:

I forbid you utterly all manner of violence
 During this matter, and also that ye cease
 Of all such words as may give occasion
 Of brawling or other ungodly condition. 2: 370—3

Later, during the debate, Medwall alters the pattern of *The Declamacion of Noblesse* speeches to emphasise Cornelius' violent character. In Tiptoft's disputation, Cornelius first addresses the Senate, then Lucesse, ignoring Gaius completely, even when he makes disparaging comments about him:

Thenne lete Gayus Flamyneus put hym self to sylence, and namely
 in this stryf of noblesse, or in the desyre of fair Lucesse, syth, in
 byrthe and rychesse, he maye chalenge no part of noblesse.
 Namely, that it is to vs alle vnknownen from whens he cam, and
 whether he haue ony lytle pyece of erthe to bylde upon a cote or
 lodge. fol 35^v

Medwall converts these remarks into a personal attack by Cornelius directed at Gaius:

I marvel greatly what should thy mind incense
 To think that thy title therein should be good.
 Perdie, thou canst not say for thy defence
 That ever there was gentleman of thy kin or blood,

that he compares well with Cornelius in ‘virtue and goodly manner’ (2: 667), the equivalent of Tiptoft’s generalised statement that noblesse is a ‘certayn excellence of vertue and manhode’ (fol 37^v), and Medwall contributes an original comment about Gaius, indirectly associating at least his superior character with Henry, to the effect that ‘Through his great wisdom and virtuous behaviour, / He ruled the common weal to his great honour’ (1: 96–7).

As his principal claims to nobleness, Tiptoft’s Gaius states he is:

pyteous of them whyche had necessaryte, namely to my fader,
moder, & kynne, welbeloved of my neyghbours, true to my
frendes, obeysaunt and deuoute in thynges relygious ... (fol
44^v)

there was no day whiche passed me ydle, ne no nyght without
studye and lerning of somewhat ... (fol 43^v)

I was a knyght, & in the seruyse of the same Emperour; and how
ofte I had for my guerdons, the rounde crowne ... (fol 44r–v)

In Medwall, there are the additional distinctive Christian virtues of piety, chastity, and humility:

I have borne unto God all my days
His laud and praise with my due devotion ... 2: 671–2

Incontinency and uncleanness I have had in abomination ...
2: 675

And ever have I withstood my lusts sensual ... 2: 677

For loth would I be as any creature

To boast of mine own deeds — it was never my guise ... 2: 591–
2

followed by the parallel claims from *The Declamacion of Noblesse*:

I bear always
To all my neyghbours charitable affection ... 2: 673–4

Loving to my friend and faithful withal ... 2: 676

One time with study my time I spend,
To eschew idleness, the causer of sin;
Another time my country manly I defend,
And for the victories that I have done therein
Ye have seen yourself, sir, that I have come in
To this noble city twice or thrice

Crowned with laurel, as it is the guise.

2: 678—

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‘By these ways’, Gaius claims, ‘lo, I do arise unto great honour fro low degree’ (2: 685—6), reinforcing, with the reference to his humble background and his military service, the connection with Henry VII’s court circle.

Like Gaius, virtually all the trusted members of the King’s Council and other officials were self-made men who had served in his army. The older nobility were not totally excluded from the administration, but they were rarely given real authority, especially if they had been adherents of the Yorkist cause, whereas many of Henry’s officers of state had been in exile with him, fought alongside him, and subsequently held office throughout his reign. Because of his own background, Henry Medwall was in a position to know and be sympathetic to the circumstances of their lives: his father had probably been in the clothing trade in London, and in 1485, while still at Oxford, Medwall apparently entered the service of either Oliver King, secretary to the king, or of John Morton, Henry’s Chancellor in the new government. By 1490 he was definitely in Morton’s employment and remained with him until Morton’s death.²⁰ He would know personally Henry’s friends and advisers, men such as Richard Empson, Edward Dudley, John Heron, Henry Wyatt, and Thomas Lovell, who all appear to have had similar characters, personal histories, and later careers. Lovell, for example, was the fifth son of a minor land-owner, and had trained as a common lawyer before joining Henry in exile, becoming Chancellor of the Exchequer and Treasurer of the Chamber on Henry’s accession. Other long-standing members of the court circle, such as Giles Daubeney and Richard Guildford, while never holding important posts, always remained close to the King. Neither were of noble stock, and Daubeney at least must have had the special personal qualities valued by Henry. An epitaph written by Bernard André, the King’s poet laureate, praises him for those very virtues attached to true nobility; he was *vir bonus, prudens, justus, probus, et omnibus dilectus* (‘a good man, prudent, just, honest and loved by all’).²¹

In line with Henry’s selection of men for high office who were capable, if not necessarily well-born, his churchmen were frequently also lawyers, and administrators rather than theologians. He chose men such as Peter Courtney, a civil lawyer, to be Keeper of the Privy Seal and Bishop of Exeter until his death, and Richard Fox, another lawyer, to succeed to both posts. Even the most important and powerful figure in Henry VII’s

council, John Morton, was a civil lawyer from an ordinary family, repaid for his loyalty and service to the King with the offices of Archbishop of Canterbury and Chancellor of England, which he held from the first year of the reign until the end of his life. Morton and Lady Margaret Beaufort, the King's mother, had been joint conspirators in the plots to secure the throne for Henry, and remained the King's closest supporters and most influential advisers. While the King himself was by no means 'of low degree', nevertheless he understood the difficulties of rising from uncertain and unpromising beginnings to high office, and he had acquired the crown by right of conquest. Constitutionally his status was that of a usurper until he could gain the official recognition of Parliament, and when he came to the throne he was a 'landless and penniless refugee, after fourteen years' exile ... no resources of his own, and little clothing even, no experience of government and administration, and no training as a prince'.²² The King's mother, Lady Margaret, was, of course, of impeccable lineage. As the direct descendent and heiress of John of Gaunt and great-great-granddaughter of Edward III, she, and not her son, was the real heir to the throne after Richard III's death. However, in spite of her standing, her early life had been as difficult and dangerous as her son's, and perhaps because of her experiences, she learnt to value loyalty and ability above social rank. It may have been her example of furthering the careers of able men from whatever background which influenced Henry's choice of councillors; certainly from her own household she provided the King with several excellent officers, notably the man who became his chief minister, chief financial adviser and most trusted friend: Sir Reginald Bray. Middle class and unknown in court circles, Bray had started his career in Lady Margaret's service when she was married to Henry Stafford, and remained her friend throughout his life as well as continuing, after his transfer to the King's household, to carry out commissions for her. He was in exile with Henry and fought at his side in the battle of Bosworth, reputedly rescuing Richard III's crown and presenting it to Henry. Quiet and retiring, little given to extravagance or ostentatious display, Bray was noted for his piety, public benefactions, and generous contributions to the church. Praised by Morton as 'a man of prudence and integrity' who was 'sober, secret and well-witted',²³ he, perhaps of all Henry's courtiers, epitomises the Tudor attitudes and beliefs portrayed, in Medwall's interlude, as belonging to the three dramatic characters of Gaius, Fulgens and Lucre, and above all he provides a perfect template for Medwall's Gaius.

For an argument such as the one in *Fulgens and Lucre* between the lawless and the law-abiding, there was more than one Tudor legal forum where disputants like Cornelius and Gaius might plead their cases, although in three of the available principal courts of equitable appeal, they would probably have appeared before the same man: Chancellor John Morton. It has been suggested that *Fulgens and Lucre* was written for performance in his household, and at a time²⁴ when, as Chancellor, he was the chief judicial officer of the Star Chamber, the Court of Chancery, and the King's Council. Leaving aside the problem of Lucre's female judicial rôle for the moment, a number of connections are readily apparent between the legal aspects of *Fulgens and Lucre* and Chancellor Morton's professional life. First, Henry's Star Chamber Act offered a safer, unbiased court, and stronger justice for plaintiffs than some local courts in arguments about land involving the local gentry, so, as president, Morton would be involved with adjudicating disputed claims to property and possessions which often involved rioting and violence. Additionally, in order to assist with the difficulties of dealing with the offences of maintenance and retaining in local courts and assizes, the Court of Chancery, under the Chancellor, developed its equitable jurisdiction in cases relating to property and land, where common law gave a remedy, but owing to the disturbed state of the country, or the power of the offender, ordinary courts could not act. The Star Chamber Act also encouraged complaints direct to the Chancellor, as the King's deputy in Council, for a remedy in equity, when common law itself was deficient and could offer no redress in the face of evident injustice, especially with regard to disputes over titles to land. In the course of the fifteenth century, equity became a supplementary system of law to correct both the defects of an increasingly rigid rule of common law and the system of writs which limited the kind of legal action available to a plaintiff.²⁵ One contemporary definition of equity as 'the mind of the law', was given by Bishop John Fisher in a collection of sermons compiled at the request of Lady Margaret Beaufort:

Equitas is called the thyng that phylosophers named *epieikeia* whiche is proprely the mynde of the lawe. A Iuge ought rather to folowe the mynde of the lawe than the extremyte of the wordes wyryten in it. Elles as Cicero sayd. *Summum ius summa iniuria erit* ('Extreme law is extreme injury').²⁶

There was also the notion that law must be derived from moral rules, evidently subscribed to by Morton, who implicitly laid down in various

dicta the fundamental principle that Chancery was a court of conscience;²⁷ and by the mid-fifteenth century, the most important court of equity, exercising the principles of fairness, equality, and good conscience, was the High Court of Chancery under Morton's presidency. As the equitable jurisdiction of the court was enlarged, it attracted increasing numbers of cases where the complaint lay outside the machinery of common law. Of course, despite his claim that *nullus recedat a curia cancellariae sine remedio*²⁸ ('no-one should depart from Chancery without a remedy'), the settlement of a dispute about true nobility would probably be beyond even the wide remit of Chancellor Morton. If it had come before him, his verdict would have been against Cornelius on the grounds that an ill-doer could not succeed in equity. As an entertainment however, the form, language, and content of the debate was bound to appeal to Morton and his household, as well as to Henry and his legally-minded and predominantly law-trained council, if they were present in the audience.

Alan Nelson has commented on the amount of legal incident, language, and allusion in both of Henry Medwall's interludes, relating the 'quasi-legal debate' of *Fulgens and Lucre*s to Morton's Chancery Court.²⁹ Since juristic administration was Medwall's profession and the main pre-occupation of Morton's colleagues and household, it is not surprising that the interlude is full of legal terms and references. Although none of the characters address the servants as 'A' and 'B', they are labelled in this way in the text. In a less obvious reference to Morton's activities, A and B would be recognised, probably with some amusement, by readers as well as by the actors, as the conventional anonymous protagonists of specimen Chancery writs (like John Doe, Richard Roe, etc. in criminal indictments). In order to pursue a case in the king's courts, a writ had first to be obtained from Chancery, issued in the King's name by the Chancellor, and an appropriate example of such a writ, in view of the physical damage A and B caused each other in their mock joust for the hand of the maid Joan, might be the original writ of *Trespas vi et armis*, for battery:

Rex vicecomiti S. salutem. Si A. fecerit te securum de clamore suo prosequendo, tunc pone per vadium et salvos plegios B. quod sit coram nobis ... ostensurus quare vi et armis in ipsum A ... insultum fecit et ipsum verberavit, vulneravit et male tractavit.

'The king to the sheriff of S. greeting. If A. shall give you security for pursuing his claim, then put by gage and safe pledges B. that he

be before us ... to show why with force and arms he made assault on the same A ... and beat, wounded and ill-treated [him].³⁰

In many respects the debate between Cornelius and Gaius might be thought to replicate Chancery procedure in the fifteenth century, when the court became less restrictive in its dealings with petitioners. Not bound by formal rules, the president of the court could apparently sit alone without a jury, hearing both litigants without the presence of lawyers or witnesses. Often the hearing would be in a private place, such as a room in his own household, in preference to a recognised court, and at a time convenient for the disputants, not necessarily during the fixed law-terms of other courts. The Chancellor would favour arbitration to settle the complainants' quarrel rather than making a judgement based on strict law (*summum ius*), and his decrees operated *in personam*, binding only on the parties in that particular case, not judgements of record binding on anyone else. A private written decision on the case would be given only to the persons concerned, partly to keep the subject of their argument confidential, but principally to avoid creating a legal precedent for future court rulings, because the judgement was intentionally unique and original to that particular dispute.³¹ In Medwall's debate, Lucre also presides alone, and in a private place, not a court. When Cornelius and Gaius are 'both together in presence' (2: 367), she hears the suitors informally on their agreement to accept her sentence given between them (2: 427, 433–4), and is willing to listen to them impartially, without being intimidated, thereby practising 'equity' (2: 541). She then promises a private written decision for each of them alone (2: 738), which must not be taken 'for a general precedent' (2: 431); the proviso always attached to any equitable ruling of the Chancellor.

The comment by Alan Nelson, referred to above, notes Lucre's rôle as judge, without exploring further what is probably the most interesting and might be the most controversial element of the play. Given that Lucre's activities are aimed at selecting a husband for herself, her role as written in the text — and especially as performed — is undeniably feminine, even allowing for her part being played by a boy. With the music and dancing preceding the debate, this part of the interlude has some of the ingredients in John Stevens' description of a medieval 'game of love' in which Cornelius and Gaius, as 'suppliants at law' plead their causes in a courtly-love parlement, or perhaps a 'Court of Love' governed by a queen.³² But while an argument about true nobility would qualify as a courtly-love subject, the content and serious nature of the claims and counter-claims

made by the two suitors would not be suitable. On the other hand, if Lucre's supervision of the debate re-enacts the procedures of the Chancellor's court, there is the problem of how the audience for the play would receive the idea of a girl usurping his ecclesiastic, and exclusively male, office by assuming the Chancellor's judicial authority. Because the Court of Chancery was Morton's personal power-base, would not he, and a supposed audience of churchmen, state officials, and lawyers consider Lucre's usurpation as at least surprising, in view of the gravitas of the debate topic? Objections to the feasibility or propriety of a female judge would also apply to any of the other courts where Morton had an official role: the King's Council, Star Chamber, or especially the canon-law Court of Arches. As Archbishop of Canterbury, Morton was president, and Medwall an officer, of this archiepiscopal court, and appeals to it were heard from the consistory courts of the province of Canterbury on a variety of matters pertinent to *Fulgens and Lucre*: moral and disciplinary offences and matrimonial cases arising in the see which needed referral to the highest authority. But all ecclesiastical courts were barred to women in any capacity whatsoever, so the casting of Lucre as a judge raises the question of Medwall's authorial purpose in substituting her for the Senate; a girl in place of the law-making assembly of the State.

In our production, the figure of Lucre initially presented somewhat different problems of interpretation for the medieval drama students. Because they were accustomed to the narrow range of women's rôles in early English drama, and because they tended to assume that the place of women in medieval society was invariably subordinate and ineffectual, they expected Lucre to be either a symbolic, emblematic, or allegorical figure, or the model of submissive virtue commonly found in other medieval plays. Although Lucre expresses herself in conventionally modest female language, and the part was played with quiet self-possession to suit her supposedly low-profile role, Lucre gradually emerged, in rehearsal, as the theatrical focus of the whole interlude, in contrast to the completely traditional Lucrese of Tiptoft's disputation. The passive figure who appears briefly in *The Declamacion of Noblesse* apparently has no wish to marry at all, declaring herself to be 'alle other wise sette' when her father wishes her to 'entende to marriage' (fol 30^v). After it is agreed that the Senate should hear the arguments of her suitors, and select for her the more noble of the two, she has nothing more to say. Although she is evidently present at the Senate hearing, where both Cornelius and Gaius appeal to her, she neither speaks, nor takes any further part in the

disputation. Her function is simply to provide an explanatory introduction for a classical oratorical disputation on the quality of true nobleness.

Medwall's *Luces* is a different proposition altogether. Instead of existing merely as a contrived literary excuse, she is involved in the whole process of the interlude through her individual scenes with every character in the play. The contrasting attitudes of her suitors are more clearly defined by her responses to them than if she were silent, and the parody by the three servants of their employers' romantic triangle would be less effective without her central role. In performance, *Luces*' attitude to her father is seen as one of loving respect, rather than the unquestioning obedience of her literary predecessor, and she successfully manipulates *Fulgens* into allowing her to make her own choice of husband, when her father seems to prefer the rich aristocratic *Cornelius* to the worthy commoner *Gaius*. *Fulgens* then disappears from the play, leaving *Luces* in full command of her affairs and of the subsequent dramatic action. She deals briskly, confidently, and tactfully with the two rivals for her hand, she is firm but civil to their impudent servants, and affectionately confiding with her own maid. She modestly agrees, 'under protestation', to give sentence between the two men, and proceeds to take competent and knowledgeable charge of the debate, rebuking *Cornelius* and *Gaius* when necessary, and refusing to be influenced in her decision either by *Cornelius*' ill-judged flattery, or his servant's insulting criticism of her choice of husband. On stage, *Luces* is a lively, attractive young woman who cannot be reconciled with Glynne Wickham's assessment that she is an abstract symbol of the State,³³ nor is she convincing as a purely allegorical figure, exercising God's gift of free will in the choice between virtue and vice. Medwall apparently discarded the kind of exemplum of female chastity or dutiful submission to be found in much of medieval English drama, to create an original, unconventional, and unfamiliar Shakespearean-type heroine, with no known precedent nor immediate successor. Acting independently of any male authority figure, with the freedom to choose her own husband, she challenges both dramatic expectations and what is understood to have been normal social practice at the time. However, it is possible that *Luces* is the sole surviving specimen of other similar female dramatic characters in plays which no longer exist, or perhaps Medwall's own original invention,³⁴ taken from life, and modelled on any of the strong-minded and powerful women prominent in fifteenth-century European court circles, one of whom was Lady Margaret Beaufort, King Henry's mother.

Because of her position in the court, the honour and precedence accorded to her by the King, and Chancellor Morton's long-standing friendship and respect for her, Medwall could be sure of the approval of both the King and the Chancellor for the importance he gives to a female dramatic character who appears to have many of Lady Margaret's personal characteristics.³⁵ Medwall himself would be familiar with Lady Margaret's abilities and interests, either from hearsay of her past involvement with his employer in promoting both Henry's accession to the throne and his marriage, or from his personal observation of her present status, again shared with Morton, as the closest and most influential of Henry's advisers. Reviewing the combined factual and eulogised reputation of Lady Margaret, coincidence or accident can scarcely account for the many similarities between her and Medwall's dramatic creation, not least being that she possessed in reality the kind of judicial power conferred on the fictional Lucre.

In the sphere of law and the administration of justice, Lady Margaret's position was almost certainly unique at that time. It is thought that she held a commission, in essence to act as the king's deputy, for the hearing of petitions of the king's poorer subjects, and possibly charges of riot, the frequent outcome of the unlawful retaining included in the list of Cornelius' offences. Although no record of her commission has been found, some years after her death a comparison was made by one of her contemporaries between the Council of the North's commission and the one 'that my lady the king's [Henry VIII] grandam had [which] tried and approved [cases]'.³⁶ Again by inference, Lady Margaret may have been a Justice of the Peace, a rare office for a woman until this century, and it was said that many 'arbitraments' were made by her,³⁷ although no records exist to show whether any of these were her personal or sole responsibility, or were arranged by her for someone else to supervise. Bishop Fisher's sermon, preached after her death at her 'month's mind', seems to suggest that, unlike Lucre, she did not preside alone over a dispute:

And the sutors, also whiche cometh compelled by necessitye to seche helpe & socoure in theyr cause, muste be herde ... For the sutors, it is not vnknownen how studyously she procured Iustyce to be admynstred ... And of her owne charges prouyded men lerned for the same purpose euenly & indyfferently to here all causes, and admynstre ryght and Iustyce to euery party (Fisher 296, 297)

although she may have acted alone in some cases, and by reputation would be eminently capable of controlling an arbitrary procedure.

Whether directly, or through a third party, the making of 'arbitraments' was Lady Margaret's special area of competence, and if Medwall's debate was actually an arbitrary, rather than a judicial, process, it would solve the problem of the presentation of Lucre as a surrogate Chancellor or autonomous judge, and establish a specific link between Lady Margaret and Lucre. Although the debate uses common law terminology and follows what is thought to have been fifteenth-century Chancery procedure, an arbitration hearing was apparently not dissimilar in form or equitable intention to a Chancery case. With Lady Margaret's known involvement in arbitration, it would be a more acceptable and preferred dramatic alternative to a supposed hearing in Chancery, as it was in real life for many fifteenth-century litigants. Tudor magnates took it as one of the obligations of lordship to settle quarrels between their own servants and tenants before they could reach the common law courts, and for ordinary people in general, arbitration was a favourite recourse instead of taking disputes to court, because arguments could be resolved quickly, avoiding large litigation costs. Even a case already in court might be recommended for arbitration by the judges, if the claims for each side were thought to be evenly balanced.³⁸ Lady Margaret, one of the greatest landowners in the country, took her obligations seriously, and at her palace of Collyweston in Northamptonshire, there existed a 'court of equity' for the benefit of her dependants: a descriptive, rather than a prescriptive label, because it applies to the kind of justice dispensed there; the equitable decisions and judgements possible in a so-called 'court' operating outside the statutory system of common law. At Collyweston her council made arbitration awards in cases brought from a wide area,³⁹ with disputes often referred to her personally, arising from the administration of her lands and properties, involvement with the civic affairs of Coventry, and her patronage of Christ's College, Cambridge, when she would always recommend or arrange arbitration. One appeal from a citizen of Coventry moved her to direct the mayor to solve the matter 'to accorde *with* right and thequitie of the kinges lawes', and when no immediate action was taken, a further summons was issued with a firm instruction to implement it.⁴⁰ In a more complicated dispute between the town and the University of Cambridge, she advised the protagonists 'to nominate arbitrators which in her presence they did, binding themselves under a penalty of 500 marks', and subsequently meeting several times before her as well as elsewhere.⁴¹

Another long-standing difference concerning town and University produced a comment about Lady Margaret suggestive of Lucre's expertise in man-management, when, during the course of the hearing, it was said that 'the audience with Lady Margaret gave her the opportunity of using with regard to Sycling [Senior Proctor] her keen judgement of men which was so conspicuous a feature of her character'.⁴² Lucre is credited with the same insight into the masculine mind in the way she controls any dealings she has with her father, her suitors, and the male servants.

Lady Margaret also had some jurisdiction in gentry quarrels, the other source of arbitration cases. A letter (c. 1500) to a member of the Paston family, related to her by marriage, is strongly worded. Referring to the withholding of lands 'by mighty power ... without any just title', she ordered the recipient to meet the appointed arbitrators to settle the business 'so as we be not driven through your defalte to put to our hands for further remedye to be had in the premisses'.⁴³ For members of the land-owning class themselves, if they were prepared to avail themselves of it, arbitration was a more private way to settle an argument with less chance of on-going violence, or, in order to prevent gentry quarrels over illegal entry into land escalating into the 'greate riottes' of the Star Chamber Act, arbitration might be insisted upon by the king's deputies or more powerful neighbours.⁴⁴ When the disputants sought arbitration of their own volition (as Cornelius and Gaius do in *Fulgens and Lucre*), the number of arbitrators, and who they should be, was decided between them. Among the upper classes, virtually anyone could serve, and although there were usually two or three per side, with an umpire, a single person might act as arbitrator and umpire combined. In 1483, Edward IV had presided alone over a dispute between Sir Robert Plumpton and the heirs of his father, Sir William,⁴⁵ so that legally and realistically, it was possible for Lucre to act as a solitary, female arbitrator. Medwall disposes of any difficulty of Lucre's personal bias when she recommends that Cornelius and Gaius should choose 'some indifferent man' (2: 414), 'a philosopher or else a divine' (2: 422), but in Cornelius' words, 'no man shall have that office but ye' and Gaius is 'content that it be so' (2: 417, 418). Where the proposal of an alternative person would be possible for an arbitration hearing, litigants in common law or Chancery were hardly likely to be in a position to select their own trial judge.

Apart from the criminal acts of dispossession inspired by greed, gentry disputes often arose because of genuine uncertainty about right or title to the tenure, use, or possession of land ('real property'), when the stronger or

instance, the plaintiff petitioned the King because ‘notwithstanding that by thaward of iiii lerned men yeuen by thagrement of bothe parties’, the defendant still kept the plaintiff’s manor and goods originally taken illegally by force. To avoid this kind of trouble after arbitration, and to persuade the loser to comply with the agreed findings, awards were likely to be lengthy and probably face-saving if one party had been less successful than expected. This might explain why Lucre relates at great length to B (and the audience) her reasons for choosing Gaius, repeatedly denying that she intends any disrespect to ‘the blood of Cornelius’ (2: 759). An integral part of her decision, not so obvious to a modern reader or audience, is that Lucre’s arbitration is undertaken according to the rules of equity, and she is justifying her rejection of Cornelius because his conscience is not clear. Where Tiptoft’s Cornelius fails because of inferior oratorical skills, Medwall’s Cornelius cannot succeed because ‘he who comes to equity must come with clean hands’.⁴⁷ In strict law, Cornelius is entitled to be called noble because of his inherited rank and blood, but he claims the deeds of his ancestors as if they were his own, when he is in fact lawless, immoral and irresponsible. In all fairness, in a court of conscience, he cannot be preferred to Gaius. Cornelius’ noble ancestors, ‘his blood’, will be honoured, but because he is personally ‘dissolute and rooted in sin’ (2: 792), he cannot succeed in equity.

Apart from Lady Margaret’s legal interests, other aspects of her life and character would have to be adapted by Medwall with a certain amount of dramatic licence if he intended Lucre to represent the King’s mother. For example, parallels between Lucre’s preference for Gaius and Margaret Beaufort’s marital record can only be drawn if the diplomatic adjustment of historical facts undertaken in her own lifetime, and the authorised version of her marriage to Henry VII’s father are accepted. According to tradition, and her own childhood recollection, Margaret was asked to choose between the Duke of Suffolk’s son and Edmund Tudor, half-brother to Henry VI.⁴⁸ Margaret, when ‘not fully ix yeres olde, doubtfull in her mynde what she were best to do’, was advised to beg St Nicholas for guidance. She prayed earnestly, especially on the night before she had to give her answer, and:

whether slepyng or wakyng she coude not assure, but about iiii of
the clocke in the mornynge one appered vnto her arayed like a
bisshop, & naming vnto her Edmonde bad take hym vnto her
husbande. (Fisher 293)

It is fairly improbable that a fatherless nine-year-old heiress with an ambitious guardian would have been consulted about her future marriage, and the alleged method of selection is as unusual, to say the least, as the choice by philosophical debate in *Fulgens and Lucrez*, even though the reported alternatives were the same as those facing Lucrez. The suitor supposedly rejected by Margaret was an aristocrat, John de la Pole, later duke of Suffolk, who was subsequently accused in the Star Chamber of the same type of offences as Cornelius, arising from retaining,⁴⁹ and whose family were notorious for ‘mayntenaunce, Murdres, Mansleers, Riottours’.⁵⁰ The successful or confirmed suitor, and the only husband of dynastic importance, was Edmund Tudor, a courageous soldier in the Lancastrian cause, rewarded for his services with a peerage; a type of Medwall’s Gaius whose military reputation was a claim to nobility in both senses of the word: honour and rank:

Another time my country manly I defend
 And for the victories that I have done therein
 Ye have seen yourself, sir, that I have come in
 To this noble city twice or thrice,
 Crowned with laurel, as it is the guise.
 By these ways, lo, I do arise
 Unto great honour fro low degree,
 And if mine heirs will do likewise,
 They shall be brought to noblesse by me.

2: 680—8

On the subject of marriage, where Lucrez was given the unusual freedom to choose her own husband, Lady Margaret was granted, by her son, a different kind of unprecedented female marital right. In the first year of Henry’s reign, a private Act of Parliament gave her independence from her husband, Lord Stanley, by according her the exceptional legal status of *femme sole*; the right to hold property, control her finances, and sue in law as if she were single. In a sense, this power can be equated with Lucrez’ ‘free choice and liberty’ (1: 428) to make her own decision about marriage.

The familial affection between Lucrez and Fulgens in the play had no exact parallel in Margaret Beaufort’s life, as her father died when she was only two years old. Instead, if the few surviving letters between her and her son are evidence, they reversed the father and daughter roles of the interlude, with Henry and his mother sharing a comparable loving relationship, expressed in a striking similarity of language to that in *Fulgens and Lucrez*. Where Lucrez was to Fulgens his ‘chief jewel and riches’ (1:

281), Henry was to his mother ‘my own sweet and most dear king and all my worldly joy’.⁵¹ Lucre expresses herself as ‘bound / as much [to Fulgens] as any child may be / unto the father living on the ground’ (1: 424–6) as did Henry to his mother when he wrote: ‘I shall be as glad to please you as your heart can desire it, and ... that I am as much bounden so to do as any creature living for the great and singular motherly love and affection that it hath pleased you at all times to bear me’.⁵² Of course, these sentiments may have been no more than conventional formulae, and it is not suggested that Medwall read the correspondence between the King and his mother, but Henry expressed his deep admiration, gratitude, and loving concern in verifiable concrete form. In his first parliament, he restored to his mother all the lands taken from her by Richard III, and during her lifetime made her many grants of valuable estates and influential wardships. Where Fulgens praises his daughter for her ‘clear understanding’ and ‘honest and virtuous counsel’ (1: 263, 268), Lady Margaret’s influence over the King was generally acknowledged.⁵³ He valued her organising ability and political judgement to the extent of trusting her almost as his deputy, especially in legal affairs, when, as described above, she clearly subscribed to the Tudor promotion of the principles of equity.

Lady Margaret’s tastes and life-style were very much in the Tudor tradition, with the same dichotomy between public display and personal sobriety evident in the Tudor court, and reflected by Medwall in the contrasting choices offered by Cornelius and Gaius to Lucre. Gaius believes that Lucre’s interests are the same as his when he tells her ‘Ye shall also have a man according / To your own conditions in everything’ (2:697–8), listing his claims to be the perfect partner for her:

I have borne unto God all my days
His laud and praise with my due devotion;
And next that, I bear always
To all my neighbours charitable affection;
Incontinency and uncleanness I have had in abomination;
Loving to my friend and faithfull withal.
And ever I have withstood my lusts sensual.

One time with study my time I spend,
To eschew idleness, the causer of sin ...

2: 671–9

These qualities of Gaius were the same as those credited by Bishop Fisher to Lady Margaret:

To god & the chirche full obeydent & tractable serchyng his honoure & pleasure full besyly. Of meruallous gentylnesse she was vnto all folkes, but specyally vnto her owne, whom she trusted and loued ryghte tenderly. A wares of herself she had alwaye to eschewe euery thyng that myght dyshonest ony noble woman, or dystayne her honour in ony condycyon. right studyous she was in bokes whiche she hadde in grete nombre bothe in Englysshe & in Frensshe, & for her exercyse & for the prouffyte of other she dyde translate dyvers maters of devocyon. (Fisher 291, 292)

Cornelius offers Lucrez the exact opposite; the false liberality and magnificence of a life of idle luxury:

For riches ye shall have at your will evermore,
 Without care or study of laborious business,
 And spend all your days in ease and pleasant idleness.
 About your own apparel ye can do none excess
 In my company that should displease my mind;
 With me shall ye do none other manner of business
 But hunt for your solace at the hart and hind,
 And sometime, where we convenient game find,
 Our hawks shall be ready to show you a flight,
 Which shall be right pleasant and cheerful to your sight.
 And if so be that in hunting ye have no delight,
 Then may ye dance awhile for your disport.
 Ye shall have at your pleasure both day and night
 All manner of minstrelsy to do you comfort. 2: 546—
 59

Lucrez cannot be persuaded by Cornelius' enticing promises; for the King's mother, her royal position would preclude the straightforward choice available to Lucrez. Lady Margaret did enjoy many of the pleasures and advantages listed by Cornelius, but they were always balanced by, and not necessarily in conflict with, the religious devotion, charitable works, or temporal responsibilities for which she was renowned. The 'riches' to be put at Lucrez' disposal by Cornelius were possessed in abundance by Lady Margaret. She was a very wealthy woman and a great landowner, with rather more than the 'moderate richesse' (2: 695) promised by Gaius to Lucrez; nevertheless it was 'sufficient' (2: 696) for Lady Margaret in the sense that her wealth was appropriate for her position, and not spent on

wasteful extravagance. Her magnificent collections of gold plate, tapestries, furs, jewellery, and clothes were the required outward show of royalty, and her careful supervision of income financed not only the welfare of her household and estate servants, her building works, and her scholarly, literary, and religious projects, but also the hospitality expected from someone of her rank. When she 'was bounteous & lyberall to euery persone of her knowlege or aquayntaunce', entertaining strangers 'accordynge to theyr degre and hauour', to 'prouide by her owne commaundement that nothyng sholde lacke that myght be convenient for them' (Fisher 290, 291, 296, 297), she was conforming to the Tudor idea of liberality.

Similarly her recreations and her enjoyment of entertainment were facets of a life balanced by charity, devout obedience to God, along with considerable organising and management abilities. During her marriage to Sir Henry Stafford, she had frequently hunted with him in Windsor Park, apparently sharing her son's devotion to hunting and hawking, and in common with the heads of other aristocratic households, she gave her patronage and support to plays, minstrels, and musicians,⁵⁴ just as Luces agreed to the 'goodly recreation' of dancing and minstrels (2: 389). In the tradition of the great households, Lady Margaret employed a Lord of Misrule at Christmas, and May Kings, Boy Bishops, fools and entertainers regularly visited Collyweston. There, and at her London mansion, Coldharbour, her hospitality was sumptuous, while she was frequently a guest at official receptions or as a member of the royal party at state banquets. In 1501, Catherine of Aragon's retinue dined at Coldharbour with Lady Margaret and a week later she attended an interlude and a disguising, with dances in the evening after a banquet, held in the parliament chamber of Westminster Hall,⁵⁵ and in 1503, at Collyweston, she provided eleven days of feasting and amusement for the King and Princess Margaret, then on her way to Scotland as James IV's bride.⁵⁶ At such events, 'Lord Morley, who served as Margaret's cup-bearer during his youth, in the 1490's, described her dinner-table conversation as joyous, loving merry tales as well as talk of godly matters'.⁵⁷ But she would not have cared to spend all her 'days in ease and pleasant idleness' without 'laborious business' (2: 548, 547). On the contrary, she was known for her superb organisation, both of her household and of the larger building and engineering projects which she commissioned and supervised and in which she remained closely interested throughout her life.⁵⁸

For less well-documented aspects of Lady Margaret's personality, Bishop Fisher's sermon, preached after her death, is the main source. He praised her 'noblenes of manners' to friends and servants alike:

of singular easynes to be spoken vnto & all curtayse answere she wolde make to all that came vnto her. Of meruayllous gentylnesse she was vnto all folkes, but specyally vnto her owne whom she trusted and loued ryghte tenderly. (Fisher 291)

According to Medwall's portrayal of Lucre, this is also how she behaves, discreetly encouraging to Gaius and patient with his servant A, who cannot remember his master's message or his master's name, and is uncertain what he himself is called. She treats the offensive presumption of Cornelius politely and calmly, and the insolence of his servant B with surprising forbearance. When B delivers a carelessly, or deliberately misunderstood, and consequently obscene, message to her, she resolves not to tell Cornelius: 'For it hath been my condition alway / No man to hinder but to help where I may' (1: 313–314). This agrees with Lady Margaret's reported principles: 'Unkinde she wolde not be vnto no creature ... not vengeable ne cruell, but redy a none to forgete and to forgyve iniuries done vnto her' (Fisher 291). Even so neither Margaret nor Lucre would tolerate strife and controversy. In her household, Margaret 'with grete polycye dyde boulte it out and wyth grete dyscrecyon studye the reformatycon therof' (Fisher 296), just as Lucre forbade Cornelius and Gaius 'all manner of violence' and 'all such words as may give occasion / Of brawling or other ungodly condition' (2: 372–3).

Lady Margaret and Lucre are similarly endowed with the quality of virtuous nobility. It is said of Lucre that she was

of noble fame;
And yet, as th'author saith in very deed,
Her noble virtue did her fame exceed. 1: 74–6

And over that her virtues manifold
In such a manner wise were praised and told,
That it was thought she lacked no thing
To a noble woman that was according. 1: 80–4

In Lady Margaret's 'mornyng remembraunce', Bishop Fisher relates how all England wept at her death, including 'All the noble men and women to whome she was a myrroure and exempler of honoure', likening her to Martha in nobleness, discipline of body, godliness of soul and in hospitality, and exploring the four kinds of nobleness found in her: of

blood, of manners, of nature, and an increased nobleness as by marriage and affinity (Fisher 290). Although this may be simply a formulaic elegy appropriate to royalty, the virtue of nobleness does seem to be particularly attached to Lady Margaret. When Bishop Fisher preached at Henry VII's funeral, the King was praised for his wit, wisdom, reason, memory, experience, and fortunate counsels; for the way he had ruled the kingdom; and for his faith and piety, without ever being called 'noble' (Fisher 280).

While it would be satisfying to know positively for whom the interlude was written, it can only be said with any certainty that married men and women were among the spectators, because A appeals directly to the audience, referring to Lucre's preference for a virtuous man: 'How say ye, good women, is it your guise / To choose all your husbands that wise?' (2: 847–8), and B addresses 'wedded men every one' (2: 859). Unfortunately they cannot be identified; such remarks are too general or vague to be genuinely informative about who the audience or participants were in Medwall's original performance (1: 773–5). Because Medwall was in the employ of John Morton in the latter's capacity of Archbishop of Canterbury, it has been assumed that *Fulgens and Lucre* was written for an entertainment in his household, with a *terminus ad quem* generally been taken to be Morton's death in October 1500. Medwall's name appears only once in official documents after this date, in February 1501, and it is thought that he either died not long after his employer, or that he went abroad.⁵⁹ He certainly ceased to be in archiepiscopal service, but that is not necessarily significant. Although the principal helpers of archbishops frequently continued their work under successive incumbents, their commissions lapsed on the death of an archbishop and they had to be officially re-appointed.⁶⁰ This did not happen in Medwall's case, but for some reason he came under the special protection of the King.⁶¹ If he neither died nor left England after Morton's death, might he have been employed by the King in some capacity or, under his patronage, taken into some other great household? Lacking any confirmatory evidence either way, it is tempting to speculate that Henry Medwall entered Lady Margaret's service, and reasonable to assume in that case that Medwall wrote the interlude as a compliment to her, incidentally pleasing the King at the same time.

A family occasion, comprising perhaps Lady Margaret's household and the King with his court circle, including his Chancellor, would provide an appropriate audience for the legal content of the play, and possibly account for some of the obscure comments and references in the interlude as

household and family private jokes: for example in the casting of A, the servant of Gaius. At the end of the first part of the interlude, A tells B to return for the debate in the second part, saying:

I would not for a swan
 That thou shouldst be hence at that season,
 For thou shalt hear a royal disputation
 Betwixt them ere they have do. 1: 1404—

7

Whatever might be the implications of the phrase ‘a royal disputation’, there may be some significance in A’s unusual epithet, ‘for a swan’. Lady Margaret had a servant, Nicholas Aughton, assumed to have been in charge of his mistress’ swans, since a payment was made to him after her death for ‘going with many boats’ to take her swans out of the Thames. Aughton was often employed by Lady Margaret as a trusted scout and messenger, sent for instance to accompany the retinue of the King’s daughter for a day’s journey on her way north to be married in 1503.⁶² Because of the phrase ‘not for a swan’, was the audience expected to link the servant A with Aughton and be amused by the incongruity, or was he even playing the part of A? Apparently a responsible and long-established member of the household, Aughton in no way would resemble A, the archetypal gormless servant who mixes up his words, loses the letter he should have delivered to Lucre, forgets his master’s name — and his own — and then excuses himself with the same words as Gaius earlier used to Lucre ‘Ye may say I am a homely guest’ (2: 341). Aughton’s character and position in the household would provide an extra dimension to the by-play between Lucre and A, as Lucre tells him ironically ‘Ye are a good messenger for certain’ (2: 328).

In a performance for, and often by, members of a group well-known to each other, there were endless opportunities for innuendo and allusive teasing of the audience, either deliberately written into the script or by impromptu ad libs. In the course of rehearsals, the Lancaster actors recognised that there was a sub-text to be exploited, and that certain remarks and speeches actually needed a personal target to be fully effective or even sensible, starting with the opening dialogue of A and B, which seems to be mainly comprised of knowing comments and references (1: 1—64). It was also realised that Fulgens’ solemn ‘bidding-prayer’ offered an opportunity, in the paraphrase of 1 Corinthians 12: 8—10, to involve the audience, as it must have done in Medwall’s time, providing some

amusement at the expense of those members identified, and personally linked by the actor, with each of the diverse talents:

To some he lendeth the spirit of prophecy,
 To some the plenty of tongues' eloquence,
 To some great wisdom and worldly policy,
 To some literature and speculative science,
 To some he giveth the grace of pre-eminence
 In honour and degree, and to some abundance
 Of treasure, riches and great inheritance. 1: 209—215

and successive performances always supplied suitable targets. Later, A's first meeting with Gaius, when he applies to be his servant, is full of apparently pointed remarks, which are meaningless on the surface. A is scathing about Lucre's 'dissemblance' towards Gaius, and, surprised by A's knowledge of his affairs, Gaius asks: 'Why, hast thou of me any acquaintance?' A, who later proves to be notoriously forgetful, replies 'Yea, sir, and some time ye knew me / Though it be now out of your remembrance' (1: 603—605). Requested to provide sureties for his character, A picks on someone in the audience: 'Here is a gentleman that would trust me / For as much good as he has', whereupon Gaius dryly comments: 'Yea, and that is but little, percase' (1: 626—8), and A claims that he has 'no more acquaintance within this hall' (1: 30). Stage business, in this kind of innocuous-sounding brief dialogue, depending originally on the personal relationships and shared knowledge of author, players, and spectators in a private household situation, can rarely be accessible to, or reproduced by, modern actors.

Take for example the apparently significant, but mystifying business of the puns and word-play on 'tokens' in the scenes between Cornelius and B, and between B and Lucre. The first exchange, when B asks for some token to identify him to Lucre 'else she will not believe me / That I came from you' (2: 175—6), seemed to be a continuation of the theme of retaining and its outward display of liveries, signs and tokens; Cornelius giving, and B receiving a hat, badge, or other object, to distinguish B as Cornelius' paid retainer. Instead, Cornelius offers B a verbal token of recognition, a password, sentimentally recalling an incident when he threw Lucre's musk ball at a bird: 'Commend me to her by the same token / (She knoweth it well enow)' (2: 178—9). Cornelius' reminder of an innocent occasion is greeted with disbelief by B, either from mishearing the words, or unable to accept that Cornelius has any gentle romantic feelings. After Cornelius' exit, B asks the audience their opinion: 'But how say you, sirs,

by this token, / Is it not a quaint thing?' (2: 217–218); his own view being that Cornelius 'is a mad man / In this message doing' (2: 220–221). When he meets Lucre, B says he has several tokens for her, including 'one very nice / As ever I heard tell' (2: 261–262), and then relates to her a deeply offensive version of the incident of the musk ball, converting Cornelius' action when he 'kist it even in the hole / Of the hollow ash' (2: 207–208) into a claim that Lucre had 'kissed him on the nook of the arse' (2: 282). Lucre's indignant denial allows B to elaborate salaciously:

Troth, it was on the hole of th'arse I should say;
 I wist well it was one of the two,
 The nook or the hole ...
 By my faith, ye kissed him or he kissed you
 On the hole of th'arse, choose you now!
 This he told me sure.
 Howbeit I speak it not in reprove,
 For it was done but for good love
 And for no sinful pleasure. (2: 284–
 92)

In a modern production, the puns and the comedy still work, but we are left with questions. Might these scenes originally have had less obvious aims: perhaps to mock the pretensions of nobles with retinues of unreliable, low-class retainers, and to illustrate the dangerous uses of badges and liveries as symbols of authority too easily misapplied or subverted? Or had the incident of the musk ball actually happened, and been adapted by Medwall for the amusement of an audience familiar with the circumstances and the people concerned? The ambiguity and double meanings are especially frustrating and tantalising because although their existence is recognised, they cannot be decoded.

As to the subject matter of *Fulgens and Lucre*, there is no doubt that Lady Margaret would enjoy the Roman setting and noble theme of the interlude, because of her special interest in heroic and chivalric literature. She sent her French copy of *Blanchardyn and Eglantine*, previously bought from William Caxton, back to him to translate and print, and his dedication of the work to her echoes the theme of true nobleness in *Fulgens and Lucre*. Caxton thought that her intention was to teach 'vertuose yong noble gentylmen & wymmen to be stedfaste & constaunt', through reading 'Auncient hystoryes of noble fayttes & valiaunt actes of armes & warre, whyche have ben achyeved in olde tyme of many prynces, lordes &

knyghtes'.⁶³ Caxton, who was Lady Margaret's printer, had also produced, in 1481, John Tiptoft's English translation of *The Declamacion of Noblesse*, the presumed source for Medwall's play.

Although other elements of the interlude would also repay study (Fulgens' 'bidding prayer' and elevated panegyric (1: 202–291) or the comic sub-plot, for example), I have concentrated on the characterisation of Lucreces and the legal/political aspects because the combination of a new type of dramatic heroine with an obviously intentional usage of common law terminology and detail proved both original and intriguing. However, without being involved in the production of *Fulgens and Lucreces*, I might not have thought of Lucreces' role as possibly biographical, or fully realised the political implications of Medwall's alterations to *The Declamacion of Noblesse*. Seen on stage, the dramatic characters are people with identifiable personalities, interacting emotionally and physically with each other, rather than one-dimensional figures representing abstract ideas; and without the interpretation of the actors, it would have been easier to accept the interlude as an allegory of the condition of England. On that level, when Lucreces, as a personification of the kingdom, rejects Cornelius for Gaius, she would be choosing the king's law over the rebellious aristocrats, with the subsequent threat of civil uprisings by the nobles, who want to impose their own authority over the kingdom:

it will make
 Many a man to lose his life,
 For therof will rise a great strife. 1: 773–5

Acting out the same scene, the discussion between A and B plays as a straightforward argument about which of their masters Lucreces ought to marry. Performance, as with other plays produced at Lancaster, was found to 'humanise' the text, so that where the interview between Lucreces and Gaius, for example, reads as a formal and fairly ordinary social exchange, on stage it became a delightfully flirtatious love scene, enjoyed by the players themselves. Perhaps after all this is the most important and satisfactory reason for continuing the dramatic experiment: that performance may transform what the actors first thought was an abstruse and archaic literary form into a rewarding and informative theatrical experience, with production-based research providing technical information and practical expertise, and generating unexpected insights into the cultural background of early English theatre.

NOTES

All quotations and line references are taken from Peter Meredith's edition of *Fulgens and Lucrez* (Leeds Studies in English, University of Leeds School of English, 1981).

Unless otherwise stated, all Acts of Parliament referred to in the text may be found in *The Statutes at Large Volume 4 (1483–1549)* edited Danby Pickering (Cambridge UP for Charles Bathurst, London, 1763), or *The Statutes of the Realm Volume 1* (London, 1810; reprinted Dawson, London, 1963).

1. M.T. Cicero *Tulle of Olde Age* (Caxton, Westminster, 1481), includes a translation by John Tiptoft, Earl of Worcester, of the *De Vera Nobilitate* of Buonaccorso da Montemagno, called *The Declamacion of Noblesse*. A modern version is printed in Rosamond J. Mitchell *John Tiptoft* (Longmans, London, 1938) Appendix I. Mitchell suggests that Tiptoft is closer in phrase and spirit to the original Latin, than the freer and more verbose French translation by Jean Mielot, although it is generally thought that Tiptoft used Mielot's version (176–8).
2. Quintilian *Institutio Oratoria* translated H.E. Butler 4 vols (Loeb Classics: Heinemann, London, 1933) 3 3. Advice to lawyers on forensic oratory and the conduct of their cases is given in Books 4 and 5.
3. 'Since one cannot speak well unless one is good': Quintilian *Institutio* 2 15.34.
4. *The Ethics of Aristotle: The Nichomachean Ethics* translated J.A.K. Thomson (George Allen & Unwin, London, 1953) hereinafter referred to in the text as *Ethics* followed by the chapter number.
5. Gordon Kipling *The Triumph of Honour* (Leiden University Press, 1977) 21.
6. Parliament supplemented existing statutes with the Star Chamber Act (3 Hen. VII c. 1) and with later acts: 11 Hen. VII c.7, c.25 (1496) and the most important: 19 Hen VII c.13, c.14 (1504), authorizing prosecutions not only by the King's Bench, but also in the Court of Star Chamber and before the Council in attendance.
7. Sir Edward Coke *The Second Part of the Institutes of the Lawes of England* (Garland, New York and London, 1979) 212 (referring to the Statute of Westminster 1, 3 Edw. I, c. 28 (1275) to be found in *The Statutes at Large, Volume 1 (1225–1340)* (Cambridge UP for Charles Bathurst, London, 1762) or *The Statutes of the Realm Volume 1* (1810, reprinted Dawsons, London, 1963).
8. For example a bill of complaint by Sir Thomas Cornwall against Sir Richard Croft alleged that 'the said Richard gadred and assembled riottously with hym

- CC men hernysed with Jakkes salettes bryandyrens and other ablementes of werre and soo riottously with force and armes laye in wayte to have assaulted and shamefully distroyed the same Thomas': *Select Cases in the Council of Henry VII* edited C.G. Bayne and W.H. Dunham (Selden Society 75: 1956) 85. The plaintiff in an earlier case (*Poche v. Idle*) asked the court to rule that the 'duc of Suffolk no further supporte ne maynteyn the said William Id[l]e nor noon of the said Riottous persones other wyse than accordith with your said laws': *Select Cases before the King's Council 1243—1482* edited I.S. Leadam and J.F. Baldwin (Selden Society 35: 1918) 116.
9. *Materials for a History of the Reign of Henry VII* edited William Campbell, 2 vols (Longmans, London, 1877) 2 275.
 10. Edmund Dudley *The Tree of Commonwealth* edited D.M. Brodie (1948) 103.
 11. *Select Cases in the Council of Henry VII* edited C.G. Bayne and W.H. Dunham (Selden Society 75: 1956) cxxi. The title of Lord Bergavenny (so styled until 1723) became 'Abergavenny' after 1724.
 12. *The Anglica Historia of Polydore Vergil, 1485—1537* edited D. Hay (Camden Society, 3rd Series 74: 1954) 127.
 13. *Select Cases in the Council of Henry VII* (Selden Society 75) cxxi note 1.
 14. *Polydore Vergil* 129.
 15. John Gage 'Extracts from the Household Book of Edward Stafford, Duke of Buckingham' *Archaeologia* 25 (1834) 311—341: see 325.
 16. James Gairdner *Henry the Seventh* (Macmillan, London, 1926) 209.
 17. *Rotuli Parliamentorum* edited J. Strachey and others, 6 vols (London, 1767—1777) 6 336.
 18. S.B. Chrimes *Henry VII* (Eyre Methuen, London, 1972) 306.
 19. David Bevington has commented that great tact was needed to avoid offending members of a supposed audience, English or foreign, who were themselves nobly born, but the condemnation of aristocratic behaviour in the interlude is perhaps too overt and forceful to qualify as suitable entertainment for an official function: David Bevington *Tudor Drama and Politics* (Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1968) 47, 50—51.
 20. *The Plays of Henry Medwall* edited Alan H. Nelson (Brewer, Cambridge, 1980) 5.
 21. Chrimes *Henry VII* 112.
 22. W.C. Richardson *Tudor Chamber Administration 1485—1547* (Louisiana State University Press, Baton Rouge, 1952) 3—4.
 23. J.R. Tanner *Tudor Constitutional Documents A.D. 1485—1603* (Cambridge University Press, 1940) 4.

24. *Five Pre-Shakespearean Comedies* edited F.S. Boas (Oxford University Press, London, 1934) 1x.
25. Typical examples of injustice were: if a man made an oral contract where the law required written evidence of it, the court would not compel performance of the contract, no matter how unfair or how much loss or damage the plaintiff suffered, or, if a man granted land to others on trust to carry out his wishes, at law the grantees could not be compelled to obey him and might dispose of the land to their own benefit and advantage, dispossessing the grantor and his heirs. See J.H. Baker *An Introduction to English Legal History* (Butterworths, London, 3rd edition 1990) 63–7, 116–18, for the circumscription of justice by the writ system, rigid forms of pleading, rules of evidence, and strict adherence by the judges to substantive law. The Chancellor’s court operated differently because it was a court of conscience. If the letter of the law resulted in manifest injustice, the defendants could be coerced by the Chancellor into doing whatever conscience required in the full circumstances of the case. See also S.F.C. Milsom *Historical Foundations of the Common Law* (Butterworths, London, 2nd edition 1981), chapter 4, for a brief history of equity.
26. *The English Works of John Fisher* edited John E.B. Mayor *EETS ES 27* (1876, reprinted 1975) 261: hereinafter referred to in the text as ‘Fisher’ followed by the page number of the reference. In this maxim *erit* is translated as ‘is’ in legal dictionaries.
27. *Year Book* Anon. Hil. 4 Hen. VII fol 5 pl. 8, *per* Moreton C. (Chancellor Morton quoting the Statute of Westminster II, 13 Edw. 1, c. 24, 1285), and Pasch. 7 Hen. VII fol 12a, pl 2.(London, 1679: reprinted 1981, Professional Books, Abingdon, England).
28. *Year Book* Hil. 4 Hen. VII fol 5a, pl 8.
29. Nelson *Medwall* 15–16.
30. J.H. Baker *An Introduction to English Legal History* 442, quoting Sir Anthony Fitzherbert *Natura Brevium* fol. 86 I.
31. Baker *Introduction* 119–120.
32. John Stevens *Music and Poetry in the Early Tudor Court* (Methuen, London, 1961) 164–5, 182–6.
33. *English Moral Interludes* edited Glynne Wickham (Dent, London, 1976).
34. Nelson *Medwall* 2.
35. I owe grateful thanks to Michael K. Jones for converting a vague idea into a reasonable supposition. Several years ago I discussed with him my theory that Lucretius was modelled on Lady Margaret Beaufort, and he supplied me with the information about the court of equity at Collyweston, copies of his articles and many useful references. See Michael K. Jones ‘Collyweston — An Early Tudor

- Palace' in *England in the Fifteenth Century* edited Daniel Williams (Boydell, Cambridge, 1987) 129–141.
36. R.R. Reid *The King's Council in the North* (Longmans Green, London, 1921) 87–91. It should be noted that Henry VIII's daughter, Princess Mary, was sent to Ludlow Castle in 1525 'with power to hold courts of oyer and determiner and to supervise the administration of law in Wales' (*Dictionary of National Biography*); presumably, since she was only nine years old in 1525, a nominal not executive power.
37. B.H. Putnam *Early Treatises on the Practice of the Justices of the Peace in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries* (Oxford Studies in Social and Legal History 7: Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1924) 194–7.
38. J. G. Bellamy *Criminal Law and Society in Late Medieval and Tudor England* (Alan Sutton, Gloucester/St Martin's Press, New York, 1984) 65–83 for a general description of riot and arbitration in the late fifteenth century.
39. For a fuller account of Lady Margaret's legal activity, see Michael K. Jones and Malcolm G. Underwood *The King's Mother* (Cambridge University Press, 1992) 86–91. Although I originally wrote this article before the publication of *The King's Mother*, I have since made some revisions and further comparisons between Lucreces and Lady Margaret.
40. Cambridge University Library Add. MS 7592.
41. A.H. Lloyd *The Early History of Christ's College Cambridge* (Cambridge, 1934) 272.
42. Lloyd *Christ's College* 283.
43. *The Paston Letters* edited James Gairdner, 6 volumes (Alan Sutton, Gloucester, 1983, reprinted from Chatto & Windus, London, 1904) 6 158.
44. Bellamy *Criminal Law and Society* 79.
45. Bellamy *Criminal Law and Society* 80.
46. *Year Book Mich.* 22 Hen. VI pl. 7, *per* Newton J.
47. This is one of the many statements on the essence of equity recorded in Chancery proceedings, emphasising the role of conscience in equitable hearings, for example, 'equity looks to the intention and not to the form' and 'to give a remedy in such a case accords well with conscience'.
48. Lady Margaret Beaufort was originally contracted in marriage at seven years old to John de la Pole, son of her guardian the Duke of Suffolk. The existence of this marriage, sometimes ignored or denied by contemporary writers, is confirmed indirectly by a papal dispensation of 18 August 1450, which allowed the couple to remain married. (They were both under age at the time of contract.) The marriage was dissolved in February 1453, and later the same year Lady Margaret was married to Edmund Tudor, half-brother of Henry VI, but

of doubtful legitimacy. Edmund was killed in battle in 1456 and his son, the future Henry VII, was born posthumously in 1457, just before Lady Margaret's fourteenth birthday. At sixteen she married Lord Stafford, 'a seemingly obscure union', but by all accounts a happy one. He died in 1471 and less than one year later she was married for the last time to Thomas Stanley, a politically advantageous union to protect herself and the future of her son. She survived Lord Stanley but had made a vow of chastity before Bishop Fitzjames and lived apart from her husband 'longe tyme before that he deyede' (Fisher *English Works* 294).

49. *Select Cases before the King's Council in the Star Chamber AD 1477—1509* edited I.S. Leadam (Selden Society 16: 1902) 18. John de la Pole was the subject of a complaint by William Parker, c. 1487, alleging that 'seruauntes [of] the seid dukes came vpon hym with billes and bowes and ther put hym in suche fere' that he [Parker] was 'conveyed to the church for the saufgarde of his lif and so conveyed by night or elles he had be sleyn'.
50. *Rotuli Parliamentorum* (1783) 5 181.
51. *Original Letters Illustrative of English History* edited Sir Henry Ellis, 1st series, 3 vols (Harding, Triphook and Lepard, 1825) 1 46.
52. *The Reign of Henry VII from Contemporary Sources* edited A.F. Pollard, 3 vols (AMS Press, New York, 1967, reprinted from Longmans Green, 1914) 3 188.
53. *Calendar of State Papers, Spain 1* 178, in a letter from Don Pedro de Ayala to Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain.
54. When the King was at Collyweston in 1495, 6s 8d. was paid 'To the women who sang before the king and the quene in rewarde'. £3.6s.8d was paid in 1496 'to my lady the kinges moder poete', supposed by Mr Craven Ord (without any supporting evidence) to have been Erasmus: *Excerpta Historica* edited S. Bentley (London, 1837) 104, 105, 115.
55. J. Leland *Collectanea Topographica et Genealogia*, 8 vols (Oxford, 1715) 5 356. This occasion has been overlooked as a possible venue for *Fulgens and Lucrez*, perhaps because it is outside the period of Medwall's employment by Cardinal Morton (see note 61 below).
56. Leland *Collectanea* 4 265—8.
57. Michael Jones and Malcolm Underwood 'Lady Margaret Beaufort' *History Today* (August 1985) 24.
58. Among Lady Margaret's building schemes were the extensive additions to Maxstoke Castle, new works at Christ's College, Cambridge, the renovation and transformation of the original house at Collyweston into a palace (Jones 'Collyweston — An Early Tudor Palace' 131, 132, 134), and an ambitious drainage scheme, involving foreign engineers, for the construction of a sluice at

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Boston to prevent flooding in the fens (Jones and Underwood 'Lady Margaret Beaufort' 25).

59. Nelson *Medwall* 13.

60. Irene J. Churchill *The Archbishops' Registers: Mediaeval Records of the Archbishop of Canterbury* (The Lambeth Lectures: Faith Press, London, 1962) 14.

61. On 27 February 1501, Medwall received royal letters of protection against arrest for one year, issued *per ipsum Regem*. Such letters were among the most highly valued of all royal missives, affording protection for various periods to persons engaged in the King's service (Nelson *Medwall* 13, note 38).

62. Jones and Underwood 'Lady Margaret Beaufort' 27.

63. William Caxton *Caxton's Blanchardyn and Eglantine* edited Leon Kellner *EETS* ES 58 (1890, reprinted 1962).