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Counsellors and Counselled

The Advice to Princes Tradition between the Hundred Years' War and the British Interregnum

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Book of Abstracts

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Michael Drayton and the Failure of Counsel

Andrew Hadfield
(University of Sussex)

In this lecture I will revisit Michael Drayton's underexplored poems on the English civil wars in the reign of Edward II (1307-27): *England's Heroical Epistles*, *Mortimeriados*, and the revised form of that second work, *The Baron's Wars*. The disastrous reign of Edward II had been the subject of other works, such as Christopher Marlowe's play of that name, and it is easy to see why such a troubled reign that concluded with the king's deposition and murder should appeal to serious English thinkers in the troubled and uncertain last years of the reign of Elizabeth. It was not only the reign of Richard II that had a topical resonance.

I shall argue that Drayton looks back to a long tradition of literature as counsel, most recently and most significantly for him in the much-reprinted collection, *A Mirror for Magistrates*, to show how counsel can fail to have an impact, the reasons for this and the consequences. Drayton's work looks back to the literature and history of the Middle Ages to show that English history was a vast storehouse of positive and negative examples, and that the English needed to read their history and use the emerging literary traditions that developed in Elizabeth's reign to learn from the past and make use of it in the present.

Panel 1 – Elizabethan Advice to Princes

'To speake before a king, it is no childe playe': Sending Political Messages to the Monarch in Early Tudor Interludes

Olena Lilova
(University "Mediterranean", Podgorica)

Texts of early Tudor playwrights John Skelton, Henry Medwall, John Heywood, John Rastell, Nicholas Udall and others contain references to the events of English home politics as well as international affairs of that time. Performed at the royal court or at mansions of the nobility, interludes communicated to the monarch dominant attitudes to his decisions in conflicting situations (e.g. the social anxieties provoked by the Reformation, rivalry between the old and the new political élites and others), offered reaction to the activity of his close counsellors (such as Henry VIII's Privy Council, Cardinal Thomas Wolsey, Thomas Cromwell and others) or even gave comment upon the King's private life.

Special attention is paid to *The Enterlude of Godly Queene Hester*, the anonymous play that was presumably written in the late 1520s. In this interlude topical subject matter is rendered by means of the dramatic reworking of the plot about Queen Esther from the Old Testament. The portrayal of Hester in the play and the presentation of Aman, the vicious counsellor of King Ahasuerus, allow political implications due to the associations these figures have with Katherine of Aragon and Henry VIII's chief minister Cardinal Wolsey. While the Queen is represented as a virtuous royal woman, the embodiment of honesty and wisdom, the malign advisor Aman is condemned for his greed and prejudice.

Hester proves to be an effective and resolute intercessor with the King in defending the Jewish people and declaring her readiness to rule the state in case of necessity. Her strategies of counselling the monarch in the interlude contrast those manipulative techniques that Aman applies in order to influence the sovereign's decisions. The satirical tone is added due to Aman's usurping the functions of the Vices in the play, those of Pride, Ambition, Adulation and Hardy-dardy.

Thomas Nashe's Relationship with Authorities: Satire through his Works

Liudmyla Fedoriaka

(Kryvyi Rih State Pedagogical University)

Thomas Nashe (1567-1601?) was a popular Elizabethan satirist, the author of pamphlets, poems, and the novel *The Unfortunate Traveller*. In his works, he in different ways demonstrated awareness of social problems and political events, appealed to politicians and royals, and his career often depended on particular social circumstances and authorities. He started expressing his satire of Queen Elizabeth I and her policy in the pamphlet *Pierce Penniless* (1592). The pamphleteer used the periphrasis 'true Diana', with a subtle hint at Elizabeth, pretending to be a virgin queen but known for her freedom-loving behaviour.

Considering the same, Nashe calls her 'virgin rectoress' in his last work, the burlesque *Nashe's Lenten Stuff* (1599). Representing the idea of talking about Elizabeth's help to the Yarmouth fishermen to repair the port, Nashe not only emphasizes the discrepancy between her words and the real state of affairs but implicitly mocks the Queen's bounty. Nashe satirised the Queen also in the play *The Isle of Dogs* he co-authored with Ben Jonson in 1597. Soon Nashe had to flee to the east of England and was forbidden to write satirical works, so he wrote *Lenten Stuff*.

Shakespeare's *Othello* as a Political Play?

Tamara Jovović

(University Mediterranean, Montenegro)

William Shakespeare was one of the most political playwrights of the late Elizabethan time due to his exploration of themes such as societal and political issues, power struggles and ambition. Shakespeare was evidently interested in politics, however, he was more interested in 'analysing the human causes of failure in different types of polity' (Headlam: 28). Even though his plays such as *Julius Caesar*, *Macbeth*, *Richard II*, *Richard III*, *Henry V* and *Coriolanus* contain the most historical and political

elements, his *Othello* can be seen as a perfect example of Machiavellian politics play. Iago is a counsellor to Othello who pursues his manipulative and deceitful agenda against his vulnerabilities. His pragmatic and persuasive guidance of Othello portrays him as a threat and enemy within; more dangerous than external aggressors Othello is trying to defeat. On the other hand, his wife Desdemona, does not explicitly serve as a political advisor, but indeed epitomizes, humanist principles of the time, open and willing to understand various challenges in the society and in her marriage. Through her feminine perspective she assumes the masculine world of politics and military. Therefore, the paper will explore the struggle between opposing forces in the play, Desdemona and Iago, who represent the counterpoints of the Renaissance view of human nature: she emphasises the goodness and human's love of truth whereas his emphasis is on wickedness and vice.

Panel 2 – Jacobean Advice to Princes

‘Invaded or impeached we cannot be, but by sea’: Sir Walter Raleigh’s ‘War with Spain’ and King James I

Carlo M. Bajetta

(Università della Valle d'Aosta - Université de la Vallée d'Aoste)

In 1603 James, the Rex Pacificus began his campaign to stop the long Anglo-Spanish conflict which had been going on since 1585. Sir Walter Raleigh’s *A Discourse of War with Spain and the Protection of the Netherlands* is a text frequently dated about this time, and linked to a conversation Raleigh and James had when the latter visited the house of Nicholas Carew at Beddington Park, Surrey (Edwards 1868: I, 364-5; May 1989, 66-7; Nicholls and Williams 2011, 193). Intriguingly, Raleigh’s tract circulated in numerous contemporary copies, and may have been meant to be read as widely as possible precisely while the peace negotiations were taking place. This may have not been the last time Raleigh advised his king by recommending precisely what James found irritating; interestingly, though, on this occasion the former favourite of Elizabeth quite probably thought he was providing reasonable and cogent advice on the situation. Based on recent research for the new Oxford edition of Raleigh’s *Complete Works*, this paper will endeavour to cast a new light on the real circumstances of composition of *A Discourse of War with Spain* and on its reception.

William Alexander’s *Paneresis to Prince Henry* (1604): Political Counsel and Political Anxieties on the Eve of the Union of the Crowns

Allison Steenson

(IASH – The University of Edinburgh)

This talk focuses on the Scottish writer William Alexander’s *A paraenesis to the Prince*, published in London in 1604, shortly after the Union of the Crowns of England and Scotland and the accession

of James VI to the throne of England as James I. The short volume is dedicated to James' heir, Prince Henry, the future Prince of Wales and heir apparent to the Scottish and English Crowns, and primarily constitutes an encomiastic text, celebrating the departure of the young Scottish Prince on his way to the south. However, with its several heads of political counsel, Alexander's poem can be seen as an example of 'advice to princes' literature, a genre that had a long and quite illustrious tradition in Scotland.

That a court poet who was publishing closet tragedies with a Senecan inspiration and a Petrarchan sonnet collection should offer political advice is not as surprising as it may seem. At the Scottish court of the eminently literate James VI, poetry and politics had been closely intertwined, and James' own interest in discussing pins of both disciplines with his court poets is well known to scholars. Texts such as Alexander's *Paraenesis*, coupled with his panegyric verse on James' accession, show how Alexander posed as a suitable royal advisor since the beginning of his career as a poet-courtier, highlighting political advice in his poetic production and providing exempla of tyrannical rules in his Tragedies. This positioning would apparently work in his favour, as his career at court rose to ever soaring heights during James' reign, from Gentleman Usher to Prince Charles (1603) to Secretary of State for Scotland (1626), and he rose to be one of the King's main literary and political confidantes.

'...to mold this youth!': A Portrayal of the 'Ideal Prince' According to the Poetics of George Chapman

Pamela Pierro

(Università di Genova)

The intense commitment to life-long philosophical research of an obscure, personal learning (Rees, 1954) and, concurrently, the constant struggle for financial support are two major tendencies which one cannot avoid considering when approaching the poetics of George Chapman. Poet and playwright in Shakespeare's England, Chapman's desperate search for patronage seemed to find ultimate solace at the court of Prince Henry Frederick Stuart – the blooming hope of the kingdom as its future Henry IX. Apart from fostering Chapman's poetic production – see his role as Homer's metaphrast (Strong, 1986 and Buchtel, 2004) – princely support granted the poet some privileges and kept him relatively 'safe' from censorship issues – since Chapman's prior imprisonments for debts and, later, for *Eastward Ho* (1605) are now old news. Nonetheless, Chapman's work can be partly said to have had a share in the construction of the public image of the monarch that, against all odds, England never had. If in *The Tears of Peace* (1609) Chapman provides Henry with the secret of perfect princedom, with *The Conspiracy and Tragedy of Charles, Duke of Byron* (1608) he puts his moral philosophy into practice. The former – a poem soaked in Chapman's ethic of Christian Humanism and in "mythological syncretism" (Waddington, 1970) – addresses Henry explicitly, while the latter – two plays combined as one – enacts the author's poetic mode providing the heir with "prudent counsel" (Hillman, 2004).

Despite the late scholarly groundswell of interest towards Henry's role as a literary patron, the prince's professional liaison with Chapman has been receiving scant critical attention. This paper seeks to clarify how the above-mentioned literary works not only become versatile vehicles for advice, but also offer insights into the intricate courtly dynamics of mutual exchange between

counsellors and counselled, thus placing Henry – the common thread of both works – at the heart of Chapman’s quest as poetic advisor and, at once, as man of letters thirsting for royal favour. Moreover, since the author’s moral precepts waged peaceful war to Henry’s political ones, at least partially, it will be interesting to analyse how the two distinct advising modes discussed above – poetry and drama – make sense of the prince’s and the poet’s contrasting views.

Panel 3 – Carolean Advice to Princes

Thomas Heywood’s 1633 *Londini Emporia as Political Counsel*

Jill Ingram
(University of Florida)

London’s seventeenth-century Lord Mayor’s Shows, most often penned by eminent stage dramatists such as Anthony Munday, Thomas Heywood, Thomas Dekker, and Thomas Middleton, were written to please the commissioning livery companies sponsoring the annual shows, and to honour the incoming mayor. Such shows reflected, however, larger issues at the heart of institutional relationships between the mayor, the livery company, and the crown. As the livery companies’ ancient privileges of the City were contracting, and as the period saw a decline of the long-standing dominance of the great companies, companies used the Lord Mayors’ Shows to signal connections with London’s prestigious founders and the past. Some of these signals became more urgent with the onset of Charles I’s ‘personal rule’ and practice of royal arbitrariness. The Shows’ heavily allegorical pageant scenes allowed for a type of political counsel, or an embodied example of ‘advice literature,’ similar to the late medieval drama of John Heywood or the protestant polemic of John Bale. Thomas Heywood staged one such novel type of religio-political counsel, addressing London’s mayor Ralph Freeman, in his 1633 *Londini Emporia*. The show celebrated the Clothworkers’ role commercially and London’s position as a force of global trade, ultimately focusing on the mayor’s role as magistrate. With the show’s temporal frame – which prophesized ways in which Freeman’s righteousness in his mayoral reign would result in his heavenly ‘Celestial Tower’—Heywood created a temporal disjunction. The fourth land show in particular staged an eschatology of ‘what is future’ in light of the four cardinal virtues attending Freeman’s office (Prudence, Temperance, Justice, and Fortitude): Heywood detailed how the earthly aspects of those qualities would transform into their heavenly manifestations, impugnable in ‘all Eternity.’ Drawing from counsel manuals such as Thomas Elyot’s *Boke Named the Governour* (1531) and, more obliquely, from the Protestant polemic *Veritas filia Temporis* tradition, Heywood offered a narrative freely shifting from a temporal-historical to an allegorical plane. Heywood’s invention was a type of public counsel that skirted direct criticism of Charles I by indirectly illuminating Freeman as an abstract force in a kind of moral stratosphere. Heywood created in his Lord Mayor’s Show a type of religio-political counsel, hearkening back to protestant polemics and drama alike that presented leadership qualities in the language of homiletic objective, pointing to political success in a framework of economic salvation.

Edward Dacres, Machiavelli, and the Public Face of the Early Stuart Mirror for Princes Tradition

Charlotte McCallum
(Queen Mary, University of London)

After nearly a century of controversy, the most notorious work of princely advice, Niccolò Machiavelli's *The Prince*, was finally published in English language print in 1636. The most surprising feature of this development is that this rather insulting image of politics was dedicated to a friend of the monarchy, James, Duke of Lennox, a cousin of the king and member of his government, by his servant, Edward Dacres. Dacres frames his translation of *The Prince* and that of the *Discourses* before it as useful material in the education of a young politician. Yet, given that this book was published, it was clearly not for Lennox's eyes alone. Previous iterations of the mirror-for-princes genre (including Machiavelli's *The Prince*) had circulated in manuscript, but no sensible ruler would let themselves be seen to accept the advice Machiavelli expressed in *The Prince* by rewarding its author. As Virginia Cox argues, in most cases, renaissance advice books were not intended as genuine advice to the prince, which instead took place behind closed doors in the councils of state, but instead reaffirmed societal values.

Regardless of Dacres' opinion on Machiavelli's cynical understanding of politics, then, Dacres had to make his work appropriate to the service of Lennox's reputation. He achieves this through a critical apparatus that he calls his 'animadversions' where he has 'pointed at [Machiavelli's] chiefest errors with [his] best endeavours'. It was greatly in need of these, according to Dacres, who described the book as 'poyson'. In is in these animadversions that Dacres outlines appropriate princely behaviour. This paper will consider the public role of princely advice literature. Dacres may not have intended *The Prince* or even his animadversions to be taken as genuine advice, but what was he using it to say about the values of Lennox and the court?

Elias Ashmole's *Theatrum Chemicum Britannicum* (1652) as a Mirror for the Prince Who Will Be

Vittoria Feola
(Università degli Studi di Padova)

The aim of my paper about Elias Ashmole's *Theatrum Chemicum Britannicum* (1652) as a mirror for the prince who will be is threefold. First, it shows that the largest anthology of alchemical poems in the English language was not just a work of alchemy; rather, it should also be regarded as a mirror for the prince. Secondly, it demonstrates that alchemy and heraldry were metonymical subjects in the advice tradition for what we would call today 'science' and 'law'. Thirdly, by contextualising Ashmole's *Theatrum* within both the late medieval French textual tradition to which it belongs and in Interregnum Royalism, it shows the latter's confidence in the end of the republic.

First, I will provide a biographical sketch of Elias Ashmole (1617-92) in his overlapping milieus of natural philosophers and legal antiquaries in order to show that the *Theatrum* was a collaborative

Royalist undertaking. Next, I will analyse the structure of the work. Poems, such as Thomas Norton's *Ordinal of Alchemy*, George Ripley's *Epistle unto King Edward the fourth*, or John Dastin's *Dream* were meant as advice for the prince about the uses of the empirical study of nature for England's prosperity. Further, I will relate the poems (some of which stemming from France) to Ashmole's *Prolegomena and Final Annotations*. Through the heraldic analysis of his alchemist authors' lives he argued in favour of the monarchy, provided the king accepted counsel. He thus positioned himself within the tradition of the counsellor of the king - who will be, namely, the future Charles II.

Historians of science seldom consider alchemy and heraldry as two complementary subjects despite their overlap in late medieval and Renaissance works. While literary scholars do so, they tend to keep to the political dimension of the genre without dealing with Baconianism. Historians of Interregnum Royalism understand the political uses of alchemy while continuing to neglect heraldry. My paper about Elias Ashmole's *Theatrum Chemicum Britannicum* (1652) as a mirror for the prince who will be contributes to these fields through a multidisciplinary approach. Thus, it will signal the need to ever enlarge the canon of the advice to princes tradition.

13 September 2024 – Archivio Antico Palazzo del Bo

Panel 4 – Medieval Advice to Princes

Instructing Young Kings: William of Pagula's *Mirror of King Edward III*

Sibilla Siano

(Università degli Studi di Padova)

In 1327, Edward III was crowned King of England. His coronation was simultaneously met with great hope and concern, as the crown had come to him with the heavy burden of his father's disastrous realm. It might thus come as no surprise that speculum treatises such as Walter de Milemete's *De nobilitatibus, Sapientiis, et Prudentiis Regum*, or a version of the Pseudo-Aristotelian *Secretum Secretorum* were commissioned for the occasion. Yet, shortly after the coup d'état that marked the true beginning of Edward III's realm, two additional treatises were composed by the canonist and theologian William of Pagula. Significantly, these two versions of *The Mirror of King Edward III* are not solely informed by ideals of kingship drawn from classical antiquity or from the Bible. Contemporary events and concerns also seem to reverberate throughout the text. Edward II's shortcomings are thus attentively scrutinised to provide the young king with an entire set of examples of bad kingship.

Those same concerns also appear to hold centre stage in the political texts presented in the roughly contemporary Auchinleck Manuscript. Although the focus of the extant part of *Pe Simonie* is

admittedly the greed of the clergy, some significant analogies can still be detected. The ubiquitous presence of divine retribution, the debasing of knighthood, the absence of any form of social justice all seem to convey the sense of inadequacy of Edward II's rule. Similarly, the general and almost prophetic tone of *The Sayings of the Four Philosophers* seems to convey a disturbing sense of reiteration of the English kings' misrule of the country.

The two versions of the *Mirror of King Edward III* will be thus analysed in the light of the contemporary political texts contained in the Auchinleck Manuscript in order to understand the extent to which contemporary instances of maladministration of the country have supplemented the customary repertoire of the *speculum principis* tradition.

Literature and Politics – The Changing Narrative of a Child King by the Example of Richard II from 1376 till 1386

Ann-Katrin Effmert
(Trinity College Dublin)

This paper will explore the mirroring in turbulent politics and taunting literature regarding child king Richard II. This phenomenon can be observed simultaneously in literature and politics. Literary works such as Gower's *Epistle to the King* refer to the Mirrors for Princes literature. Gower advised the king to rule justly and avoid vices and bad counsel (John Gower, *The Mayor Latin Works of John Gower. The Voice Of One Crying and The Tripartite Chronicle. An Annotated Translation into English with an Introductory Essay on the Author's Non-English Works*, edited and translated by Eric W. Stockton, Seattle 1962, p. 232: 'A mob of flatterers proceeds to the forefront of the royal court [...]. But the court banishes those who dare to speak the truth, and does not allow such people to be at the king's side. The boy is free of blame, but those who have instrumented this boyish reign shall not endure without a fall).

Simultaneously, the Parliament Rolls report of the commons demanded Richard be made Prince of Wales (*Edward III 1351–1377*. Vol. V, ed. by Mark Ormrod, London 2005, The Parliament Rolls of Medieval England 1275–1504, p. 315). Counsellors and writers were hopeful about Richard. Their positive tone changed once Richard came of age. The Parliamentary Rolls show Richard rejecting the overbearing council (*Richard II 1377–1384*. Vol. VI, ed. by Geoffrey Martin/ Chris Given-Wilson, London 2005, The Parliament Rolls of Medieval England 1275–1504, pp. 315f), while Gower changes from advice to criticism (John Gower. *Mayor Latin Works*, p. 232: 'The king, an undisciplined boy, neglects the moral behavior by which a man might grow up from a boy. Indeed, youthful company so sways the boy that he has a taste for nothing practical, unless it be his whim.' Rex puer indoctus morales negligit actus, In quibus a puero crescere possit homo: Sic etenim puerum juvenilis concio ducit, Quod nihil expediens sit nisi velle sapit; Book VI, Chapter VII, p. 303, V. 555-558). The correlation between the changing politics around Richard and the literature will be analysed by examining the sharp change of tone and examples from official documents.

Moral Teachings and Family Affairs: Earl Rivers, Prince Edward, and Royal Education in Late Fifteenth-Century England

Omar Khalaf

(Università degli Studi di Padova)

The illustration on the first folio of London, Lambeth Palace Library, MS 256 depicts Anthony Woodville, second Earl Rivers kneeling before his brother-in-law King Edward IV, Queen Elizabeth, and Edward, Prince of Wales; the earl is handing to the royal family that same book, a copy of his *Dicts and Sayings of the Philosophers*, which Rivers, according to the preface that opens the work, translated from French for the benefit of his nephew. The *Dicts* is but the first of a series of moralizing texts Rivers made available to young Edward in English; completed between 1473 and 1477, it was soon followed by the translation of Christine de Pisan's *Proverbes moraulx*, Jean Miélot's *Les quatre derrenieres choses*, and, possibly, Christine's *Livre du corps de policie*. Scholarly attention has been exclusively focussed to the study of these works in connection to Caxton's involvement in their dissemination in printed form and the relationship between Caxton and Rivers, his first recognised patron, despite their primary function as mirrors for the Prince of Wales. In fact, no specific study has ever been proposed on the connection between Rivers's literary endeavours, the close relationship he was able to establish with his nephew at Ludlow, and the influence he was able to exert on the prince's education. Despite what the propaganda favourable to Richard III's coup told about the rapacity of the Woodvilles and their evil plans for the control of future King Edward V, the nature and content of these texts, Rivers's intellectual effort for the education of his nephew and some hitherto overlooked contemporary historical accounts witness a remarkably tight relationship between uncle and nephew, characterised by mutual affection and Edward's strong respect and admiration for Rivers.

Taking Rivers's prologues and other near-contemporaneous textual evidence, including Domenico Mancini's *De occupatione regni Anglie per Riccardum Tercium* and Thomas More's *History of Richard III*, this paper aims to cast light on this much overlooked aspect of the final period of the War of the Roses, where plots, feuds, and bloodshed gave way, for once, to a selfless and affectionate relationship between an earl and a prince, a master and his pupil, a man and his nephew.

Counselling the King – Reading Emotions, Mastering One's Own from the Fourteenth to the Fifteenth Century in England

Raluca Radulescu

(University of Bangor)

This lecture will focus on the uses of Giles of Rome's *speculum principis* and the tradition of other *Governance of Princes* tracts in late medieval England, both popular and authored by court poets like

Thomas Hoccleve. Quite apart from the standard advice regarding governance of one's kingdom and subjects, the governance of one's own emotions included in these tracts goes beyond controlling the passions, such as channelling justified anger (the *ira regis* so commonly discussed in literature) or practising *temperance*. Reading and managing others' emotions, at a collective and individual level, is also an important, and very modern, one might add, part of these tracts. I propose to place such tracts side by side with their application in both real life politics and other literary texts, in order to evidence their continued use and validity throughout the fourteenth and fifteenth century in England.

Panel 5 – (De)constructing Advice

Non-identical Twins: Thomas More's *Utopia* and Niccolò Machiavelli's *Prince*

Alessandra Petrina

(Università degli Studi di Padova)

Advice for princes literature is by definition generated of nostalgia and looking at utopia. Composed and disseminated in the same years, Thomas More's *Utopia* and Niccolò Machiavelli's *Prince* have much more in common than the dating and the general subject-matter. They both position themselves vis-à-vis the *speculum principis* tradition, implicitly challenging it by subtracting from the medieval genre the pivotal role of divine authority. Medieval *specula principum*, in fact, proposed the distinction between the good ruler and the tyrant as based on their relationship with divine intervention and ultimate divine judgement. Once divine intervention no longer plays a role, the new prince has to negotiate human forces; in this sense More's and Machiavelli's works mark the boundary from the medieval to the early modern perception of politics, opening the ways for the discussion on reason of state that will dominate the following century.

There have been recent scholarly attempts to identify closer links between the two texts: for instance, William Connell worked in the assumption that Machiavelli had read and was responding to *Utopia*. In the absence of definite proof for this theory, it may be more profitable to think of these two texts as non-identical twins, parallel reactions to a long-lived literary genre that was now showing its weakness against the emergence of the reality principle.

‘Warlike counsailes and preparation’: The first English Translation of Machiavelli's
Arte Della Guerra

Giacomo Sanavia

(Université Paris 8)

Machiavelli's *Arte della guerra* (1562) was first translated into English by the soldier Peter Whitehorne, who had finally returned to England after years of military campaigns abroad. Like many of his contemporaries, Whitehorne dedicates his work to Queen Elizabeth to uphold the recent

emphasis on military education stressed by the Militia Act (1558). Reflecting on the unprecedented warlike scenario ravaging Europe, the translator assumes the role of military advisor as he offers a complete overview of a question of necessary utility thanks to both the Machiavellian text and his original addition to the translation (*Certain Waies for the Orderying of Souldiers in Battelray*). The ‘grave and sage counsailes, learned & wittie precepts, or pollitike and prudent admonicions’ on warfare, the translator tells the Queen, ‘ought not to bee accounted the least and basest iewells of weale publike’. In particular, Whitehorne focuses on the work ‘of the famous and excellent Nicholas Machiavel, which in times past being a counsailour, and Secretarie of the noble citie of Florence’. The thought of Machiavelli foregrounds Whitehorne’s military competences and may have the same effect on its English readership. The analysis of some of the lexical choices made by Whitehorne, then, allows not only to understand how the Florentine Secretary’s thought substantiates political and military reflections in England, but also to take a closer look at how modern military science was developed in a country which was gradually gaining primacy in the European political framework.

‘Some of the court hold it presumption to instruct princes what they ought to do’
(DM, I, 19-20), or, How to Undermine Good Counselling in John Webster’s
Tragedies

Laura Tosi

(University of Venice Ca’ Foscari)

John Webster’s famous revenge tragedies *The White Devil* (1612) and *The Duchess of Malfi* (1614) are set in Italian Renaissance courts in which the standard behaviour is often identified with the courtier’s degeneration; this produces disenchantment towards court values and the possibility for the Prince to be surrounded, and advised by, disinterested courtiers.

In the plays every attempt to propose an ideal of a court in which a wise ruler can educate his counsellors into goodness, and be educated in return by them, guaranteeing the well-being of his subjects, is invariably challenged. The Machiavellian art of dissimulation does not appear to assist Webster’s passionate rulers either – Webster’s princes do not replace ethical integrity with prudence or dignity. The spaces of revenge tragedy are spaces of secrecy and plotting: corridors and dark interiors do not allow Princes to avail themselves of the service of a group of wise counsellors, but rather of frustrated courtiers and malcontents of middling birth looking for preferment. Although the importance of counselling and the dangers of flatterers are reiterated in the plays, words and intentions are contradicted and undermined by inadequate political choices, gossip and lies, murderous plots, flattery, and spaces that become haunted, chaotic, and gothic. As Kapust (2018) has argued, ‘Prudent princes receive good counsel: good counsel does not make a prince prudent. Absent prudence in the first place, the prince will be unable to receive good council at all’ (94).

Panel 6 – Anglo-Italian Advice to Princes

[Re]Framing Accountability for the King's Actions: Investigating Giovanni Francesco Biondi's Historical Account of Richard II's Relationship with his Counsellors

Leonardo Bagnulo
(Sapienza Università di Roma)

Dedicated to Charles I, the *Istoria delle Guerre Ciuili d'Inghilterra tra le Due Case di Lancastro, e Iorc*, by Giovanni Francesco Biondi, is a historiographical work focused on the lives and reigns of the English kings, covering the period from the reign of king Richard II to the reign of king Henry VII. This multi-volume text was originally published in Venice between 1637 and 1642, and an English translation, by Henry Carey, second earl of Monmouth, appeared almost immediately in London between 1641 and 1646. Therefore, the *Istoria* offers an interesting opportunity to investigate the political significance of late medieval and early Modern English history, as represented by the author, and by the translator, during the troublesome period of the English Civil War. Considering this premise, the aim of my presentation is to analyse the relationship between King Richard II and his counsellors as described in the first book of the *Istoria*, investigating the description of the different characters partaking to the events, and paying particular attention to the attribution of political responsibility by the author to said characters. After a brief contextualisation of Biondi's work, also in the light of his relationship with the dedicatee, Charles I, a close reading of the text thorough the lens of the Appraisal Theory will allow to achieve two objectives: first, to highlight the stance that Biondi takes on the king and his counsellors; secondly, to show how Biondi's historical account aligns with or diverges from that by other historians, chroniclers, and playwrights narrating the same events.

Deciphering the Interplay of Religion, Politics and Italian Language in *La Tavola di Cebete Tebano* (1552)

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This paper introduces Petruccio Ubaldini's *La Tavola di Cebete Tebano* (1552) dedicated to his pupil Henry Fitzalan, Baron Mautravers (1538-1556), son of Henry Fitzalan, Count of Arundel (1512-1580); and later on to Cosimo I, Duke of Florence, and his sons. Ubaldini introduced his illuminated manuscript as both a calligraphy manual and a moral treatise in Italian. These two functions reflect Ubaldini's double role as Mautravers' tutor (and perhaps also King Edward VI's) and a political intermediary between Arundel and the Duke of Florence. The manuscript includes a translation into Italian by the Venetian ambassador to England Daniele Barbaro (1514-1570) of a 1st CE Greek moral-allegorical dialogue and the commentary on the dialogue (either by Barbaro or Ubaldini). By using the rhetorical device of ekphrasis, the allegorical dialogue describes the soul's path in reaching

Happiness through Real Education and Virtues. The following commentary on the dialogue revives the message of the *Tavola* from a Christian angle, providing Mautravers with crucial moral advice in the middle of the English Reformation and Council of Trent. Through close reading and by placing the text in its political and religious scenario, I will argue that such commentary devised a subtle criticism to the Protestant doctrine of justification by faith alone. This moral-religious criticism matches Barbaro's and Arundel's contemporary attacks on the Edwardian Reformation. Even if Arundel's son, Mautravers, did not leave many historical traces due to his early death in 1556, his contemporary looked at him as a potential princeps who could marry Elizabeth Tudor. The *Tavola* is, therefore, a *Speculum Principis* meant to teach morality, calligraphy and the Italian language and to advise a new political actor in England on crucial theological matters.

George Whetstone, Italian novellas and the Mirror for Magistrates Tradition in *The Rocke of Regard* (1576)

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The miscellaneous prose and verse collection *The Rocke of Regard* (1576) was George Whetstone's first published work and set the tone for all his subsequent publications, which aimed to improve human ethics and society through the promotion of good civic values. Claiming that Whetstone's pursuit of moral edification is deeply rooted in his legal training at the Inns of Chancery, I will point out how his verse adaptations in complaint form of three novellas originally by Matteo Bandello are central to his moralising project in *The Rocke*. Here, Whetstone employs verse as a means to expand on the Italian novellas, infusing them with legal tones to underscore their moral implications. Key to this intent is the influence of a seminal early modern literary work: *A Mirror for Magistrates* (1559) and its later editions. This was a hugely ambitious and popular project whereby a group of authors (led by William Baldwin) close to the Inns circles set upon themselves to guide the conduct of magistrates, lawyers, and those in positions of authority, while also involving the middle classes in a conversation about ethical lawmaking. This influence is most obviously reflected by Whetstone's adoption of the complaint, a form with strong legal connotations, for his translation of the novellas. The form, structure, and even wording of the versified novellas in *The Rocke* echo the fundamental characteristics of the complaints included in the *Mirror*. I will showcase this intertextuality by analysing the complaint of Bianca Maria, Countess of Cellant (from Bandello's *Nouvelle* I.iv through William Painter, *Palace of Pleasure* II.xxiv), the first of Whetstone's adaptations in *The Rocke*. It will become evident that this adaptation was seemingly crafted with the 1563 edition of the *Mirror* as a reference. Furthermore, similarly to the *Mirror*, Whetstone's work aims to engage a diverse audience comprising both high and middle classes. By eulogizing an equitable administration of the law and justice, he offers guidance to this composite audience.