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Decoding *Misfortunes*: Advice to Elizabeth I and Her Subjects

This article positions Misfortunes within the context of drama and literature offered as counsel. Such contextualization demonstrates that the play drew upon Senecan drama, mirror for princes texts, and the Inns play Gorboduc in order to more authoritatively offer counsel about counsel itself to Elizabeth I, her court, and readers of the play in print. Considering both Misfortunes's wider circulation in print and in a recent performance by The Dolphin's Back, this article argues that the play's counsel had value beyond its application to the queen. We can fully decode the play's political messages only by looking across these different contexts.

When they presented *The Misfortunes of Arthur* before Elizabeth I and her court in February 1588, the playwrights situated their work within a tradition of drama and literature offered as counsel to the monarch. This article examines *Misfortunes* as a play that offers advice about the nature of counsel itself by considering how such counsel circulated across a variety of forms. By repurposing mythic British history and adapting classical texts, from Seneca's tragedies to Lucan's *De Bello Civili*, the authors align the play with these texts' politically charged concerns about governance. *Misfortunes* also follows the example set by *speculum principis*, or 'mirror for princes', presented in other literature, primarily the previous Inns of Court play *Gorboduc* (1562) by Thomas Norton and Thomas Sackville. The tapestry of influence in *Misfortunes* would have been identifiable by Elizabeth and her courtiers; the tenets of humanist education would have prepared them well to decode the play in light of topical politics.

The overarching narrative of *Misfortunes*, however, is not only applicable to events in Elizabeth's reign. We can instead read the play as a mediation on counsel itself, one that is relevant to a range of issues. The value of this reading seems even more apparent when we consider the play within the context of the printed playbook, which reached a wider audience, and the 2019 revival by The Dolphin's

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Back (hereafter called *Arthur*), which retained counsel scenes but removed references to Elizabeth for the modern audience. Although these versions operated with the queen physically absent, counsel remained continually present. By examining the original performance, playbook, and 2019 performance, this essay demonstrates the variety of topical and general ways in which we can decode the play's counsel.

This article will first explore *Misfortunes* and its introductory poem in relation to dramatic and literary traditions developed at the Inns. In tracing these influences, this analysis follows Ivan Lupić's argument that 'When counsel appears in Renaissance plays, its significance needs to be considered in dramatic and not just in moral or political terms'.¹ Consideration of the play itself in relation to its deviations from Geoffrey of Monmouth highlights the guidance given by its counsellor figures. Elizabeth and her court might have productively applied to specific situations the advice *Misfortunes* offers about the necessity of counsel for governing the country. This advice, however, also held worth for Inns readers who aspired to positions in government and for members of the 2019 audience interested in the dynamics of counsel in early modern drama.

That *Misfortunes* aims to function as political counsel is evident from the outset, with Nicholas Trotte's prologue endorsing the Inns on an institutional level:

Our industrie maintaineth unimpeacht
Prerogative of Prince, respect to Peeres,
The Commons libertie and each mans right;²

Trotte fashions himself and his fellow playwrights as legitimate political advisors whose legal 'industrie' grants them the authority to advise the queen on matters of state. This text figures Inns men as active participants in the polity, reflecting the lived experience of their various roles in government. Christopher Yelverton had served in multiple parliaments before contributing to *Misfortunes* and went on to be elected as speaker of the House of Commons.³ Francis Bacon, who, like Yelverton, was involved with the dumbshows, also sat in parliament before writing for *Misfortunes* and went on to have a distinguished, if controversial, political career as attorney general and lord chancellor.⁴

Setting a precedent for *Misfortunes*, the authors of the earlier *Gorboduc* similarly took roles in government. Sackville was elected to the House of Commons for Elizabeth's first parliament in 1559 and soon became one of her closest advisors.⁵ Norton also sat in her first parliament and was appointed counsel to the Stationers' Company in the year *Gorboduc* was performed.⁶ Both Kevin Dunn and Jessica Winston have convincingly argued that *Gorboduc* is drama-cum-counsel,

with Winston stating that the play's imitation of Senecan drama and the *Mirror for Magistrates* (first published in 1559), 'signalled that there was a precedent for the combination of drama and counsel offered in the play itself'.⁷ Senecan influence infuses *Gorboduc*, while the Chorus signals a connection to the *Mirror*: 'A mirror shall become to princes all / To learn to shun the cause of such a fall' (1.2.Chorus.392–3).⁸ *Misfortunes* also drew on the existing tradition of Senecan tragedies and non-dramatic Inns literature that functioned as political advice.

A number of Inns men produced works which belong to the mirror for princes genre, texts intended to shape the behaviour of rulers and statesmen by providing examples to follow or avoid.⁹ These include Thomas North's translation of Antonio de Guevara's *Dial of Princes* (1557) and William Baldwin's *Mirror for Magistrates*. North, via Guevara, argues that 'princes are, or ought to be, the mirrour and example of al'.¹⁰ Although specifically dedicated to Charles V, holy Roman emperor, king of Spain, and ruler of the Habsburg Netherlands, the manual also applied to statesmen. Anyone involved in government could likewise utilize the *Mirror*, which featured poetic monologues from a variety of political persons. Baldwin's preface attests to the value of the *Mirror*: 'For here as in a looking glas, you shall see (if any vice be in you) howe the like hath bene punished in other heretofore, whereby admonished, I trust it will be a good occasion to move you to the soner amendment'.¹¹ By producing texts which participated in this literary tradition, Inns men fostered an image of themselves as capable of counseling political leaders.

Inns and university men further developed their reputation as counsellors through their translations of Seneca, himself both a counsellor and a playwright, thus strengthening the connections between literary and political activity in Elizabethan England. For instance, Jasper Heywood and Alexander Neville shape their translations in the tradition of advice-to-princes texts; their works, like *Gorboduc*, linguistically recall the *Mirror*. Heywood creates new lines for the Chorus in *Troas* (1559), declaring Hecuba 'of high estate a Queene / A mirrour is, to teache you what you are'.¹² In *Oedipus* (1563) Neville adds a Chorus which asks readers to 'Let Oedipus Example be of this unto you all, / A Mirrour meet. A Patern playne, of Princes carefull thrall'.¹³ Prefatory dedications further position these translations as counsel. Heywood presents his translation as a gift for Elizabeth, fitting given Seneca's tragedies being seen as vehicles for counsel, while Neville dedicates his to privy councillor Nicholas Wotton, in order to 'admonish all men of theyr fickle Estates'.¹⁴ Through publication Seneca's tragedies became political mirrors to a wider range of Elizabethan subjects. The circulation of counsel in print, through Seneca, academic drama (*Gorboduc* was first printed in 1565), and

mirror for princes texts, accustomed the reading public to encountering counsel in this format and would have allowed them to identify the printed *Misfortunes* as a play of counsel. The advisory nature of Inns literature and drama would have prepared the original audience and readership of *Misfortunes* to decode the play as politically charged advice.

Despite following well-established traditions, authors had to navigate offering counsel to a ruler carefully, especially within the emergent public sphere in Elizabethan England. Conversations about political matters should ideally have taken place in controlled and private settings, such as court or parliament. Increasingly, however, as Peter Lake and Steven Pincus explain, counsel circulated more widely, and ‘A variety of media — print, the pulpit, performance, circulating manuscript — was used to address promiscuously uncontrollable, socially heterogeneous, in some sense “popular”, audiences’.¹⁵ Seemingly aware of this shift, Elizabeth issued a 1559 proclamation which limited plays on ‘matters of religion or of the governance of the estate of the commonweal’, because these topics were ‘no meet matters to be written or treated upon but by men of authority, learning, and wisdom’, nor were they ‘to be handled before any audience but of grave and discreet persons’.¹⁶ *Misfortunes*’s performance under this edict indicates that the queen thought the audience was ‘grave and discreet’ and that Inns men possessed sufficient ‘authority, learning, and wisdom’ to comment on the governance of the country. Still, counsel being offered in a play complicated the ideal advisory dynamic because more agents — from courtly audiences to public readers — could access the advice being offered. The more public nature of the counsel perhaps explains why Trotte’s introductory poem rejected contemporary relevancy:

How suetes a tragedie for such a time?
 Thus — for that since your sacred Majestie
 In gracious hands the regall sceptre held,
 All tragedies are fled from State to stadge.

(‘An Introduction’, lines 130–3)

Trotte calls attention to Elizabeth’s ‘sacred’ status and argues that her expert statecraft means that tragedies now only occur on the dramatic, rather than political, stage. The play nonetheless has a discernible relevance to a range of contemporary issues, and this disclaimer likely stoked the topical possibilities rather than dampened them. Giles Y. Gamble believes that in reworking the Arthuriana, the playwrights ‘emphasized their current anxieties regarding Elizabeth’s lack of an heir and the constant threats of usurpation, civil war, and foreign invasion’.¹⁷ The

original audience likely interpreted the play in reference to the political uncertainties England was experiencing.

The play itself explicitly rejected Trotte's denial of relevance. The ghost of Gorlois appears during the last act to deliver a panegyric in praise of Elizabeth for ending the cursed cycle of Arthur's bloodline. In the original performance this speech, penned by William Fulbecke, commands admiration for Elizabeth: 'Vaunt Brytaine vaunt, of her renowned raigne, / Whose face deterres the hagg-es of hell from thee' (5.2.26–7). Thomas Hughes rewrites the speech for the playbook but retains the same basic meaning, describing the queen as 'That virtuous Virgo, borne for Brytaines blisse; / That peerlesse braunch of Brute; that sweete remaine / Of Priam's state' who will 'reduce the golden age againe' (18–20, 23). Tudor myth considered both Elizabeth and Arthur descendants of the Trojan Brutus, but the play differentiates them by contrasting Elizabeth's virginity with Arthur's incest. Curtis Perry explains that, despite this difference 'the well-known genealogical link between Arthur and the Tudors ensures that the play would have been understood to have contemporary relevance'.¹⁸ Both the original elite audience and readers of the play would likely have identified such topical applicability.

The printed playbook of *Misfortunes* that appeared within weeks of its performance moved it even further into the public sphere; print allowed a broader readership to access a text initially delivered to Elizabeth and her court. Inns men likely represented a large proportion of the readership. Robert Wilmot's preface to the Inns play *Tancred and Gismund* (1591) addresses directly 'the Gentlemen Students of the Inner Temple, with the rest of his singular good friends, the Gentlemen of the middle Temple, and to all other curteous readers'.¹⁹ Wilmot depicts Inns students as his primary readers, and they could have similarly been the core readership of *Misfortunes*. If so, the printed playtext redirects *Misfortunes*'s counsel towards the Inns community, many of whom sought positions within government as ambassadors, MPs, or counsellors. Printed Inns plays held educative value for this readership, exemplifying ideal counsellors to potential future counsellors. *Misfortunes*'s title page records the play's performance 'at her Highnesse Court in Greenewich', emphasizing the presence of Elizabeth and framing the text within this specific court context, a context in which many Inns men sought to participate.²⁰

While the playbook attempted to assert Elizabeth's presence, the 2019 revival *Arthur* took the opposite approach by removing references to the queen. As the director James Wallace explains, time restrictions required cuts, and 'Without the real Elizabeth's physical presence, the flattering introductory speeches directed

towards her lose much of their charge'.²¹ These cuts consequently underscore the broader, general worth of the play's depiction of the leader-advisor relationship, whereas, for the original audience Elizabeth's physical presence would have encouraged application of political lessons to contemporary situations. We can see the printed play as a bridge between the original and 2019 performances in that it inserted the queen as a literary presence but was still shaped by her physical absence. Either Elizabeth's presence or absence coloured the two performances, influencing spectators to examine the play topically or generally, but readers could switch more easily between both interpretations.

Hughes's adaptation of Arthurian sources intensified the need for counsel within the play. In Geoffrey of Monmouth's *De Gestis Britonum* (ca 1136) Mordred is Arthur's nephew, while in *Misfortunes* he is Arthur's son. This alteration creates a greater dilemma for Arthur and thus a greater need for counsel and an expansion of the counsellor roles. In Geoffrey's version of the legend, Arthur grants Mordred no mercy and self-assuredly seeks vengeance: 'As soon as the bad news of this flagrant crime had reached his ears, Arthur immediately cancelled the attack which he had planned to make on Leo, the Emperor of the Romans ... then without more ado he himself set off for Britain'.²² The Arthur of *Misfortunes*, by contrast, vacillates between his paternal feelings for his son and his responsibility to England. He struggles to act because of the strong familial bond between father and son: 'my flesh abhorres' to battle 'my proper bloud' because 'Great is the love which nature doth inforce / From kin to kin, but most from sire to sonne' (3.1.39–42). Felicity Brown identifies *Misfortunes* as the first depiction of an Arthur who feels love for Mordred; all other versions depict only hatred.²³ Arthur's love for his son is integral to his dilemma and thus to the elucidation of the value of political advisors.

Arthur's two close advisors encourage action against Mordred, with Cador urging Arthur to prioritize his political duty:

CADOR When farre and near your warres had worne the world,
 What warres were left for him but civill warres?
 All which requires revenge with sword and fire
 And to pursue your foes with present force. (3.1.28–31)

These lines expand upon Lucan's *De Bello Civili*: 'What conquests now remain, / What wars not civil can my kinsman wage?'²⁴ Lucan's poem was the chief classical source depicting civil war, and Edward Paleit designates 'the period of English literature between the mid-1580s and the 1640s as the "age of Lucan"'.²⁵ *Misfortunes* logically employs *De Bello Civili* given these texts' shared interest in the ethical



Figure 1. Production photograph of Arthur (Oliver Senton). Photo credit: Daniela D'Amato.

ramifications of civil war. Ventriloquizing Lucan, Cador faults Arthur for leaving the country vulnerable with his warmongering ways. If the audience recognized the imitation, then Cador's quoting of an authoritative text gives his reprimand more weight. Howell, Arthur's other counsellor, follows Cador in reminding the king that his duty to country must come before the bonds of family:

HOWELL A king ought alwaies to preferre his realme
 Before the love he beares to kin or sonne.
 Your realm destroide is neere restord againe,
 But time may send you kine and sonnes inough. (45–8)

Howell's argument that Arthur can produce more sons but that his kingdom is irreplaceable seems heartless but is politically necessary. Arthur's wavering between his royal and paternal roles means that his counsellors are crucial in reframing his arguments, bidding him to accept the personal cost of war against his usurper son. While Elizabeth never faced this specific situation, the play argues that any difficulties in her reign (encompassing the succession, imperial expansion, and the threat from Spain) must be resolved with the aid of her advisors. Tragedy results from the shared refusal of Arthur and Mordred, along with Guenevora earlier in the play, to collaborate with their counsellors. This warning about the

necessity of counsel may have felt particularly pertinent at the time of the play's composition because, as Winston describes, Elizabeth's 'style of rule was altering from the collaborative model that dominated the first half of her reign to the more authoritarian style of the latter half'.²⁶ While the play presents Arthur and Mordred as models for Elizabeth to avoid, Cador and Howell appear as models for the courtiers in the audience and for readers with political aspirations to follow.

Mordred's advisor, Conan, provides an even more exemplary model than Arthur's advisors. By counselling a villain, Conan demonstrates the importance of providing honest advice, even when doing so potentially threatens one's life. Conan is reminiscent of the counsellor-to-a-tyrant figures from Seneca's *Thyestes* and the pseudo-Senecan *Octavia*. In *Thyestes*, a guard unsuccessfully attempts to dissuade Atreus from vengeance against his brother; in *Octavia*, Seneca futilely attempts to restrain Nero's malevolence. Conan accordingly offers Mordred wisdom despite its aggravating effect:

CONAN If powre be joyned with right, men must obay.

MORDRED My will must go for right.

CONAN If they assent.

MORDRED My sword shall force assent.

CONAN No — gods forbid!

MORDRED What! shall I stande, whiles Arthur sheads my bloode? (2.2.40–3)

Conan's first line exemplifies the kind of pithy axiomatic advice that early modern readers would have copied into their commonplace books. Laura Estill identifies a notable instance of a reader mining political wisdom from an Inns play: William Briton's extractions of *Gorboduc* in his commonplace book.²⁷ Briton, a member of the Sidney circle, copied lines from the play in the early 1590s, along with quotations from advice-to-princes texts such as Thomas Blennerhasset's *The Seconde Part of the Mirrour for Magistrates* (1578) and Thomas Elyot's *The Boke Named Governour* (1531). Briton seemed especially interested in the monarch-counsellor relationship and copied the play's caution to 'be plain without all wrie respect / or poysonous craft to speake in pleasing wyse', as well as the Chorus's interpretation of the second dumbshow: 'wo to the prynce that plyant eare enclynes / & yelds his mynde to poysonous tale that floweth / from flattering mouth'.²⁸ Counsel was ideally intimate, but copying the public counsel first presented in a play into a private notebook transforms the advice into a different kind of intimacy, and illustrates the diverse ways in which counsel literature circulated in the early modern period. Like *Gorboduc*, *Misfortunes* is rich with aphorisms relating to duty

and counsel and could be read with an eye to political lessons. While affording readers the opportunity to mine the play, the text of *Misfortunes* also featured clarifying descriptions of the dumbshows. Romola Nuttall explains that publication ‘offered the composers of these sequences opportunities to explain their full significance to readers, thus demonstrating their skill and ingenuity’.²⁹ Spectators had to decode the symbolism of the dumbshows by themselves, whereas the play-book elucidated their meaning for readers.

The stichomythic exchange between Mordred and Conan, quoted above,



Figure 2. Production photograph of Mordred (Patrick Walshe McBride) and Conan/Nuncius 2 (Mark Hammersley). Photo credit: Daniela D’Amato.

could also have been regarded by the original audience and readers as worthy of extraction into a commonplace book because it replicates Senecan tragedy. These lines closely adapt the following passage from *Octavia*:

NERO Let them obey our orders.
 SENECA Give righteous orders —
 NERO I shall myself decide.
 SENECA Which all men may respect.

NERO The sword will force respect.

SENECA May heaven forbid!

NERO Shall I then go on suffering them to seek my blood³⁰

Linguistic imitation here adds a didactic layer which the elite audience and Inns readers would have understood, as both groups were familiar with humanist pedagogy. Felicity Brown comments that the play's medley of lines from Seneca and Lucan probably led to 'a general sense of familiarity rather than specific recognition' and that 'studious readers of the play likely apprehended *Misfortunes's* patchwork of Latin translation as classical texts'.³¹ For spectators these lines, if recognized, link the play to the political value of classical writers, but performance offered little time for deep contemplation. Readers of the play, as noted by Brown, would have had ample time to consider the significance of translated lines. Many of Conan's lines suit commonplacings; their imitation of Seneca often imbues them with authority. For instance, Conan tells Mordred that 'who so seekes true praise and just renowne, / Would rather seeke their praying heartes then tongues' (2.2.80–1), in lines taken from *Thyestes*: 'he who seeks the glory of true favour, will wish heart rather than voice to sing his praise'.³² The Senecan lines, character types, and stichomythia would have encouraged the classically trained audience to search the play for the same type of exemplary wisdom they attached to Seneca's works. The instruction operates on two levels: on one level, Conan's lines signal to Elizabeth that she should heed her counsellors while offering these dramatic counsellors as ideal models; on the other level, audiences and readers can divorce his pithy statements about the restrictions of monarchs within the laws of government and religion from their original context and apply them more widely. The printed edition and *Arthur* represent two different but similar forms in regard to this wider application. Both demonstrate that the play's counsel had purpose beyond offering advice to Elizabeth, but where the playbook teaches Inns men about their potential future duties of counsel, *Arthur* facilitated a modern audience's broader understanding of the importance of counsel to both early modern drama and modes of government.

By removing mentions of Elizabeth and thus of the immediate political context, *Arthur* lends itself to an examination of the value of the play's counsel beyond direct application. James Wallace emphasizes that 'the situations into which the characters are thrown, rather than physical action, create dramatic intensity'.³³ This understanding of the play led to the vast majority of the counsel scenes being retained, and they are dramatically compelling. In performance, the stichomythic speech patterns heightened the intensity between the pleading Conan

(Mark Hammersley) and the furious Mordred (Patrick Walshe McBride). This dynamic is especially apparent when Conan asks ‘What sonne would use such wrong against his sire?’ (1.4.109), and Mordred replies: ‘B’it nature, be it reason, be it pride, / I love to rule!’ (114–5). McBride comments that this line is ‘so bald and bold, and you have no choice but to savour the word “rule”’.³⁴ While the line adapts a segment of Seneca’s *Hippolytus*, for a modern audience less familiar with Seneca, this speech holds power because of its emotional impact.³⁵ The aim of *Arthur* was not to counsel the audience, but to see if the play worked as a modern performance. The counsel scenes are important in this entertainment context, as well as featuring much of the instruction about the relationship between leaders and their advisors. The heavy presence of this relationship, in the absence of a direct link to Elizabeth, provides a modern audience of the play in performance with an understanding not only of counsel’s importance to early modern politics in general, but also counsel’s power to reach the public sphere through drama.



Figure 3. Production photograph of Mordred (Patrick Walshe McBride) and Conan/Nuncius 2 (Mark Hammersley). Photo credit: Daniela D’Amato.

Conan's efforts to temper Mordred ultimately fail because of his refusal to accept counsel, which leads to civil war and Arthur and Mordred's deaths. Geoffrey does not report the king and prince killing each other directly: 'the accursed traitor was killed and many thousands of his men with him' and after further fighting 'Arthur himself, our renowned King, was mortally wounded'.³⁶ Hughes alters their deaths, forcing father to kill son and son to kill father in the vein of the vernacular Arthurian tradition, including Thomas Malory's *Le Morte Darthur* (1485). The play also reports that this instance of unnatural familial violence is not isolated: 'The brethren broach their bloud; the sire the sonne's / The sonne againe would prove by too much wrath, / That he, whom thus he slew, was not his sire. / No blood nor kinne can swage their irefull moodes' (4.2.170–3). *Misfortunes* returns to Lucan here: 'One his brother slew, nor dared to spoil the corse, till severed from the neck he flung the head afar. Another dashed full in his father's teeth the fatal sword'.³⁷ Lucan's gory portrayal of civil war gives classical weight to the argument that these horrors must be avoided, an outcome which according to *Misfortunes* can be achieved through monarchs and counsellors collaborating.

Arthur explicitly highlights the cautionary and exemplary nature of the play before he dies: 'both heavens and hell conspir'd in one / To make our endes a mirror to the worlde' (5.1.119–20). He frames his downfall as a 'mirror to the worlde' and so aligns the play overtly with the mirror for princes genre. Arthur's presentation of his misfortunes as a mirror likely resonated with the educated original audience and readership. The events in *Misfortunes* map roughly onto the various anxieties gripping England in the 1580s, in particular, the feared outcome of the unsettled succession and the threat from internal and external enemies. The play advises the queen that she should face any issues with the aid of counsel. Arthur's inability to act and Mordred's villainy offer examples *not* to follow, while the counsellors provide examples *to* follow. The play endorses counsellors, but Conan is aware that rulers do not always heed counsel: 'men in greatest countnance with their king / Can worke by fit perswasion sometimes much; / But sometimes lesse, and sometimes nought at all' (4.1.31–3). Tragedy results not from ineffective counsel, but from the king and prince repeatedly ignoring counsel.

In *Misfortunes* the playwrights sought to counsel Elizabeth and her advisors about counsel itself. The political backgrounds of some of the authors, the historical and political subject matter, and the Senecan and *speculum principis* style all indicate that the play was attempting to provide authoritative political advice. The context of the play bolsters the image of Inns men as competent statesmen, while also emphasizing the importance of advisors to the mechanisms of government. The original performance urged Elizabeth and her counsellors to participate

successfully in a reciprocal model of governance in order to resolve matters of state. Inns students who hoped to gain positions in government could use the play in print to supplement their education regarding the duties of counsellors while mining speeches for aphorisms. *Arthur* demonstrated that the play's advice holds relevance beyond its Elizabethan context for facilitating conversations about the leader-advisor dynamic. Although initially aimed at Elizabeth, *Misfortunes* must be looked at across all of these contexts — as well as compared to *Gorboduc*, Senecan translations, and mirror literature — if we are to fully decipher and extract the play's many forms of counsel.

Notes

- 1 Ivan Lupić, *Subjects of Advice: Drama and Counsel from More to Shakespeare* (Philadelphia, 2019), 4, <https://doi.org/10.9783/9780812296433>.
- 2 Thomas Hughes, *The Misfortunes of Arthur*, ed. J. Payne Collier (London, 1828), 'An Introduction', lines 87–9. All quotations from the play derive from this edition, but line numbers are my own.
- 3 David Ibbetson, 'Yelverton, Sir Christopher', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography (ODNB)* (2008), <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/30213>.
- 4 Markku Peltonen, 'Bacon, Francis, Viscount St Alban', *ODNB* (2007), <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/990>.
- 5 Rivkah Zim, 'Sackville, Thomas, first Baron Buckhurst and first earl of Dorset', *ODNB* (2015), <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/24450>.
- 6 Marie Axton, 'Norton, Thomas', *ODNB* (2008), <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/20359>.
- 7 Kevin Dunn, 'Representing Counsel: *Gorboduc* and the Elizabethan Privy Council', *English Literary Renaissance* 33.2 (2003), <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1475-6757.2003.00029.x>; Jessica Winston, *Lawyers at Play: Literature, Law, and Politics at the Early Modern Inns of Court, 1558–1581* (Oxford, 2016), 189, <https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780198769422.001.0001>.
- 8 Thomas Sackville and Thomas Norton, *Gorboduc, or Ferrex and Porrex*, ed. Irby B. Cauthen Jr. (Lincoln NE, 1970).
- 9 For more on the *speculum principis* genre, see Harriet Archer and Andrew Hadfield, 'Introduction: *A Mirror for Magistrates* and Early Modern English Culture', in *A Mirror for Magistrates in Context: Literature, History and Politics in Early Modern*

- England*, ed. Harriet Archer and Andrew Hadfield (Cambridge, 2016), 1–14, <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781316219768>.
- 10 Antonio de Guevara, *Dial of Princes*, 3 books, trans. Thomas North (London, 1568; STC: 12428), 2.87v.
 - 11 William Baldwin, *A Myrroure for Magistrates* (London, 1559, STC: 1247), C3r–v.
 - 12 Seneca, *The Sixt Tragedie of the Most Graue and Prudent Author Lucius, Anneus, Seneca, Entituled Troas*, trans. Jasper Heywood (London, 1559; STC: 22227a), B3v.
 - 13 Seneca, *The Lamentable Tragedie of Oedipus the Sonne of Laius Kyng of Thebes Out of Seneca*, trans. Alexander Neville (London, 1563; STC: 22225), D2v.
 - 14 *Ibid.*, A3v.
 - 15 Peter Lake and Steven Pincus, ‘Rethinking the Public Sphere in Early Modern England’ in *The Politics of the Public Sphere in Early Modern England*, ed. Peter Lake and Steven Pincus (Manchester, 2007), 6.
 - 16 Paul L. Hughes and James F. Larkin, ed., *Tudor Royal Proclamations*, 3 vols (New Haven, 1969), 3.115–6.
 - 17 Giles Y. Gamble, ‘Power Play: Elizabeth I and *The Misfortunes of Arthur*’, *Quondam et Futurus* 1.2 (1991), 59.
 - 18 Curtis Perry, ‘British Empire on the Eve of the Armada: Revisiting *The Misfortunes of Arthur*’, *Studies in Philology* 108.4 (2011), 511, <https://doi.org/10.1353/sip.2011.0022>.
 - 19 Robert Wilmot, *The Tragedie of Tancred and Gismund* (London, 1591; STC: 25764), *4r.
 - 20 Thomas Hughes, *Certaine Deuises and Shewes Presented to Her Maiestie by the Gentlemen of Grayes-Inne at Her Highnesse Court in Greenewich* (London, 1587; STC 13921).
 - 21 James Wallace, ‘Staging *Arthur*’, 143, in this Issues in Review, <https://doi.org/10.12745/et.24.2.4891>.
 - 22 Geoffrey of Monmouth, *The History of the Kings of Britain*, trans. Lewis Thorpe (London, 1966), 258.
 - 23 Felicity Brown, “‘With giddy steps runs on a headlong race’: The Reinvention of the King in *The Misfortunes of Arthur*”. Conference paper delivered at *The Inns of Court and the Circulation of Text*, King’s College London, 14–15 July 2019.
 - 24 Lucan, *The Civil War*, trans. J.D. Duff (Cambridge MA, 2015), 2.595, <https://doi.org/10.4159/dlcl.lucan-civil-war.1928>.
 - 25 Edward Paleit, *War, Liberty, and Caesar: Responses to Lucan’s Bellum Ciuile, ca. 1580—1650* (Oxford, 2013), 10, <https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199602988.001.0001>.
 - 26 Winston, *Lawyers at Play*, 227.

- 27 Laura Estill, 'New Contexts for Early Tudor Plays: William Briton, an Early Reader of *Gorboduc*', *Early Theatre* 16.2 (2013), <https://doi.org/10.12745/et.16.2.12>.
- 28 British Library Add MS 61822, 89v, 1.2.29–30; 90r, 2.Chorus.103–5.
- 29 Romola Nuttall, 'Publishing *Misfortunes*: Recording Performance at the Inns of Court', 191, in this Issues in Review, <https://doi.org/10.12745/et.24.2.5025>.
- 30 Seneca, *Octavia*, trans. Frank Justus Miller in *Seneca's Tragedies*, 2 vols (London, 1917), 2.447, lines 459–62. This is a polyglot edition; I reference here the English page number and the Latin line numbers.
- 31 Felicity Brown, 'Sourcing *Misfortunes*: Translation and Tragedy', 163, in this Issues in Review, <https://doi.org/10.12745/et.24.2.4878>.
- 32 Seneca, *Thyestes*, trans. Miller in *Seneca's Tragedies*, 2.107, lines 209–10.
- 33 James Wallace, 'Staging Arthur', 151.
- 34 Personal correspondence with the actors.
- 35 Seneca, *Hippolytus*, trans. Miller in *Seneca's Tragedies*, 1.361, lines 567–8.
- 36 Geoffrey, *Kings of Britain*, 261.
- 37 Lucan, *The Civil War*, 7.626–30.

