
Renaissance and Reformation
Renaissance et Réforme



Archer, Harriet, and Andrew Hadfield, eds. A Mirror for Magistrates in Context: Literature, History and Politics in Early Modern England

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Volume 40, Number 4, Fall 2017

URI: <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/1086075ar>

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.33137/rr.v40i4.29277>

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Publisher(s)

Iter Press

ISSN

0034-429X (print)

2293-7374 (digital)

[Explore this journal](#)

Cite this review

Ranson, A. (2017). Review of [Archer, Harriet, and Andrew Hadfield, eds. A Mirror for Magistrates in Context: Literature, History and Politics in Early Modern England]. *Renaissance and Reformation / Renaissance et Réforme*, 40(4), 185–187. <https://doi.org/10.33137/rr.v40i4.29277>

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movement. Maiarelli suggests that it made Angeli unsuitable to be Colomba's spiritual guide (lxxviii–iv). Just to be safe, Alessi avoided any possible reference to Savonarola and avoided some of the material from the Latin legend that could have compromised the Blessed Colomba by a possible connection.

Compiled between 1635 and 1639 at Cardinal Giovanni Francesco Guidi's request, the manuscript (BAV 11808) is dedicated to Cardinal Francesco Barberini. It is in a good state of conservation and presents a beautiful page in which the image of the Blessed Columba receiving the Eucharist from an angel stands out. Although the manuscript was not addressed to readers expert in sixteenth-century Latin, we can easily say that its intended readers were at least familiar with the *latinus sermo*. The exegesis and the introduction offer a double apparatus: lexical, morphological and syntactic information, and annotations of a literary, historical, and mythological nature. On the whole, this is a fine edition of a rare text that raises the hope of further scholarly attention to Niccolò Alessi's poem on the Blessed Colomba and other late fifteenth-century holy women.

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Archer, Harriet, and Andrew Hadfield, eds.

A Mirror for Magistrates in Context: Literature, History and Politics in Early Modern England.

Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016. Pp. xiv, 258. ISBN 978-1-107-10435-8 (hardcover) US\$99.99.

Sources generally agree that *A Mirror for Magistrates* was a publishing phenomenon in early modern England. It first appeared in bookstalls in 1563, and new editions were issued continually throughout the reign of Elizabeth I and well into the reign of James I. It greatly influenced contemporary writers, including Shakespeare himself, and in its first manifestation was controversial enough to be banned by Mary I. Then called *A Memorial of Such Princes*, this lost first edition set up the *Mirror's* unique structure: a prose frame around narrative poems spoken by the ghosts of well-known historical figures. The primary author, William Baldwin, wrote the prose frame as if he was reporting

the events of a gathering of scholars who performed and recorded the ghosts' tales.

Many studies of the *Mirror* during the twentieth century suggested that its purpose was simply to teach its readers universal truths about providence and fortune. More recent scholarship has explored the *Mirror's* political themes, its concept of the self, and its deliberate alteration of the *de casibus* tragedy genre, which takes the study of this important source text in a new direction. In *A Mirror for Magistrates in Context: Literature, History and Politics in Early Modern England*, the authors have gone even further from the traditional view of the *Mirror*. Editors Harriet Archer and Andrew Hadfield suggest that modern scholarship often ignores the substance of the text, even though it had such a pervasive influence on Elizabethan and Jacobean culture. Thus, their book intends to "open out debate" and put the *Mirror* in its context, which will hopefully give the *Mirror* a greater place in early modern studies.

This book is the product of a 2012 conference that explored both the significance of the *Mirror* for early modern England and its continuing legacy. It is divided into three parts: The first part focuses on the first edition of the *Mirror*, which was the only edition directly supervised by William Baldwin. The second part studies adaptations of the work published after Baldwin's death in 1563, examining how the changes incorporated by various new editors reflected the changing circumstances of later Elizabethan and early Jacobean culture. The third part considers the wider influence of the *Mirror* on contemporary writing.

In this book, the authors aim to look in the *Mirror* in ways that will alter the reflection they see. Thus, they have approached it from many different angles. Scott Lucas's chapter, which opens the book, places the *Mirror* in its literary context by exploring the connection between Baldwin's scholarship and his chosen genre. Paul Budra chooses to look at what emotional effects Baldwin and his collaborators may have intended the *Mirror* to have. Cathy Shrank focuses on what was missing from the 1563 edition: the story of Elianor, the Duke of Gloucester's wife, which was in the table of contents but did not actually appear until the 1578 edition. Michelle O'Callaghan looks at how one of the later *Mirror* editors, Richard Niccols, applied the style of the *Mirror* to contemporary rather than historical events, with a pamphlet about the ongoing tragedy of Sir Thomas Overbury. In the closing chapter, Philip Schwyzer conducts a fascinating examination of the chaos of the *Mirror's* timeline and its

influence on Shakespeare's history plays, showing how it affected Shakespeare's exploration of temporal sequence.

This book is thoroughly multidisciplinary, which provides a good foundation for the breadth of its scholarship. It also allows each author a unique voice, demonstrated in part by the editors' decision to allow everyone to use different editions of the source text rather than aim for consistency. However, the book falls short in one area: studying the readership of the *Mirror*. It touches on the question of audience many times but does not fully explore it. The excellent chapter by Bart van Es examines how Baldwin's mirror imagery became a metaphor for the ideal interpretation of texts, and considers how the *Mirror* may have influenced readers to become more interested in politics, but does not provide specific examples. Similarly, Jennifer Richards conducts a very interesting study of how the *Mirror* may have sounded by examining its vocality, but focuses more on the speaker than the hearers.

This is a weakness because it is a central claim in the book that the *Mirror's* profound effect on Elizabethan and Jacobean culture makes it worthy of further study, and yet that influence is never fully explored. The book's focus is very much on the *Mirror's* various authors and editors. It is almost exclusively through their eyes that the book looks at rhetorical tropes, the significance of objects in the text, and the evolution of the corpus of works known collectively as the *Mirror for Magistrates*.

Fortunately, this minor flaw actually helps the book achieve its goal. It shows that the interpretation of the *Mirror's* significance and legacy is still open to debate, and that there is still work to do. The diverse and challenging chapters from skilled scholars, who each explore an under-studied aspect of the *Mirror*, raise many questions that can push scholarship forward. In short, this book demonstrates the marvellous malleability of the *Mirror*. By placing it in its context, this book confirms that the *Mirror* should be factored into political, historical, literary, and even social studies of early modern England.

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