

**Richard III's Books:**  
**XII. William Worcester's *Boke of Noblesse***  
**and his Collection of Documents on the War in**  
**Normandy**

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THE COMPANION VOLUMES of the *Boke of Noblesse* and the documents on Normandy were not composed for Richard III personally, but meant to be read and consulted by any king of England about to invade France. Brought together in the hope of presentation to Henry VI, they were given to Edward IV on the eve of his French enterprise, and later re-dedicated to Richard III, presumably because it was thought — or hoped — that he believed a reconquest of the lost territories still feasible. The *Boke*, in the guise of a 'mirror for princes', gives practical and moral precepts that, if followed, would enable the English to regain what they have lost. The Collection is a series of copies of authentic documents, both military and administrative, that back up the advice given in the *Boke*.<sup>1</sup> The evidence that both books were presented to Richard III is contained in the introduction to the Collection.

**William Worcester's Life and Work**

William Worcester, alias Botoner, 'of Bristol and Norfolk, gentleman',<sup>2</sup> was born in 1415, studied in Oxford and entered the service of Sir John Fastolf when about twenty-three. He acted as secretary, agent and personal attendant until Fastolf's death in 1459.<sup>3</sup> However unpleasant Sir John's treatment of his dependants many have been — and there is plenty of evidence that it was — Worcester served his master long and intimately, even to the extent of writing for his entertainment and ministering to him during his long illness. His duties also took him on extensive journeys through England and into Normandy, collecting evidence for lawsuits, looking after the Fastolf estates, even sorting out the confused affairs of the late Duke of Bedford, Regent of France. Worcester's own interests were wide-ranging; his curiosity has been called 'undisciplined'.<sup>4</sup> He liked 'a good boke of Frensche or of poetre',<sup>5</sup> made at least one translation from French and/or Latin — Cicero's *Old Age*, made for Fastolf in *his* old age — and corrected other people's work. He is known to have sampled the 'New Learning': quite a number of classical and humanist texts went through his hands; he was acquainted with John Free, of undoubted humanist fame,<sup>6</sup> from whose library he acquired two books, one in Greek,<sup>7</sup> and with William Sellyng, the Greek scholar,

monk at Christ Church, Canterbury, who helped him to find a copy of Livy.<sup>8</sup> Medicine, astrology and biology also intrigued him.

He was an antiquarian first, however, and enjoyed collecting historical, architectural and topographical facts, stimulated by his travels in Fastolf's service and by Fastolf's needs and wishes.<sup>9</sup> Impressive evidence of his researches is to be found in his voluminous *Itinerarium*, autograph notes jotted down *en route* mainly in his own brand of 'working' Latin.<sup>10</sup> His literary studies, too, seem to have had a practical purpose, consistent with his antiquarian note taking.

Sir John Fastolf personally encouraged the creation of a remarkable amount of literary work and Worcester appears to have been involved in many instances. Three of Sir John's old companions-in-arms wrote him a straightforward account, in French, of military events in Normandy, 1415 to 1429. They did not finish their project, in which Worcester assisted them, because Fastolf died and with him the main reason for its composition.<sup>11</sup> Another servant or dependant wrote or copied a 'chronicle of jerusalem' and 'the journeys that my master [Fastolf] did while he was in France' and 'delivered' it to Worcester.<sup>12</sup> Fastolf's stepson by his first marriage, Stephen Scrope, translated the *Dicts and Sayings of the Philosophers* from the French for Sir John's 'contemplacion and solace' in 1450.<sup>13</sup> It was corrected by Worcester after Scrope's death in 1472.<sup>14</sup> Also about 1450, at Fastolf's command, Scrope translated Christine de Pisan's *Epistre d'Othea*, or as he calls it, the *Pistell of Othea*, 'a Bok off Knyghthode' or 'of Chevalrye'.<sup>15</sup>

In the same period Worcester himself<sup>16</sup> produced similar work for Sir John's entertainment in his old age: the translation of Cicero's *De senectute*,<sup>17</sup> a (lost) compilation called *Acta Domini Johannis Fastolf* ('the Deeds of . . .')<sup>18</sup> and the *Boke of Noblesse*.

### The Boke of Noblesse and the Collection on Normandy

The *Boke* survives in one manuscript, now BL Ms. Royal 18 B xxii.<sup>19</sup> It is on paper, very simply but consistently executed, written in a cursive mid- to late-fifteenth-century hand. Decoration consists of a four-line initial H with green penwork at the beginning of the actual text, two-line red initials and blue and red paragraph marks throughout. Chapter headings are underlined. There are contemporary marginalia in red and black, corrections and long additions, apparently in Worcester's hand.<sup>20</sup> At least two other hands added shorter *notas*. The text is headed, in red in the hand of the main additions:

The boke of noblesse compiled to the mest hygh and myghty prince kyng Edward the ivth for the avauncyng and preferring the comun publique of the royaumes of England and of Fraunce

*Edward* was at some stage crossed out and changed to *herry* (?), and *ivth* to another, illegible number; both were crossed out again and the *iiij* restored. The text ends [f.42]:

Here endyth thys epistle undre correccion<sup>21</sup> the xv day of June the yeere of crist m<sup>i</sup> iiij<sup>i</sup> lxxv. and of the noble regne of kyng Edward iiiij<sup>th</sup> the xv<sup>th</sup>

The original text was probably written not long after 1451, the latest year mentioned. The urgency of the author's description of, for example, the many instances of treason by the French, and the misery of the common people in

Normandy, as well as the reference to Charles VII as 'youre grete aduerserie' suggest that it was made not long after the actual expulsion of the English and before 1461. The adaptation of the text for presentation to Edward IV is complete, however. Phrases such as 'the erle of Marche your moste noble antecessour' (p.15) and 'that highe and mighty prince Richarde duke of yorke youre father' (p.41), leave no doubt that the book was rewritten after 1461. Of the new text a fair copy was made by a scribe and to this Worcester again added long marginal notes. These seem to have been written very shortly before Edward's actual departure to France in 1475:<sup>22</sup> Worcester wrote that the evil of the English defeat could still be remedied 'as youre hygnesse now entendyth' (p.90). It also appears that some important documents had already been handed over by the author to the King: '. . . the statutes made by Johan regent of Fraunce, duc of bedford, . . . uppon the conduyt of the werre, that I delyvered to your hyghenesse enseed the day before your departing out of London, that remayned yn the keyping of ser Johan Fastolf for grate autoritee'.<sup>23</sup>

The Collection of documents that goes with the *Boke* is now London, Lambeth Palace Library Ms.506.<sup>24</sup> It is smaller than the *Boke*<sup>25</sup> and though neatly written it is a not very 'presentable' jumble of notes and copies. The first six pages of the first quire contain the introduction, and the rest of the quire is blank except for a list of contents added in a much later hand, perhaps Sir Robert Cotton's. The actual documents are written in another hand in an older style than the hand of the introduction; they start on the first page of the second gathering and end on folio 53. A few notes by Worcester follow; folio 55 is blank, folio 55b has more notes in Worcester's hand. At the very end are sixteenth-century abstracts of some of the preceding items written on unruled pages that were added later.

The long introduction begins:

Most hyghe myghtye and excelente Cristen prince Edwarde by the dyvyne prudence of God the thred kynge of Englande and of Fraunce . . .

The first three letters of *Edwarde* are written on an erasure, *thred* is underlined in different ink and *fourth* added in the margin in the same ink as the underlining.

The introduction *cum* dedication was written by Worcester's son, as he himself says, and the way the relatives of the king are described proves that the dedication was originally meant for the eyes of Edward IV — 'the queneys moder, dame Jacques, ducese of Bedforde' — and altered for Richard III — 'your most nobill brodyr and predecessoure'.<sup>26</sup> The younger Worcester lists the items of the Collection in detail and there can be no doubt about their identity. His description of the contents of the *Boke*, however, makes one suspect he never read it, or was not interested. 'Vegesius', whose 'Boke of Batayles' he thought his father had used, only occurs in the *Boke of Noblesse* in quotes from Christine de Pisan's *Faits*; Frontinus and his 'Boke of Knyghtly Laboures' do not appear at all, and the 'new auctoure callid The Tree of Batayles' was not used by the elder Worcester except, again, *via* Christine de Pisan. Modern scholars have generally accepted that the younger Worcester was describing the *Boke*, but it remains arguable that he did not have it to hand.

The documents in the Collection, according to Worcester's son, contain the 'experiense of men' and complement 'the deciplyne' of the literary authors. John, Duke of Bedford, is highly praised and his life described. The Duchess of Bedford

was probably mentioned because she provided another link between Bedford and Edward IV and it was the latter's duty to emulate Bedford's actions.

The documents themselves include lists of Frenchmen who served under Bedford, with some summary biographies, of estimated revenues from English possessions in France, of various wages, receipts and expenses, of numbers of soldiers in various garrisons, of the value of lands; ordinances, military inventories, Fastolf's report and advice on the management of France and similar 'advertismentys and instruccion' made by him and others when Richard, Duke of York and Edmund, Duke of Somerset, were governors.

The title of the *Boke of Noblesse*<sup>27</sup> is explained by the Latin quote that Worcester chose to use at the very beginning. It is the description of hereditary nobility glorified by the aristocratic Scipio, one of the contestants in Buonaccorso de Montemagno's *Controversia de vera nobilitate*,<sup>28</sup> which maintains that the highest kind of nobility derives from the great deeds of one's ancestors, the status and privileges inherited from them and one's mental and physical resemblance to them. The importance of the quote is emphasised physically by red underlining and other marks which do not occur elsewhere in the manuscript. It is obviously the author's 'argument' on which he originally based his book. The Latin reads:

This is the highest kind of nobility: to be able to relate the great deeds of one's ancestors; to be able to strive for public office because they did well; to be able to protect the common good by hereditary right and above all to be able to call oneself part of them and show that one is made in their image. Only those born from noble parents are called noble by the people.

Worcester clearly chose to ignore the actual problem discussed in the *Controversia* — whether nobility of virtue or nobility of blood is to be preferred and whether virtue can ennoble a man. He considered the context of his quote irrelevant and was pleased with the reference to 'great deeds' and 'public office' and the protection of the common good. The *Boke* does in fact argue that by remembering the feats of arms of his predecessors the King will find the courage to reconquer France, and that it is the 'comyn profit' and 'wele' that will benefit. There is not only great emphasis on the rightful, inherited title of the King to each of his French dominions, but the author is also careful to describe the people of Normandy, etc., as the King's true subjects to be protected and treated justly. The introduction by the younger Worcester also stressed one's duty to one's ancestors — emulating Bedford — and the need to 'governe the comyn publique'.

The argument of the *Boke* itself (such as it is) rambles inconsistently from one topic to another and is difficult to follow. Much of its material is taken from recent history — Worcester no doubt used Fastolf's memory and knowledge — describing the valorous deeds of the English and the treachery of the French in an attempt to prove that all is not lost and a defeat can be reversed. There is a discussion of the problem of war between Christians (taken from Christine de Pisan), excursions into mythology (taken from Cicero) and many examples of civic and military virtue from Roman history. Disproportionately long passages are quoted from Cicero's dialogue *De senectute* (Old Age), such as the whole of the 'curious chapter in praise of agriculture'<sup>29</sup> with its description of the 'gardins and herbers' of King Cyrus (pp.69-70). There are references to other works by Cicero and quotations from Boethius and Livy, but Worcester's intimate

acquaintance with *De senectute* (also called *Cato Maior*, after the main speaker of the dialogue) is really remarkable. His reliance on what 'Caton writeth' and 'Caton saide' is so great that we have to conclude that the text was very much on his mind.

Worcester's other main literary source, responsible for a few long sections of the book, was Christine de Pisan's *Livre des Faits d'Armes et de Chevalerie*. In fact, two of the three references to Vegetius are in passages taken from Christine (pp.29 and 55); the third is so general that it could have been culled from her work (p.21).<sup>30</sup>

Among the more interesting sections of the book are those urging the need to pay one's soldiers regularly in order to save the country from plunder and oppression (pp.30-3), and those exhorting the English not to seek riches before victory is certain (pp.71-4). They should gain 'worship' first, the rewards will follow. Behind the exclamations and exhortations — 'by lak of simple payment' the dukedom of Normandy was lost; 'wolde Jhesus of his highe grace' that all commanders rewarded their men — one can hear the excitement and the regrets of old Sir John Fastolf whose efforts of several decades had all been brought to nothing. Moral precepts are also given: 'noble men' are to eschew 'sensualite' and 'pomp in clothing', and above all sloth, exercising themselves continually in arms. The last chapter elaborates on the willingness of the nobility of Rome to sacrifice its wealth to the state when 'a gret armee' and 'men for to defende and kepe the see as the lond' were needed. The 'comons of Rome' followed the noble example and the country was bought 'to worship, prosperite and wellfare' (pp.83-5).

It is difficult to gauge what Worcester's motives<sup>31</sup> were in writing the original version of the *Boke of Noblesse* and its *pièces justificatives* in Lambeth 506. His single-minded quoting from *De senectute* suggests the *Boke* was composed when he was also studying Cicero's work.<sup>32</sup> The ageing Fastolf may have commissioned both books, *Old Age* was appropriate enough, and the *Boke of Noblesse* would help him 'to occupie the tyme . . . in gostly chevallrie'.<sup>33</sup> The prospect of presenting the *Boke* to Henry VI, whether it ever actually happened or not, may have kept Sir John happy. Worcester's own travels in France could have made him aware of the magnitude of the loss of Normandy, and daily contact with his master and frequent conversations with old soldiers like Basset and Hanson may have convinced him, too, that the English presence in France could not be allowed to become merely a thing of the past. Nationalist sentiment and an interest in history, as well as a desire to display his literary knowledge also played a part.

Fifteen or more years later, long after Fastolf's death and on the eve of Edward IV's invasion of France, the nature of the project must have been different. Worcester still wanted to vindicate his master's reputation and emphasise Fastolf's expert knowledge, but his additions concerning Sir John — either stories on the old man's authority or references to his successful activities — all seem to be last-minute insertions, as if he had already adapted the text for presentation to the new King but had only later realised how much of an asset Fastolf's name was. If it was Edward himself who expressed an interest in the old soldier, Worcester no doubt responded eagerly for his main concern must have been to make some profit at last from his literary and antiquarian labours. The

King may also have been well pleased with a piece of propaganda that ended so conveniently with an injunction to nobles and commons to help finance the war and provided an historical precedent for his benevolences.<sup>34</sup>

In his introduction to the *Collection of Documents on Normandy* the younger Worcester showed that he was aware that some of the information might be considered outdated and 'of litle effecte at this daye', but his father in the *Boke* had no such qualms. The elder William's lack of real involvement with the actual political situation can be seen in his failure to update his work: he does not lament the definite loss of Gascony and the death of Talbot at Castillon in 1453; there is no mention of a Burgundian alliance — an important factor in Edward's undertaking — and not a word about any more recent event such as the accession of Louis XI or Margaret of York's marriage to Charles the Bold, both of which shaped the politics of 1475.

### Richard III and France

There is little evidence about Richard's attitude towards an invasion of France but it is certain that Edward IV left his successor a difficult legacy.<sup>35</sup> On 23 December 1482 Louis XI and Maximilian of Austria, the widower of the Duchess of Burgundy, reached an agreement in the treaty of Arras that excluded England. Louis had ceased some time before to pay Edward the 'pension' agreed at the treaty of Picquigny in 1475, now he repudiated the proposed alliance between Edward's elder daughter and the Dauphin who was promised to Maximilian's daughter.

Within the month Edward's parliament was discussing war and voting supplies for defence. To inflame English public opinion sections of the violated treaty of 1475 and the clause of the 1482 treaty repudiating Princess Elizabeth were printed and circulated,<sup>36</sup> underlining the treachery of the French and making them once more the focus of hostility.

This was the situation Richard III inherited a few months later. He could afford to distance himself personally from any blame for the treaty of Picquigny as it was probably well known that he had opposed that purchased peace.<sup>37</sup> It is a moot point whether the 1484 treaty with Scotland owed more to Richard or to James III,<sup>38</sup> but from the moment he had decided that peace was to be made, Richard may have felt free to turn his thoughts to France. He was offered help against the French by Castile as early as the summer of 1483 and was continually being urged by Maximilian, who was grateful for anything that compelled the King of France to take his eyes off the Low Countries. Richard also took such a strong line with Brittany, whose subjects were engaged in a small scale war of piracy with his own and whose Duke was providing shelter for Henry Tudor, that an English alliance became attractive to one faction at the Breton court.

Such alliances were always uncertain and the logistical difficulties of invading and keeping French territories were great. There is no way of knowing whether such an enterprise was seen as completely impossible by contemporaries.<sup>39</sup> Richard III's personal expectations may have been small — mere plans can be laid, altered or abandoned very quickly — but as King of England he had to take the English claims to French territory seriously. Like all (English) kings he knew, too, that external war was a means of keeping his subjects occupied. Perhaps Richard remembered his Scots campaigns and the

repression of the rebellions of 1483 and regarded himself as a competent and successful commander, destined for foreign conquest.

Certainly the French continued to make use of the English threat for their own purposes throughout Richard's reign: the French people, especially in Normandy and Picardy, asked for more protection and the King asked for more soldiers. At some time during his reign Richard's hopes of a French campaign may have been higher and more publicly voiced, even coming to the knowledge of young William Worcester, who simply grasped the opportunity presented by a rumour of an intended invasion, adapted the introduction to his father's *Boke*, which he knew had been given to the last king, and filled it out by adding a collection of notes by his father which were in his possession. It is impossible to be certain whether the actual copy of the *Boke*, now in the British Library, and the extant copy of the Collection, now in Lambeth Palace, ever went physically together. The evidence as it stands suggests that the elder Worcester presented the *Boke* and a text of Bedford's ordinances to Edward in 1475, and that the son either reminded Richard III of the earlier gift and presented him with the Collection, or gave him a new copy of the *Boke* plus the Collection. William Worcester junior may have remembered that his father's presentation had been rewarded, but that, of course, had been made on the eve of an actual expedition, and we do not know how 'well-timed' the younger Worcester's gift was.

The elder Worcester's concern to involve a King of England again in a French war and make him aware of his responsibilities was not unique. On the other side of the channel, too, those who feared France were equally anxious to attract England's attention. As late as July 1485, Jean Molinet, the Burgundian chronicler and poet, who had seen many battles, alliances and changes in his lifetime, could still look to the island kingdom and its prince for help against the French evil:

if only Neptune, god of the deep seas, would rid the world of this unclean mist of trouble and discord, and not keep himself in isolation . . .<sup>40</sup>

#### **Appendix: Who translated Cicero's *De senectute* and *De amicitia* and Buonaccorso de Montemagno's *Controversia de nobilitate* printed by Caxton in 1481?**

The fact that the title and argument of the *Boke of Noblesse* are based on a quotation from the *Controversia de nobilitate* has not been remarked on before. It offers some new material for the dispute about the authorship of the three translations that Caxton printed and published in one volume in 1481. Caxton himself gives the following information:<sup>41</sup>

- 1) *Old Age* was translated out of French and Latin; it was done at the command of Sir John Fastolf, whose valiant career is described; the translation was acquired at 'grete instaunce labour and coste'; Caxton corrected it; the Latin text had been translated into French by Laurent de Premierfait.
- 2) *Friendship* was translated into English by 'therle of wurcestre', whose virtues are described.
- 3) *Declamacion of Noblesse* was translated by 'therle of wurcestre', whose death, pilgrimage and visit to the Pope are described and the reader is asked to pray for his soul.

In spite of Caxton's claims it is probable that William Worcester, Fastolf's secretary, rather than John Tiptoft, Earl of Worcester, made all three translations. Worcester himself says he translated *De senectute* when he records how he offered it to Waynfilet;<sup>42</sup> he quotes it extensively in the *Boke*;<sup>43</sup> the translation was made at the command of Fastolf.<sup>44</sup> It has been suggested before that Worcester translated *De amicitia*;<sup>45</sup> he certainly knew the book and refers to it by its Latin title — and quotes it — in a letter to an unknown correspondent;<sup>46</sup> a copy of it (in which language is not specified) was in his possession at least for some time, as John Paston II in an inventory of his books wrote 'Tully or Cypio de Am[i]t[i]a leffte wyth William Worcester'.<sup>47</sup>

As far as the *Controversia* is concerned, it is clear that Worcester knew a Latin text of the work and he thus becomes a candidate as its translator.<sup>48</sup> More circumstantial evidence may be found in the fact that Caxton combined the three dialogues — of which one was made for Fastolf and the other two by someone called 'Worcester' — in one volume. He gives several, entirely subjective, reasons for doing so, but the conclusion that he acquired them all at the same time is inevitable.

Negative evidence, suggesting that John Tiptoft never translated anything, includes the failure of any of his humanist acquaintances ever to mention such work, the problem of deciding when he could have undertaken it and the mystery of why Tiptoft would have wanted to translate these 'standard' texts by Cicero. He could have been interested in de Montemagno's civic humanism and understood it better than Worcester did, but this is too complex a question to be discussed here. There is no doubt that Tiptoft visited Italy and studied there and that he was an important collector of humanist manuscripts, but there is no reason to believe that he surpassed Humphrey of Gloucester and was an *active* scholar himself. Historians have gone to great lengths to explain when and why Tiptoft made his translations and how Caxton acquired them, but no one has been very convincing.<sup>49</sup> It should also be remembered that none of the other attributions of literary work to Tiptoft have survived examination. All we have to guide us are Caxton's words — his mistake may not have been deliberate but his first aim was to sell the book.

## NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. We are grateful to Margaret Kekewich who allowed us to read her chapter on the *Boke* in her unpublished thesis. She discusses its contents in detail, assessing its value, its originality, Fastolf's contribution to it and its relation to the political writings of the time.
2. He is thus described in what is still the main study of his life and work: K. B. McFarlane, *William Worcester: a preliminary survey*, in *Studies presented to Sir Hilary Jenkinson*, ed. J. Conway Davies, Oxford 1957, pp.196-221, repr. in K. B. McFarlane, *England in the Fifteenth Century. Collected Essays*, London 1981, pp.199-224.
3. See also J. Tait in *DNB*, vol. 62, pp.441-3; *Paston Letters*, ed. J. Gairdner, 6 vols., London 1904, repr. Gloucester 1983, vol. 1, pp.152-3 and *passim*; T. D. Kendrick, *British Antiquity*, London 1949, pp.29-33; R. J. Mitchell, *John Free. From Bristol to Rome in the Fifteenth Century*, London 1955, *passim*; A. B. Emdin, *A biographical register of the University of Oxford to A.D. 1500*, 3 vols., Oxford 1957-9, pp.2086-7, incl. a list of the books Worcester owned; N. Davis, *The Epistolary Usages of William Worcester*, in *Medieval Literature and Civilisation. Studies in Memory of G. N. Garmonsway*, ed. D. A. Pearsall and R. A. Waldron, London 1969, pp.249-53; *Paston Letters and Papers of the Fifteenth Century*, ed. N. Davis, 2 vols., Oxford 1976, *passim*; William Worcester, note by Anne F. Sutton, *The Ricardian*, vol. 5 (1979), p.97; Antonia Gransden, *Historical Writing in England II, c.1307 to the Early Sixteenth Century*, London 1982, pp.327-32.

4. McFarlane (see n.2), p.219, in mild criticism.
  5. *Paston Letters*, ed. Gairdner (see n.3), no.370, quoted by many modern authors.
  6. See Mitchell (see n.3), *passim*; R. Weiss, *Humanism in England During the Fifteenth Century*, Oxford 1967, esp. pp.177-8; F. A. Gasquet, *The Old English Bible and Other Essays*, London 1908, ch.9, on Worcester's classical interests.
  7. Oxford, Balliol College Ms. 124, Bodleian Library Ms. Auct.F.3.25; see McFarlane (see n.2), nn.3 and 5.
  8. Gasquet (see n.6), pp.268-73; Weiss (see n.6), p.159.
  9. 'Fastolf's professional record searcher and tracer of pedigrees', McFarlane (see n.2), p.204.
  10. Full edition and description in J. H. Harvey, ed., *William Worcester, Itineraries, edited from the unique manuscript Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, 210*, Oxford 1969. This ms. and BL Cotton Julius F vii (see below) are described by Gasquet (see n.6). Other notebooks of Worcester are: BL Add. Ms. 28208, memoranda of his surveyorship of Castle Combe Manor, Wilts., for Fastolf; BL Ms. Cotton Julius F vii, commonplace book; BL Ms. Sloane 4, medical collection, including facts about Fastolf's last illness; BL Ms. Royal 13 C i, very diverse historical and literary notes and copies of documents.
- Modern authors have been dismissive of Worcester's scholarship. Weiss (see n.6), p.178: 'Worcester remained . . . unaffected by modern values. He was only a dilettante without qualifications for scholarship whose accomplishments lay rather in the direction of antiquarianism. . .'. Gransden (see n.2), pp.340-1, says he was credulous and superstitious. It seems better, however, to defer such judgments until Worcester's work and notebooks have been studied in more detail, see also Appendix, below.
11. Peter Basset, Englishman, Christopher Hanson, of 'Almayn', and Luke Nantron, born in Paris. See B. J. H. Rowe, A Contemporary Account of the Hundred Years' War from 1415 to 1429, *English Historical Review*, Vol. 41 (1926), pp.504-13; McFarlane (see n.2), pp.207-8. The text is now London, College of Arms Ms. M 9, ff.31-66, see *A Catalogue of the Manuscripts in the College of Arms*, Collections vol. 1, ed. L. Campbell et al., London 1988, p.129.
  12. John Bursard, see *Paston Letters*, ed. Gairdner (see n.3), vol. 3, pp.253-4, quoted by McFarlane (see n.2), p.209. There was at least one book 'clepyt Josephus' among Fastolf's, McFarlane, p.205, n.3. The 'journeys' are probably the *Acta* (see below).
  13. *The Dicts and Sayings of the Philosophers. The Translations made by Stephen Scrope, William Worcester and an Anonymous Translator*, ed. C. F. Bühler, EETS OS 211, 1941 (for 1939, repr. 1961), p.2. For Scrope see G. F. Warner, *The Epistle of Othea to Hector*, Roxburghe Club 1904, introduction; G. Poulett Scrope, *History of Castle Combe*, London 1852; *Paston Letters*, ed. Gairdner (see n.3), vol.1, pp.153-6, and the references about Worcester mentioned notes 2 and 3, above. The *Dicts* is a collection of moral stories ascribed to real and fictional, mainly classical philosophers. Originally in Latin only the French version became generally known. The same text was translated by others in the same period, for instance by Anthony Woodville, Earl Rivers, for Edward IV's son. The work varies in contents and title.
  14. Bühler, *Dicts* (see n.13), pp.xxxix-xli; McFarlane (see n.2), p.215.
  15. See *The Epistle of Othea, translated from the French text of Christine de Pisan by Stephen Scrope*, ed. C. F. Bühler, EETS OS 264, 1970; pp.4 and 122 for Scrope's use of its name.
  16. Scholars disagree about Worcester's oeuvre. Bühler tends to discredit him on almost every score, assuming that Scrope was the author of *Tully of Old Age* and of the *Boke of Noblesse* and that Worcester merely corrected and then appropriated them. McFarlane thinks this is unjustifiable in both cases. Other books ascribed to Worcester are the *Antiquitates Anglie*, in three volumes (see McFarlane, pp.216-7, they may actually have been collections of notes) and *De agri Norfolcensis famillis antiquis* (*ibid.*). Both are lost; there was also a medical compilation, now lost. Some of his notebooks survive, see note 10, above. His authorship of the *Annales Rerum Anglicarum* (reprinted in J. Stevenson, ed., *Letters and Papers illustrative of the Wars of the English in France*, 2 vols., Rolls Series 1864, vol. 2, pt. 2, pp.743-93, from *Liber Niger Scaccarii*, ed. T. Hearne, 2 vols., Oxford 1728, vol. 2, pp.424-521) has been proved untenable by McFarlane, pp.206-7. He compiled a list of fixed stars at the command of Fastolf, Oxford, Bodleian Library Ms. Laud Misc. 674, ff.81-99b, McFarlane, p.219.
  17. McFarlane (see n.2), pp.215-6; Bühler, *Dicts* (see n.13), pp.xli-xlvi; Davis, *Epistolary Usages* (see n.3), pp.251-3. According to H. Susebach, *Caxton: Tulle of Olde Age*, Halle 1933, p.xiv, the translation of *Old Age* was made from BL Ms. Add. 17433. This is a late 14th-, early 15th-century, French made, plain, clean, 'reading' copy of the French text. It contains no marks of ownership, but this ms. or a similar one could have been acquired by Fastolf in France. Susebach, also considers Worcester to be the actual translator, pp.xv-xviii.
  18. McFarlane (see n.2), pp.208-9, on Worcester's research for this work.

19. Described in G. F. Warner and J. P. Gilson, *Catalogue of Western Manuscripts in the Old Royal and King's Collections*, 4 vols., London 1921, vol. 2, pp.294-5; and in the edition by J. G. Nichols, *The Boke of Noblesse addressed to King Edward the Fourth on his Invasion of France in 1475*, Roxburghe Club 1860, repr. New York 1972, pp.lvi-vii, page references after quotations from the text of the *Boke* are to this edition. The ms. is simple and undecorated, but this does not mean that it cannot have been the copy actually presented to the King. Both Edward and Richard — to judge by their surviving books — were capable of appreciating a book for its contents. The page size is c. 153x285 mm., text size c. 125x175 mm.
20. McFarlane (see n.2), p.211, the title and the colophon are in Worcester's hand, too; Warner, *Epistle* (see n.13), p.xliv; Warner and Gilson (see n.19).
21. The words 'under correction' usually mean the author is willing to be corrected; it is not clear whether Worcester — in whose hand this colophon is written — here means that or rather that he had corrected the text and finished on 15 June.
22. Edward left London in state 30 May, returned and left again before 7 June. If 30 May is the 'departyng' meant by Worcester, he must have added his last corrections between 30 May and 15 June (the date the ms. was finished and/or its correction was finished). Was the presentation of the *Boke* an afterthought? Did Worcester actually travel into Kent to offer the book to the King before the latter sailed on 4 July? For the chronology of events see C. L. Scofield, *The Life and Reign of Edward the Fourth*, 2 vols., London 1923, vol. 2, pp.126-7, 131.
23. For the *ordonnances* of Bedford see B. J. H. Rowe, Discipline in the Norman Garrisons under Bedford, 1422-35, *English Historical Review*, vol. 46 (1931), pp.194-208. To add to the confusion the flyleaf at the beginning of Lambeth Ms.506 (the Collection on Normandy) has the title of a (lost) document: *Declaracion de Johan Duc de Bedford des ordonances de france*. This flyleaf is not part of the gatherings of the main text; perhaps it is the remnant of (a copy of) the documents the elder Worcester actually presented to Edward IV.
24. The ms. is described by M. R. James, *A Descriptive Catalogue of the Manuscripts in the Library of Lambeth Palace: The Medieval Manuscripts*, Cambridge 1932, pp.710-4. See also P. Tudor-Craig, *Richard III*, catalogue of the NPG exhibition 1973, 2nd edn. 1977, p.71, item 168. Most of the documents were printed by Stevenson (see n.16), vol. 2, pt. 2, pp.529-607.
25. Page size c. 250x150 mm, text size c. 180x90 mm.
26. For more details see McFarlane (see n.2), pp.210-3.
27. The contents are not very adequately described in the introduction to the edition (see n.19), pp.i-xvii; briefly in Diane Bornstein, Military manuals in fifteenth-century England, *Medieval Studies*, vol. 37 (1975), pp.474-5. For an evaluation of the text and its arguments see also Christopher Allmand, France-Angleterre à la fin de la Guerre de Cent Ans: Le 'Boke of Noblesse' de William Worcester, in *La France anglaise, 111<sup>e</sup> Congrès national des Sociétés savantes, Poitiers 1986*, pp.103-11. The text is clearly in need of a modern scholarly edition and commentary.
28. The text reads:  
 And as it is specified by auctorite of the noble cenatoure of Rome Kayus son, in these termes foloweng: Hoc igitur summum est nobilitatis genus. posse majorum suorum egregia facta dicere. posse eorum beneficiis petere. honores publicos posse gloriam rei publicae hereditario quodam jure vindicare. posse insuper sese eorum partes vocare. et clarissimas in suis vultibus ymagines ostendere. Quos enim appellat vulgus nisi quod [sic] nobilissimi parentes genuere.  
 In the English translation (see Appendix, below) printed by Caxton (see R. J. Mitchell, *John Tiptoft*, London 1938, pp.220-1):  
 Therefore, me semeth, this is the hiest part of noblesse, to come of theyr auncestres of whom they may recounte and reherce the noble dedes many tymes worshipfully achieved and parfytged truly and without colour, And for theyr benefaytes theyr yssue may duely desyre, And by title of enherytaunce challenge, the offices of estate and worshippe in this cyte or any other place, and remebre theym self how they be veray partyes of the bodyes which have ben so worshipful, beryng the lykenesse, ymage, and prynte aftir theym. . . . Parde the comyne people calle theym onely noble whiche ben descended of noble Auncestry; . . .  
 The paragraph mark at the beginning of the Latin text and the full stops between the sections of the quote are in red; 'Kayus' is underlined in red. Such red markings occur nowhere else in the ms. This quotation, with the recommendation of the book to the Trinity, is actually the author's preface, his 'argument'. The actual text starts after that. It is a mystery why Worcester calls the speaker *Kayus son*; in the *Controversia* the speaker of these words is Publius Cornelius Scipio, his opponent Gaius Flaminius. Worcester was probably confusing the

- two. The quote is certainly not from 'the younger Pliny', as the introduction to the edition of the *Boke* (see n.19) has it (p.ii). On the problem of the translations of this text and their authors see Appendix, below.
29. Nichols' words in the introduction to his edition (see n.19), p.xii. It is *De senectute* ch.59. There is nothing to suggest that this passage was not translated direct from the Latin, but Worcester does add and elaborate to make the text more attractive.
  30. Both William Worcester sr. (in the *Boke*) and jr. (in the introduction to the Collection) mention the *Tree of Battles*, the former as Christine's work, the latter as the work of 'a new auctore', probably meaning a 'non-classical' one. It is clear the younger Worcester did not know what exactly he was referring to. Worcester himself must have had a text of the *Falts* to hand: his quotes are long and his paraphrasing intelligent; the incorrect title was probably the result of Christine's leaning heavily on Honoré Bouvet's *Arbre de Batailles*. She acknowledged her borrowing by describing a dream in which Bouvet appears to her and offers her 'fruit from the tree of battles in his garden'. Frontinus *Strategemata* was also frequently used by Christine, but not in any passage quoted by Worcester in his *Boke*, nor is there any other evidence of direct reliance on Frontinus in the latter.
  31. The *Boke* has been ranged under 'military manuals' (Bornstein, see n.27); it has been called 'a despairing appeal on behalf of the disinherited' (P. S. Lewis, *War Propaganda and Historiography in Fifteenth-Century England*, *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, vol. 15 (1965), pp.1-21, esp. 15); and 'one manifestation of the revival [of the cult of chivalry] in the fifteenth century' (Gransden (see n.3), p.476, n.137, on the authority of A. B. Ferguson, *The Indian Summer of English Chivalry*, Durham, North Carolina, 1960, pp.143-58). W. Kleineke, *Englische Fuerstenspiegel vom Policraticus Johanns von Salisbury bis zum Basilikon Doron Koenig Jacons I*, Halle 1937, pp.145-52, goes so far as to say 'the author of the *Boke* is under the spell of an exclusively chivalric way of thinking'.  
Worcester's book should also be compared to John Hardyng's *Chronicle*, in which successive English kings are encouraged to invade Scotland. Whatever the wider implications and contexts of both works, it is clear that both authors had personal reasons to have the country 'of their choice' invaded, and were looking for material rewards; see e.g. Gransden (see n.3), pp.274-87.
  32. See Appendix, below.
  33. Stephen Scrope in the dedication of his *Pistell of Othea*, Bühler, *Othea* (see n.15), p.121.
  34. Like most authors of his time Worcester had to peddle his wares. In 1473 he offered the translation of *De senectute* to William Waynflete, Bishop of Winchester, but was not rewarded, see Worcester's *Itineraries*, ed. Harvey (see n.10), p.252. It is not certain that he had ever dedicated it to Fastolf.
  35. The substance of this section is based on Charles Ross, *Richard III*, London 1981, pp.191-2, 194-203, where the publication of the *Promise of Mairimony* is not mentioned, however.
  36. One copy of this pamphlet, *The promise of matrimonie*, survives in the British Library. We do not know whether this was printed by William Machlinia in the City or by Caxton at Westminster. The document was published by H. Ellis in *Archaeologia*, vol. 32 (1847), pp.325-31 and printed in facsimile in E. Picot and H. Stein, *Recueil de pièces historiques imprimées sous le règne de Louis XI*, Paris 1923, pp.233-8, 301-3.
  37. Philippe de Commynes, *Memoirs*, trans. M. Jones, Harmondsworth 1972, p.259.
  38. Ross (see n.35), p.193, blames Richard for 'a lack of warmth' towards James III. For a positive view of Richard's understanding of relations with Scotland, from the 'northern' point of view at least, see A. J. Pollard, *North-Eastern England during the Wars of the Roses*, Oxford 1990, pp.242-4. Pollard says that Richard, when King, never pursued his plans to invade Scotland 'no doubt because of shortage of money'. It is likely that the King took a different and more general view of diplomatic problems from the Duke.
  39. This matter as a whole is in need of more detailed consideration and research. Arguments are bedevilled by hindsight and for instance, vacillation between modern ideas about the desirability of peace and concessions to contemporary attitudes; see e.g. Allmand (see n.27) and Ross.
  40. *Les faitz et dictz de Jean Molinet*, ed. N. Dupire, SATF, 3 vols., Paris 1936-9, vol. 1, p.218:  
Se Neptune, dieu de la mer parfonde,  
Par feu, par fonde, archier ou sagittaire  
Volloit purgier ce grande brouillis immunde . . .
  41. W. J. B. Crotch, *The Prologues & Epilogues of William Caxton* EETS. OS. 176, (1928) pp.41-7; for the three translations see also *A Manual of Writings in Middle English 1050-1500*, gen. ed. A. E. Hartung, vol. 3, VII, F. L. Utley, Dialogues, Debates and Catechisms, pp.715-6, 873-4; vol. 7, XX, R. R. Raymo, Works of Religious and Philosophical Instruction, pp.2372, 2577-80.

42. See note 34, above.
43. There is no similarity between the quotes in the *Boke* and the same passages in Caxton's edition, but Worcester could have translated and altered the text at any time between c.1450 and 1473. It has to be remembered that Caxton may have made substantial changes; it is suggestive that he mentions the translation by Laurent de Premierfait: why should he do so if he was satisfied with Worcester's work?
44. Did Worcester, like Caxton, know how to 'sell' his book? Fastolf's name lent prestige and Caxton carefully stressed the patronage of Fastolf in his prologue.
45. McFarlane (see n.2), p.216 and n.4. Referring to BL Ms. Cotton Julius F vii, ff.74 ss. McFarlane says that Worcester took notes 'from *De amicitia*'. This is probably too favourable a view of these particular notes and Worcester's literary activities. The pages contain a partial glossary of philosophical (?) terms (*amicitia, anima*), arranged alphabetically and culled from Aristotle, Cicero, Seneca, Boethius *et al.* The first entry, *Amicitia*, is followed by a long list of quotes, many from Aristotle's *Ethica Nicomachea* and quite a number from *De amicitia*. The source references are clearly given, but the neatness and the consistency of the copy suggest that Worcester copied an existing text.
46. *Paston Letters*, ed. Gairdner (see n.3), vol. 3, p.205.
47. *Paston Letters*, ed. Gairdner (see n.3), vol. 6, p.66. The friendship of *Scipio Africanus* the second and Gaius Laelius is the subject of this dialogue.
48. Note also the similarity of the titles of the *Boke of Noblesse* and the *Declamacion of Noblesse*.
49. H. B. Lathrop, The Translations of John Tiptoft, *Modern Language Notes*, vol. 41 (1926), pp.496-501 ('Caxton's testimony . . . need not be questioned'. He 'was an honest and careful man with no motives for misrepresentation. '); R. J. Mitchell, Italian 'Nobilita' and the English Idea of the Gentleman in the XV Century, *English Miscellany*, vol. 9 (1958), pp.23-37, esp. 31-6; the same, *John Tiptoft* (see n.28), pp.171-86, and the text of the translation of the *Controversia* in Appendix I; R. Weiss, *Humanism* (see n.6), pp.118-9; N. F. Blake, *Caxton and His World*, London 1969, pp.73-4, 88-9; W. J. Fahrenbach, Vernacular Translations of Classical Literature in Late-Medieval Britain: Eight Translations made directly from Latin between 1400 and 1525, University of Toronto unpublished Ph.D. thesis 1975, pp.116-49, the most thorough examination of Tiptoft and the translation of *De amicitia*. Fahrenbach notes among other things that the 'only surviving example of an original piece of writing in English by Tiptoft' is convoluted and very different from his 'translating' style!