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The Shrewsbury Book is an extremely unusual and important example of French influence upon English chivalric culture during the late Middle Ages. The manuscript is justifiably famous as one of the most remarkable compilations of *chansons de geste* and romances. Yet the anthology is also important because it demonstrated the interest of a leading English military commander in some of the most prominent contemporary French chivalric treatises and manuals, many of which were unknown in England at the time. John Talbot was making a striking statement by championing these French writings on chivalry and warfare at a moment when English military fortunes had plummeted to the lowest point of the entire Hundred Years War. Like a number of his fellow soldiers from the doomed enterprise in France, Talbot was publicly turning to their enemy for inspiration as these captains sought to maintain the fragile hold on Normandy and Gascony. With the Shrewsbury Book, Talbot was demonstrating his investment in a Valois intellectual culture that had underpinned and justified a remarkable period of French military reform that had laid the foundations for the imminent recovery of the English holdings in France by King Charles VII.

1. I have explored the wider context for this argument in Craig Taylor, “English Writings on Chivalry and Warfare During the Hundred Years War,” in *Soldiers, Nobles and Gentlemen: Essays in Honour of Maurice Keen*, ed. Peter Coss and Christopher Tyerman (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2009), pp. 64–84; see also my forthcoming monograph, *Chivalry, Honour, and Martial Culture in Late Medieval France* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, forthcoming). I am extremely grateful both to the editors of this volume and to my colleague Pragya Vohra for her assistance with the final preparations for publication of this paper.

2. For the military reforms that culminated in the Ordinance companies of 1445, together with their impact on the course of the Hundred Years War, see Philippe Contamine, *Guerre, état et société à*
The first two-thirds of the Shrewsbury Book presented an anthology of literature that celebrated such chivalric paragons and worthies as Alexander the Great, Charlemagne, Godfrey de Bouillon, and Guy of Warwick. The final portion of the manuscript offered a more prosaic selection of writings on kingship, chivalry and warfare, that is to say Honoré Bouvet’s *Arbre des batailles* (fols. 293r–326v), an abridgement of Henri de Gauchi’s *Li livres du gouvernement des roys et des princes* (fols. 327r–362v), a prose reworking of Wace’s *Roman de Rou* called *Les Chroniques de Normandie* (fols. 363r–402v), Alain Chartier’s *Bréviaire des nobles* (fols. 403r–404v), Christine de Pizan’s *Livre des fais d’armes et de chevalerie* (fols. 405r–438v) and the Statutes of the Order of the Garter (fols. 439r–440v). Together, these treatises offered a wealth of advice on kingship and the political sphere, the art and laws of warfare, chivalry, and court culture.\(^3\)

The mirrors for princes and manuals that formed the backbone of this treatise cycle had all been written within the previous century and a half for Capetian and Valois princes, and numbered amongst the most prominent and successful French texts on warfare, chivalry, and kingship.\(^4\) The most well known was Henri de Gauchi’s translation of *De regimine principum*, originally written in 1281 by Giles of Rome, also known as Aegidius Romanus or Egidio Colonna.\(^5\) The opening miniature to this work in the Shrewsbury Book (fol. 327r) commemorated the gift of the original Latin text by Giles to the French King Philip III. In 1282, Gauchi had translated the treatise into French as *Li livres du gouvernement des roys et des princes*, and this became the standard vernacular version, despite competition from further translations in 1330, 1420, and 1444. There are over three hundred and fifty surviving manuscripts of this mirror for princes, including thirty-one copies of the French translation by Gauchi.

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\(^3\) For the place of the *Chroniques de Normandie* and the statutes of the Order of the Garter in this collection, see Karen Fresco’s essay in this volume, chapter 9.

\(^4\) It is striking that a number of the works selected by John Talbot appear in a recent anthology of the most widely circulated vernacular texts in France between 1350 and 1500, including Chartier’s *Bréviaire des nobles* and Bouvet’s *Arbre des batailles*, Ponthus et Sidoine, Renaut de Montauban and Fierabras. See Frédéric Duval, *Lectures françaises de la fin du moyen âge: Petite anthologie commentée de succès littéraires* (Geneva: Droz, 2007).

which was owned by Kings Charles V and Charles VI, Philip the Bold Duke of Burgundy, John Duke of Berry and Charles of Orléans. Its enormous success rested upon not just the patronage of the French royal family, but also the wide scope of the advice that it offered, drawing upon Aristotelian ideas to explore the principles of royal government, the rule of the family and the household, the education of children, and the conduct of the individual, including a queen.

Like *Li livres du gouvernement des roys et des princes*, the remaining treatises presented in the Shrewsbury Book were didactic works, though concerned more with warfare and chivalry than kingship and government. The *Arbre des batailles* by Honoré Bouvet (fols. 293r–326v) provided a careful analysis of both just war theory and the laws of war, based heavily upon the *Tractatus de bello, de represaliis et de duello*, written in 1360 by the Italian lawyer, Giovanni da Legnano. Bouvet translated and adapted his highly legalistic and scholastic source between 1386 and 1389, when he dedicated an extended second draft to King Charles VI of France during his visit to Avignon. Echoing a common prophecy, Bouvet presented Charles as a second Charlemagne who would heal the Church at that time of schism while also bringing to an end the internal division within both Christendom and Bouvet’s native Provence. Only by following the advice offered in the book could France be saved from the destruction endured by Babylon, Carthage, Macedonia, and Rome. In practice, his work was one of the first serious attempts to explain and to justify the legal framework for warfare developed by medieval canon and civil lawyers, and thus to ground such rules in not just the authority of imposed law, but also the principles of reason and chivalric honor. It became the most popular medieval vernacular treatise on the laws of war, surviving in at least ninety-one manuscripts; copies were owned by King Charles VI, Philip the Bold and Philip the Good, dukes of Burgundy, Jean Duke of Berry and Jean, count of Clermont, future II Duke of Bourbon, not to mention the Constable of France, Arthur de Richemont.

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8. The opening miniature to Bouvet’s *Arbre des batailles* in the Shrewsbury Book (fol. 293r) commemorated this donation of the treatise to King Charles VI.


The *Arbre des batailles* was one of the principal sources for Christine de Pizan’s *Livre des fais d’armes et de chevalerie*, probably composed in 1410 for thirteen-year-old Dauphin Louis of Guyenne on the orders of his governor and father-in-law, John the Fearless, Duke of Burgundy.\(^{11}\) Having discussed the moral and ethical dimensions of the chivalric code in previous works like the *Epistre d’Othea*, the *Livre des fais et bonnes meurs de Charles V*, and the *Livre du corps de policié*, Pizan offered a full scale analysis of the practical aspects of chivalry and warfare in the *Livre des fais d’armes et de chevalerie*. She presented a remarkable synthesis of both classical and French writings on the art of warfare, combining readings of Bouvet’s *Arbre des batailles*, the late fourth-century *Epitoma rei militaris* of Vegetius and the *Strategemata* of Sextus Julius Frontinus (ca. A.D. 30–104).\(^{12}\)

The resulting treatise was an extremely practical introduction to martial chivalry, providing careful advice on training, strategy, tactics, and the legal framework for warfare. The *Livre des fais d’armes et de chevalerie* was not as popular as her *Epistre d’Othea*, of which there are nearly forty-seven fifteenth-century copies, but it does survive in twenty-five medieval manuscripts whose owners included Philip the Good of Burgundy, Louis de Bruges, Antoine Great Bastard of Burgundy, Philippe de Croÿ, Guillaume de Nast, and the house of Savoy.\(^{13}\)

Finally, Pizan’s practical approach to chivalry was complemented by Alain Chartier’s *Bréviaire des nobles*, written shortly after 1415, which offered an abbreviated manual of chivalry in its wider moral and ethical sense. The 454-line poem instructed nobles in the nature of nobility and the twelve requirements that it imposed upon those who claimed that status. Like a liturgical breviary, it provided a brief text that could be consulted daily and also memo-

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rized, instructing the audience in noble and chivalric virtues like faith, loyalty, justice, courtesy, and largesse. It may not be the best known of Chartier’s works today, but it was certainly the most popular in the fifteenth century, surviving in fifty-four manuscripts.

Despite the contemporary popularity of the treatises contained in the Shrewsbury Book, this is the only manuscript to collect together these mirrors for princes and chivalric treatises in one single volume, let alone combine such works with romances and chansons de geste. Of the treatises contained in the Shrewsbury Book, the one that most commonly appeared in compilations was Giles of Rome’s De regimine principum, but rarely in a compilation with such a chivalric theme, and never with the works selected by Talbot for the Shrewsbury Book. Christine de Pizan’s Livre des fais d’armes et de chevalerie appears in just three other compilations. The first is BnF Ms. fr. 603, an autograph manuscript that was probably prepared by Christine between 1410 and 1412, and that contains the Livre des fais d’armes alongside her Livre de la mutacion de fortune, a 24,000 line poem examining the impact of fortune on great men and women, completed in November 1403. The second manuscript is Bordeaux, Bibliothèque municipale Ms 815, which presents Christine’s treatise alongside Bouvet’s Arbre des batailles and Philip IV’s ordinances on judicial duels. The third manuscript, BR Ms. 9009–11, also presents the Livre des fais d’armes alongside Honoré Bouvet’s Arbre des batailles. Yet it was written by Jacquemart Pilavaine and illuminated at Mons between 1460 and 1465, long after Talbot’s collection, for Philippe de Croÿ, lord of Chimay (d. 1482).

More importantly, the Shrewsbury Book was the first manuscript to introduce many of these French chivalric and military treatises into England. Frankis has suggested that any of the texts contained in the Shrewsbury Book “could


16. See footnote 24 below.

17. See Fresco’s comments, chapter 9, pp. 152–56.

possibly have been found in the library of a wealthy English nobleman,” with the possible exception of the prose Guy, the Garter Statutes, and perhaps the Chroniques de Normandie. In practice, though, there is no surviving evidence that any of the treatises selected by Talbot had enjoyed any prominence in England before 1445, apart from Gauchi’s translation of the De regimine principum. This may seem surprising, in light both of the popularity of many of these works in England after the end of the Hundred Years’ War, but also the generous policy of cultural acquisition carried out by the English commanders following the invasion of Normandy in 1417 and the subsequent capture of Paris. Bedford and Gloucester had carried off most of the French royal library from the Louvre, while other English aristocratic families also supplemented their libraries with the spoils of war or legitimately acquired volumes, including most famously Sir John Fastolf, William de La Pole, later Duke of Suffolk, and his wife Alice Chaucer. Yet there is no surviving documentary evidence that any of these individuals had brought copies of Bouvet’s Arbre des batailles or Pizan’s Livre des fais d’armes et de chevalerie into England before Talbot commissioned the Shrewsbury Book in 1445. Indeed, it is striking that the Lancastrian borrowings from Valois intellectual culture before 1445 largely ignored the developing intellectual debate on the science of warfare and chivalry.


20. BL Ms. Harley 4605 contains Pizan’s Livre des fais d’armes, almost certainly written by a French scribe in May 1434. The explicit states: “Digatz un pater noster et une ave maria per mosseu peyer delasita qui a escrit a quest present livre en lan de nostre senh’r mil. cccc xxxiiijo. Et fut fet a londres a. xv de may.” (My thanks to Catherine Nall for advice on this manuscript.) The treatise also appears in London, BL Ms. Royal 19 B.xviii, a manuscript that may be of English provenance and dates from the middle of the fifteenth century.


23. For the impact of these works in England after 1445, see my comments below.
Of the treatises that Talbot selected, Giles of Rome’s *De regimine principum* was the only one that was widely known in England, both in the original Latin and in translations in French and English. Copies were owned by Edward III, Thomas of Woodstock, Henry Lord Percy, Henry V and his brothers, the dukes of Bedford and Gloucester, as well as Richard Duke of York and his son Richard III as well as perhaps Edward IV. Briggs has argued that the combination of the *De regimine principum* and Vegetius’s *Epitoma rei militaris* in six manuscripts echoes the Shrewsbury Book’s presentation of Giles’s treatise alongside Pizan’s *Livre des faits d’armes et de chevalerie* and indicates a contemporary English interest in the *De regimine principum* as a military manual. Yet the simple juxtaposition of the mirror for princes and a military text like Vegetius does not demonstrate that English princes and aristocrats favored the *De regimine principum* for the advice that it gave on warfare rather than the wider counsel that it offered on kingship and government, the dominant themes of this mirror for princes. Giles dealt with military matters only in the extremely brief final section of his treatise, which gave a rather limited and unimaginative set of principles copied directly from Vegetius. The anonymous chaplain who composed the *Gesta Henrici Quinti* may have claimed that Henry V had drawn military advice from the *De regimine principum* during the siege of Harfleur, just as the same king was praised during a disputation in Oxford in 1420 for having waged war in France according to the advice given by Giles of Rome. Yet it is hard to take such statements at face value, given that they clearly represent the self-serving interests of clerical advisors, seeking to persuade future audiences of the utility and authority of such textual sources, and also to enhance the image of Henry V as a learned and wise man.

24. Briggs, *Giles of Rome’s ‘De Regimine Principum,’* pp. 65–66 and 152–71. In fact, four of the manuscripts combining Vegetius and the *De regimine principum* that Briggs cites as evidence belonged properly to an ecclesiastical context: London, BL Ms. Royal 12.B.xxi; Oxford, Balliol College Ms. 146a; Oxford, Bodleian Library, Ms. Auct. F 3.3; Paris, BnF Ms. lat. 6476. This leaves just the French manuscript (Cambridge, University Library Ms. Ee 2.17) that Robert Roos gave to his cousin, Humphrey Duke of Gloucester, and the Middle English manuscript (Oxford, Bodleian Library Ms. Digby 233) that Thomas Lord Berkeley may have commissioned. Briggs also argues that there was a specifically English reading of Giles of Rome’s work as a military treatise, given that the combination appears alongside other military texts in six English manuscripts (that is to say five in combination with Vegetius, and the Shrewsbury Book) compared with just one French exemplar, BnF Ms. lat. 6476. Caution must be taken with this ambitious claim, though, given not only the fragility of the argument that such a juxtaposition proves a military reading of Giles of Rome but also the fact that two of these seven English manuscripts were actually prepared in northern France (Cambridge University Library Ms. Ee 2.17 and BL Ms. Royal E.vi), and that there may be more unidentified examples outside of the limited sample of forty-four continental manuscripts that Briggs considered.


26. See the fuller discussion of this theme in my article, “English Writings.”
Indeed, what is striking about the Shrewsbury Book is that it ignored Vegetius’s *Epitoma rei militaris* in favor of Christine de Pizan’s *Livre des fais d’armes et de chevalerie*, a treatise that may have drawn upon the Latin source but was very much an adaptation, modernization, and expansion of the original rather than a simple translation. On the surface, Talbot’s decision to ignore Vegetius is extremely surprising given that the *Epitoma* was both the dominant military manual in late medieval England and remained popular in France too; over 80 percent of manuscripts identified by Shrader date from the fourteenth or fifteenth centuries. Vegetius’s treatise was a favorite amongst the English aristocracy and royal family, with copies owned by Henry V, Gloucester, Fastolf, and later Richard III. Indeed, Talbot’s second wife Margaret Beauchamp, had almost certainly inherited a copy of the Middle English translation of Vegetius commissioned by her grandfather, Thomas Lord Berkeley. That Talbot chose not to use an English translation of Vegetius makes sense given that the Shrewsbury Book was an exclusively French compilation, in which there was no room for the Middle English translation of the *De regimine principum* prepared by John Trevisa for Thomas Lord Berkeley, or for John Lydgate’s *Guy of Warwick*, commissioned by Talbot’s wife Margaret. Yet in both of those cases, Talbot did include prose French versions, making his decision to ignore Vegetius even more striking: there were, after all, obvious French translations by Jean de Meun, *L’art de chevalerie* (1284), Jean Priorat’s verse interpretation of that work, *Li abrejance de l’ordre de chevalerie* (1284–91), or the Jean de Vignay’s *Li livres Flave Vegece de la chose de chevalerie* (ca. 1320). Instead Talbot offered Christine de Pizan’s *Livre des fais d’armes et de chevalerie*, a work that certainly drew upon

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27. See, for example, the remarks offered by Karen Fresco, chapter 9, pp. 161–62.
Vegetius, but also changed, adapted and in crucial ways modernized that work. In short, the Shrewsbury Book presented a powerful and wide-ranging set of writings on warfare and chivalric culture, drawing heavily upon recent intellectual developments in France rather than the traditional manuals like Vegetius that had dominated the field in England. These military and chivalric treatises were very much the fruit of wide-ranging public debates triggered by the military failures of French armies and aristocrats, the collapse of public order, and ultimately of Valois attempts to reestablish control and discipline over the armed forces, culminating in the formation of compagnies d'ordonnance under Charles VII in 1445. Faced by such crises, French intellectuals had not been content to rely solely upon works like Vegetius’s Epitoma rei militaris, but rather sought to comment and contribute directly to the reorientation of military and chivalric culture under the Valois monarchy. It is not surprising that an English commander like Talbot, witnessing firsthand the collapse of English military fortunes in France, might have turned to the intellectual writings that most clearly symbolized and echoed the profound reforms currently being imposed upon the French army.

Talbot was certainly not the only old soldier to see the value of these new French treatises on the arts of warfare and chivalry. In 1447, Nicholas Upton completed the treatise De studio militari for Humphrey Duke of Gloucester; this examination of the laws of war drew principally upon Honoré Bouvet’s chief source, the Tractatus de bello, de represaliis et de duello, written in 1360 by the Italian lawyer, Giovanni da Legnano. A few years later, in perhaps 1451, William Worcester began to write the Boke of noblesse at the behest of Sir John Fastolf, based in part upon Christine de Pizan’s Livre des fais d’armes et de chevalerie. In 1453 John Mowbray, Duke of Norfolk, cited Honoré Bouvet’s


treatise in his arraignment of John Beaufort, Duke of Somerset, before the court of chivalry. Though often divided by personal enmities and feuds, these men shared a common experience of, and an investment in the wars in France. As such, they regarded works like Bouvet’s *Arbre des batailles* and Pizan’s *Livre des faits d’armes* as worthy of attention at such a moment of military crisis. Their use of these French treatises provides the bridge to the post-war interest that culminated in William Caxton’s publication of *The book of Faytes of armes and chyvalre* in 1489.

In the case of John Talbot, it is unclear whether he imagined that the Shrewsbury Book would serve as an educational program for Margaret of Anjou, or for her future son, or even for a military commander like himself. There has been much scholarly debate about whether Talbot carefully assembled the Shrewsbury Book as a tailor-made present for Margaret of Anjou or hastily repackaged his own manuscript as a gift for the new queen. Beyond the important codicological evidence, one must also weigh up the choice of texts that were included in the Shrewsbury Book. The romances and *chansons de geste* that form the core of the compilation, along with the *Chroniques de Normandie*, a history of Normandy up to 1217 based upon Wace’s *Roman de Rou*, would certainly have fitted the aims described in the verse dedication in which Talbot imagined his manuscript as providing a pleasant pastime for Margaret, designed to appeal to her because her native tongue was French, but more practically to provide her with knowledge of the history and noble deeds of arms and of chivalry. It is much harder to explain the inclusion of the practical discussions of kingship and the laws and arts of war in Bouvet’s *Arbre des batailles*, Gauchi’s *Le Livre de politique*, and Pizan’s *Livre des fais d’armes et de chevalerie*. Of the so-called “treatise cycle,” only two texts seem directly and

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37. For the codicological evidence, see Karen Fresco, chapter 9, pp. 157–59 and 171–72, and Appendix One; and Anne D. Hedeman, chapter 6 and Appendices One and Two in this collection.

38. See the transcription of the dedicatory verses (fol. 2v) in Andrew Taylor, chapter 7, pp. 121–22.

39. It seems less likely, for example, that the *Livre des faits d’armes* would have interested Margaret simply because it was written by a woman; Christine de Pizan had herself omitted this text from the compilation of thirty of her works that she presented to the French queen Isabeau of Bavaria in 1414. Bossy, “Arms and the Bride,” pp. 249–50, and James C. Laidlaw, “The Date of the Queen’s MS (Lon-
partly personally relevant for Margaret. Book II of the *De regimine principum* offered very traditional advice on marital relations, the proper conduct of women, and the education of children. Moreover, the Statutes of the Order of the Garter provided a copy of the amended rules issued at the end of the reign of Henry V. This document was given to new companions in the form of a parchment roll upon their election, and copies also survive in manuscripts owned by the Companions and also heralds. This would have served to prepare Margaret for her induction into the Order in 1447. But in 1445, no one could possibly have foreseen the role that the queen would ultimately play in the Wars of the Roses following the collapse of her husband, and therefore imagine that the other treatises would be of direct relevance or interest to her.

It would therefore appear that this collection was more suited for her future son, though it is intriguing that the educational ideal espoused in the Shrewsbury Book was much more concerned with Valois thinking on chivalry and warfare than the science of government and politics. Though the Shrewsbury Book did present Giles of Rome’s *De regimine principum*, it ignored the enormous developments in this field under the Valois monarchy, particularly during the reign of Charles V (1364–80). For example, Jean Golein had translated into French *De informatione principum*, a mirror for princes written by an anonymous author, perhaps a Dominican, shortly after Nicole Oresme had

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translated Aristotle’s *Ethics* and *Politics*.\(^4^4\) In an original work, the *Somnium viridarii*, Evrart de Trémaugon offered Charles V advice on a wide range of questions relating to kingship and also advised princes to follow the example of the French king by listening to passages from Aristotle’s works every day, in order to learn natural lordship and how to live justly and to govern and guard his people.\(^4^5\) In 1389, Philippe de Mézières completed his *Songe du vieil pelerin*, giving counsel to Charles VI on all aspects of royal government, from the managing of finances and the choice of advisors to the defense of the church and the art of warfare and chivalry. Not surprisingly, his recommendations for reading by the young king and his brother Louis d’Orléans ranged equally widely, including not just Giles of Rome’s *De regimine principum* but also Scripture, Nicole Oresme’s translations of Aristotle’s *Ethics* and *Politics*, the writings of St. Augustine and John of Salisbury, the works of Livy and Valerius Maximus, and histories of the Nine Worthies and Vegetius’s *Epitoma rei militaris*.\(^4^6\) Similarly, when Jean Gerson set out a reading program for the Dauphin, he included not only the histories of the Nine Worthies, Vegetius, and Giles of Rome but also the Scriptures, Aristotle’s *Ethics*, *Politics* and *Economics*, and the writings of Livy and Valerius Maximus.\(^4^7\) Compared with these Valois reading programs, the Shrewsbury Book clearly favored the military and chivalric over the wider science of politics and kingship.\(^4^8\) Talbot’s anthology did include many tales

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\(^4^7\) There is debate about the dating and audience for the two sets of advice that Gerson wrote: the *Tractatus* may have been composed in either 1408–10 or 1417, and the *Instructiones* in either 1417 or 1429. See Antoine Thomas, *Jean Gerson et l’éducation des dauphins de France; Étude critique suivie du texte de deux de ses opuscules et de documents inédits sur Jean Majoris précepteur de Louis XI* (Paris: Droz, 1930) and Jacques Verger, “*Ad prefulgidum sapiencie culimen prolom regis inclitam provehere; L’initiation des dauphins de France à la sagesse politique selon Jean Gerson,*” in *Penser le pouvoir au moyen âge (VIIe–XVe siècle)*, ed. Dominique Boutet and Jacques Verger (Paris: Presse de l’École Normale Supérieure, 2000), pp. 427–40.

\(^4^8\) One factor in this may have been the availability of texts in Rouen, though it is important to
of the Nine Worthies, but ignored the great works of theology and political
philosophy by Aristotle, Augustine, Aquinas, and John of Salisbury, and also
shunned the recent mirrors for princes by Trémaugon and Mézières, not to
mention much more obvious educational tracts by Christine de Pizan herself,
such as her most popular work, the *Epistre d’Othea* (1399–1400), the *Livre des
faits et bonnes meurs du sage roy Charles V* (1404), or the *Livre du corps de policie*
(1406–7). In short, Talbot’s collection focused almost exclusively upon the
chivalric and military aspects of the recent Valois intellectual revival, ignoring
the wider range of reading recommended for princes and noblemen in France
during the late Middle Ages. Here was an anthology that would equip the
future king for war, not peace, deliberately fanning the young boy’s passions
and desires for such conflict.

Yet it may be too crude to imagine that Talbot’s objective was simply to
shape the mind of one particular individual, whether it be Margaret of Anjou
or her future son. Simply preparing such an anthology made a powerful state-
ment about the continued importance of the war in France at a moment when
English support was waning. It also championed the need for deeper thought
about chivalric and martial culture, and perhaps about military reform, while
also demonstrating Talbot’s status as an authority on such matters. Indeed
whether an English audience would have recognized how much of an advance
Christine’s treatises offered upon Vegetius’s great work may be less important
than the fact that Talbot was attaching his name to the very latest treatises on
the science of warfare and chivalry.

In 1445, many in England celebrated the marriage of Henry VI and Mar-
garet of Anjou as an opportunity for peace. As the new queen reached the
Southwark end of London Bridge on her entry into the capital, she was greeted
by Dame Peace who prophesized that “Twixt the reawmes two, Englande and
Fraunce, / Pees shal approche, rest and vnite, / Mars sette aside, with alle hys
crueltie, / Whiche to longe hath troubled the reawmes tweyne.” The dedi-

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49. Of these three texts, only the *Epistre d’Othea* appeared in the manuscript that Pizan herself pre-
pared for Isabeau of Bavaria, BL Ms. Harley 4431, fols. 95a–141c. It is important to stress that many of
the works that formed the wider Valois program of reading for a prince were known in England before
the Shrewsbury Book. Humphrey Duke of Gloucester, for example, received copies of the *Songe du
vergier* and Pierre Bersuire’s translation of Livy from his brother John Duke of Bedford in 1427, taken
originally from the French royal library at the Louvre, and he also owned Leonardo Bruni’s translation
of Aristotle’s Ethics, and commissioned the famous humanist to prepare a Latin translation of the Poli-
122 and 215–16; and Petrina, *Cultural Politics in Fifteenth-Century England*, pp. 95–96, 164–66, and
244.

50. She was then told of the arrival of the dove carrying “the braunche of pees” that signified to
poem in the Shrewsbury Book may also have praised peace, but the anthology itself offered a more bellicose position. On the one hand, prowess was clearly celebrated in the romances and *chansons de geste*, but more bluntly the famous genealogical tree (fol. 3r; see figure 3) gave such energies a focus and direction, that is to say in Henry VI’s claim to the thrones of both England and France, the Dual Monarchy. The model for this genealogical tree had originally been presented alongside verses written in 1423 by the Frenchman, Lawrence Calot, on the commission of the Duke of Bedford, in order to publicize Henry VI’s claim to the French throne in Paris and presumably beyond. The Order of the Garter also served as a symbol of the war, supposedly founded by Edward III in defense of his claim to the French crown. Finally, the *Chroniques de Normandie* presented a historical case for English claims to the duchy of Normandy, independent of claim to the French throne, conveniently ignoring the treaty of Paris of 1259 and the treaty of Brétigny of 1360 in which English kings had given up their claims to Normandy.

The genealogical tree in the Shrewsbury Book may also have offered commentary on the internal debates within the English government about the war with France. The Valois and Plantagenet branches of the tree are not supported by the dukes of Burgundy and Bedford, as in Calot’s original, but rather by Richard Duke of York and Humphrey Duke of Gloucester. Though both were close relatives of Henry VI, his second cousin and uncle respectively, they were also controversial figures in 1445 precisely because they represented a hawkish attitude towards the war that was out of tune with the prevailing drive at the English court for negotiation with the French that had led to the marriage of Henry VI and Margaret. Just two years later, Humphrey Duke of Gloucester...
was murdered, and in 1450, York took advantage of parliamentary and popular opposition to Suffolk and those responsible for the loss of Normandy to return triumphantly from Ireland and try to seize control of the government. In other words, this was a time when leadership at the highest levels was faltering and English enthusiasm for the occupation of Normandy was rapidly declining in the face of local opposition and terrorism, and taxpayers at home continued to balk at the high cost of the military enterprise. Talbot was deployed to Ireland soon after the marriage of Henry VI and Margaret of Anjou, perhaps because of his lack of sympathy for the peace policy.  

Talbot had certainly had a long-standing involvement in the enterprise in France and therefore a continued stake in its justification. Alongside his father-in-law, and comrade in arms, Richard Beauchamp, Talbot had been a key figure in the English enterprise in France. In 1423, Beauchamp had commissioned John Lydgate’s translation of Lawrence Calot’s verses in support of the Dual Monarchy that had supported the genealogical tree reproduced in the Shrewsbury Book. Following success in Wales and Ireland, and limited involvement in France under Henry V, Talbot’s reputation reached new levels during the campaigns in Maine in 1427 and 1428 and the defense of the Norman frontier following the loss of Paris in 1436. The miniature introducing the Livre des fais d’armes et de chevalerie (folio 405r) in the Shrewsbury Book represented Talbot’s appointment as marshal of France, explicitly identifying him with the enterprise in France (see figure 6). Moreover, the anthology celebrated Talbot’s membership in the Order of the Garter, both by the inclusion of the Statutes but also through his representation wearing the Garter robes. His passion for the

60. The Garter also features heavily in the heraldry of three Books of Hours made for the Talbots: Cambridge, Fitzwilliam Museum Ms. 40–1950 and Ms. 41–1950; Edinburgh, National Library of Scotland, Dep. 221/l = Blairs College Ms. 1. At some time before 1441, he had presented vestments
Order emphasized his loyalty to the English crown and to Henry VI, and also served to justify himself following his famous efforts to drum Sir John Fastolf out of the Order for conduct unbecoming of a Knight of the Garter following the battle of Patay in 1429, at which Talbot himself had been captured.61

At the same time, the choice of treatises may have served to support Talbot’s own ambitions to do more than merely provide the tools with which to educate a future heir to the throne. He had married Beauchamps’s daughter, Margareret, in around 1424, and in June 1428 his father-in-law had been appointed personal governor and tutor to Henry VI, famously carrying the young king to his coronation in November 1429. The Shrewsbury Book may have been presenting a case for Talbot’s appointment to the same role for a future Prince of Wales, by asserting the connection between the new hero of the French wars and his father-in-law, Richard Beauchamp. In the presentation image (folio 2v), Talbot is identified not only by his famous mastiff but also by his heraldic arms in their simplest but grandest form, with the shield of the Beauchamp earls of Warwick in pretence, an unusual arrangement that did not reappear in the manuscript.62 The compilation also includes a prose French Guy de Warrewik, a figure powerfully connected to the Warwick family in general and Richard Beauchamp in particular, having acquired Gibcliff, supposedly the site of Guy’s hermitage, in 1422 as the site for a chantry chapel.63 It has been suggested that Talbot could have acquired or commissioned the prose French Guy de Warrewik patterned with Garters to the church of Saint-Sepulchre in Rouen in honor of St. George, whose cult had been fostered there by the Archer’s Guild of Cinquantenaire. Paul Casimir Noël Marie Joseph Le Cacheux, Rouen au temps Jeanne d’Arc et pendant l’occupation anglaise, 1419–1449 (Rouen: A. Lestrin-gant, 1931), pp. li–lii, 36–40, 378–79.


62. On the death of Richard Beauchamp, the earldom of Warwick passed to his son by his second marriage, Henry, who died the year after the Shrewsbury Book was completed. It then fell to Henry’s infant daughter Anne, until her death in 1449, when it passed to Richard Neville, husband of Anne Beauchamp, Richard’s daughter by his first marriage. Thus it is extremely unlikely that Talbot was asserting his claim to the earldom of Warwick in 1445, though in his will dated 1 September 1452, he did ask to be buried in the New Chapel at the college of Warwick, in case his claim to the earldom was later acknowledged. His wife Margaret is not known to have combined the Talbot and Beauchamp arms in the manner that they appear in the presentation image in the Shrewsbury Book. Reynolds, “The Shrewsbury book,” p. 109.

when he married Margaret Beauchamp in 1425, at the same time that she asked John Lydgate to compose a verse *Guy of Warwick* in English. The inclusion of the *Chevalier au cygne* in the Shrewsbury Book meant that the manuscript also celebrated another figure closely connected to the Beauchamp family, the Swan Knight. They laid claim to a swan badge following the marriage of Guy Beauchamp I to Alice de Tosny, and this emblem appeared on the garter plates of both Thomas Beauchamp II and his son Richard Beauchamp.

In conclusion, Talbot was making a powerful public statement simply by championing French treatises on the science of warfare and chivalry over older, more established works led by Vegetius’s *Epitoma rei militaris*, which his wife’s family had previously translated into English. The timing of this manuscript is striking. The year 1445 marked a liminal moment in the course of the Hundred Years’ War, as the truce enacted by the marriage of Henry VI and Margaret of Anjou gave the French time to implement the military reforms that would facilitate the astonishingly rapid reconquest of Normandy and then Gascony. Whether Talbot and his fellow captains understood the depth of the crisis is unprovable, but it is certain that the subsequent events changed the culture of warfare and chivalry in England and created a ready audience for the Valois treatises that he had recommended. We cannot know how far Talbot himself read or reflected on the treatises and texts contained in the Shrewsbury Book, and whether they shaped his own views of chivalry and warfare. Yet there is no doubt that subsequent generations of Englishmen were increasingly open to the lessons that these French writers could offer.

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64. Frankis, “Taste and Patronage,” pp. 84 and 88.