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A Wish for More Archers

Archers at the Battle of Agincourt, 1415

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'Now is the occasion to use all your intrepidity. The needs of the
moment should boost your courage. Rather than be scared of
doing business with so many princes and barons, be of firm hope'
– The Religieux of Saint-Denis, *Histoire de Charles VI*

Abstract:

A knight expressed the desire to his king that he would add to their small army ten thousand of the best archers in England. This thesis utilizes archaeology evidence, financial records, iconographic depictions, literary and chronicle sources to understand the men who fought at the battle of Agincourt within the larger context and traditions of archery in England, the interconnections between archers and men-at-arms and the particular actions of those men in the battle itself.

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Introduction:

The Hundred Years' War began in 1337, and in 1340 at the insistence of his Flemish allies, Edward III of England claimed the crown of France. The war was fought at sea, in Gascony, Brittany, Flanders, Normandy and even up to the walls of Paris. English armies led by Edward triumphed in Battle at Crecy in 1346, and by his son, Edward, the Black Prince, at the Battle of Poiters in 1356. But by the time of the Battle of Agincourt these victories were in the past, and France had been ascendant. But as the Religieux of Saint-Denis would have Henry V say before Agincourt: 'Be mindful of the valour which your ancestors showed when they put to flight Philip of Valois, and when they defeated and captured the King John, his successor, and when later they crossed France six times with being prevented.'[1] A French chronicler reminds us of the past successes of the English in arms in earlier years of the war. Indeed the simplest explanation of Agincourt is that Henry V campaigned to assert his just rights and privileges, he claimed, as his great-grandfather, Edward III had done, the throne of France. But also like his ancestor he was prepared to negotiate, and when negotiations failed, to fight, remembering the great successes of Crecy and Poitiers, but also the long-lost inheritance of the Angevins and of the Dukes of Normandy. Henry V set out to revive English fortunes, remembering legacies of the past.

When the English and French armies assembled on October 25, 1415, and deployed on what was to become the famous battlefield of Agincourt, there was an obvious disparity between the separate sides. The French army, drawn from the nobility, professional soldiery and the towns of Northern France, conservatively numbered 12,000 fighting men, two-thirds of whom were men-at-arms. The English were outnumbered; they had 2,000 men-at-arms and 7,000 archers.[2] It was a visual difference, commented on by the French chroniclers present at the battle, Jean Waurin and Jean le Fèvre. The French were wearing 'blans harnois' or white armour: steel plate armour, likely polished

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[1] Religieux of Saint-Denis, *Histoire de Charles VI*, in Anne Curry, *the Battle of Agincourt: Sources and Interpretations* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2000), p. 105.
[2] Anne Curry, *Agincourt: A New History* (Stroud: Tempus, 2005) p. 187.

the night before.[3] Even the English acknowledged in the first written account of the battle, likely written by a member of the English clergy present, the splendour of the French army 'with its forest of spears and the great number of helmets gleaming in between them and of the cavalry on the flanks'.[4] In the mid-morning sunlight, the shining silver must have been a sight. By comparison the English archers are described in rather unflattering terms by certain French chroniclers:

'Most of these archers were without armour, dressed in their doublets, their hose hanging loose round their knees, having axes or swords hanging from their belts. Many had bare heads and were without headgear,' according to Enguerran Monstrelet. Jean Le Fèvre and Jean Waurin add that some were also bare-footed. The only provision for protection is that some had 'hunettes or cappelines of boiled leather [body armour], and some of osier on which they had a binding of iron.'[5] Thus we have the image of the English archer at the outset of the battle of Agincourt.

From contemporary and near contemporary sources we see a brief glimpse of the dichotomy between the English and French armies. Both armies had men-at-arms, and both armies had archers, but in terms of memory, it is a battle fought largely and most obviously between the man-at-arms and archer: The French men-at-arms: heavily armoured in gleaming steel plate; the English archer: scruffily apparelled, lightly armoured and possibly barefoot. From outward appearances it seemed that the French army should have swept the field and won a resounding victory. That is how an uninformed modern viewer would see it. Chronicle sources of the battle put great emphasis on the

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[3] Need to explain in these notes that I will be referring to the translations found in Agincourt: Sources and Interpretations, and using the page references therein.
Chronique de Jean Le Fèvre, Seigneur de Saint Remy, ed. F. Morand, 2 vols (Société de l'Histoire de France, 1876-81), vol. 1 (1876), pp. 230-69; *Recueil des Croniques et Anchiennes istories de la Grant Bretagne a present nomme Englettere par Jehan de Waurin*, ed. W.L. Hardy and E.L.C.P. Hardy, 5 vols (Rolls Series, London, 1864-91), vol. 2, pp. 185-222, both translated to English in Anne Curry, *Sources*, p. 159; a note on Monstrelet, Le Fèvre and Waurin, the accounts were written in from the 1440's through to the 1460's, and each includes almost word for word many passages of the others, Curry included them in the same translation for this very reason, marking where they include separate text, but on the whole showing the copying so common in medieval sources

[4] *Gesta Henrici Quinti. The Deeds of Henry the Fifth*, translated from the Latin with an introduction and notes by Frank Taylor and John S. Roskell (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975), reprinted partially in *Sources and Interpretations*, p. 34.

[5] La Chronique d'Enguerran de Monstrelet, ed. L. Douet-D'Arcq 6 vols (Sociétè de l'Histoire de France, 1857-62), vol. 3 (1859), pp. 89-124; Waurin and Le Fèvre in Curry, *Sources and Interpretations*, p. 160.

fact that the King Henry V and the English army were not confident of victory. Sometimes it is expressed directly, by overt statement, that the English lacked belief and assurance of victory. There was however the hope, given by Henry in his battle speech, that God would side with the English, and indeed this is for many contemporaries the true reason that the English did win. God emboldened the English spirit and empowered their hungry bodies with strength, whilst sapping all courage from the pride-filled French, thus turning the tide of the battle.[6] However it is only in the shortest accounts of the battle that God alone decides the battle. In most chronicles that give Agincourt a full accounting the soldiers of both sides figure prominently, not just God's judgement. One of the key factors that most sources give were the actions of the English archers (through whom God acted). It was archery that checked the charge of the French cavalry, and caused many to retreat back across the field, and when the dismounted men-at-arms advanced, it was the archers' arrows that wounded so many and staggered their impetuous advance. When the melee was fought between the men-at-arms of both sides, it was the English archers who put down their bows and picked up swords, axes and even wooden stakes and charged into the fight as well. It was the culmination of these deeds that with those the English men-at-arms gave Henry his victory.

But before the battle no one could have known that this was how things would turn out. Thus a handful of texts include a more subtle approach to introducing both English doubts, and God's role at Agincourt. In three English literary sources, an episode where a named or unnamed knight close to the king expressed a desire that more men from England could be there to fight with them. The reply follows the formula first used in the *Gesta Henrici Quinti*, an anonymous eyewitness account used as propaganda at the Council of Constance: Henry V responds, saying it is not due to more men that victory will be attained, but rather through God's will.[7] The importance of prayer and divine intervention is given a vital place in the English lead up to the battle. Copious prayer, repentance and

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[6] For an example of this particular take on the battle see Gesta, Chpt 13, in Curry, *Sources and Interpretations*, p. 36.
[7] Curry, *Sources and Interpretations*, p. 33.

multiple masses were held before the battle: 'there was no shortage then save only one of priests.'[8]

In the *Gesta*, the wish for more men is attributed to Sir Walter Hungerford and in later texts no name is given to the knight that spoke.In Tito Livio's *Vita* the entire episode is incorporated into Henry's battle speech. In each case the wish for more men takes a slightly different form. Hungerford expressed a desire that ten thousand of the best archers in England could be there that day. In the *Vita* it is a desire that all the knights of England might be there with them at Agincourt, and lastly, in the Pseudo-Elmham, that all peers of England might be with them.[9] This particular episode highlights quite succinctly the primary problem faced by the English army; they were outnumbered, quite heavily depending on the source. They did not have enough men; in particular, they did not have enough knights, lords and men-at-arms to compare to the vast array of the French. The solutions presented, limited as they are, suggest two solutions to the army's conundrum. The most obvious are those of the Pseudo-Elmham and Tito Livio, more men-at-arms; more men that can fight their French opponents in a fair and chivalrous fight with edged weapons. The acute shortfall in these elite soldiers is the principal reason why by appearances the English looked to be severely outmatched. Tito Livio's account is partially based on the recollections of Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester, written in the 1430's after the death of John, Duke of Bedford left Humphrey as the sole surviving uncle to the young King Henry VI, who was about the reach his majority. As an account it represents the views of a later age, but also the views of a veteran, Humphrey, of the battle of Agincourt. The question then is, was the desire for more men-at-arms on the English side at Agincourt a wish of 1415, or 1438? The Pseudo-Elmham was written in the late-1440's, and of the extant manuscripts, one is addressed to John Somerset, physician to Henry VI, whilst an early sixteenth century copy dedicates the work to Walter, Lord Hungerford, the same man that the Gesta

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[8] Gesta, *Sources and Interpretations*, p. 33.

[9] the remark in the *Gesta* (Sources and Interpretations, p. 33) is attributed to Sir Walter Hungerford: 'And amongst other things which I noted as said at that time, a certain knight, Sir Walter Hungerford, expressed a desire to the king's face that he might have had, added to the little company he already had with him ten thousand of the best archers in England who would have been only too glad to be there.' In Vita Henrici Quinti: 'If only good God would grant us by his mercy that so all those knights in who are in England might be with us in this battle.' In the Pseudo-Elmham: 'When the king heard some wishing that other peers of the realm of England might be present to assist in this business, by God's will, he firmly replied...'

attributes the wish for more archers to. That this work includes a wish for more peers of the realm, and not archers places into question whether it is was actually Hungerford that made the comment at the battle, whether the writer of the *Gesta* misremembered, or whether the *Gesta* simply named a man close to the king in order to make the discourse seem genuine, we cannot know for sure. My own belief is that in each case the episode is insight into the time of the writer, as much as it is for Agincourt. In this vein, Tito Livio's *Vita* expresses the need in the then current war in Northern France, particularly after the disasters of 1430's, that more men-at-arms are willing to serve in English armies in France. Anne Curry's collation of army records for the 1400's show that progressively fewer and fewer men-at-arms served in English armies, with the ratio of men-at-arms to archers changing from the 1:3 being seen as optimum at the beginning of the century, to 1:10, or even 1:20 for armies dispatched with haste in times of emergency.[10] The *Pseudo-Elmham's* account features a very similar desire, but more specifically, for peers. Few nobles by the late 1440's were willing to serve in France, as the war was not carried out in person by the king, and as a defensive war, valuable loot was unlikely. It may be an oversimplification, but there was little motivation for the majority of the English peerage to serve in France when the *Pseudo-Elmham's* account was written. With regards to Agincourt, some peers had stayed in England to govern and protect it in the king's absence, and although those peers with the army had been depleted during the siege of Harfleur, whether by death, like the Earl of Suffolk and the Earl of Arundel, or sickness as was the case for Henry V's brother Thomas, Duke of Clarence, there was still a significant portion of the nobility present at the battle. Thus the wish for more peers only truly applies when looked at in the context of the chronicler, and not Agincourt. These later influences will be further discussed in Chapter three. Here I aim to discuss archers, more particularly, why would the *Gesta*, whether remembered or imagined, ask for more English archers at the Battle of Agincourt? Much like the motivations of Henry V when beginning his campaign, we must look to the past. Beyond archery, I will examine the connections between archers, and the men-at-arms of English armies, like Sir

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[10] Anne Curry, 'English Armies in the Fifteenth Century', in Anne Curry & Michael Hughes, ed., *Arms, Armies and Fortifications in the Hundred Years War* (Woodbridge: the Boydell Press, 1994), pp. 39-68.

Walter Hungerford, and thereby better understand the links shared between these seemingly different groups

In Chapter 1, I will explore the history of archery in England. It has many influences from across northern Europe, and through discussion of archaeological, iconographic and literary sources chart the course of early medieval archery in battles like Stamford Bridge and Hastings. Beyond these beginnings, I have included a brief summary of warfare from Anglo-Norman warfare in the twelfth century to the Hundred Years' War in the fourteenth and fifteenth, so that the Battle of Agincourt can be placed within a larger context.

Chapter 2 centres on the recruitment of archers for the Agincourt campaign, with reference to the broader patterns of the inclusion of archers within the retinues of the nobility throughout the Hundred Years' War and the changing social dynamics of archers and men-at-arms in English armies. This chapter utilizes new online databases of soldiery in late medieval England, as well as financial records from the National Archives, UK.

Chapter 3 builds on the preceding chapter by focusing on the battlefield of Agincourt and the role of the archers in that particular battle. Beyond the archers themselves, their role in conjunction with the English men-at-arms is the main point of discussion: How did the archers use of stakes, bows and close-combat paraphernalia lend support to the highly outnumbered armoured men-at-arms? To answer this literary sources are the main support, as Agincourt presents a large body of chronicle sources, but a dearth of archaeological ones.

A Few notes on the sources:

England has a long history of archery, and an extensive historiography: the famous longbow is still debated to this day.[11] The first point contested is the power of the longbow. Clifford J. Rogers ascribes to the capacity of the longbow to be a killing machine, it was capable of wounding or killing armoured men in battle. Kelly Devries, John Stone and others contest that the effectiveness of the longbow was rather than being physically powerful, served only a moral blow to its opponent, inducing fear and causing enemies to shy away from the arrows, but on the whole killing and wounding very few. Within this debate I believe that whilst the longbow does not have legendary properties, its effectiveness is well reported by contemporaries who witnessed the deaths that the bow wrought on battlefields. But when was the longbow 'invented'? Rogers again holds that the longbow was a creation of the late thirteenth and early fourteenth century, stating that in terms of the effectiveness of bows, the Hundred Years' War saw the first use of truly powerful longbows. But there are literary mentions, archaeology and iconographic portrayals of longbows well before the late thirteenth century as the research of Mathew Strickland and Robert Hardy make clear. But they themselves fail in my eyes to account for the dramatic rise in the use of longbows in English armies in the Hundred Years' War, or why no other armies utilized the long existing longbows until after the English successes. The longbow had existed long before the battle of Crecy, or Halidon Hill, as I argue in chapter 1, but no historian has yet to fully explain the changes that occurred around 1300 and

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[11] The debate is the military revolution, more particularly, the Infantry Revolution of the Fourteenth Century, a thesis first propounded by Clifford J. Rogers, 'The Military Revolutions of the Hundred Years War', *Journal of Military History* **57** (2), pp. 241-278; this hypothesis has since been challenged, particularly with regards to the efficacy of longbows in battle (Kelly Devries and Robert Douglas Smith, *Medieval Military Technology* (University of Toronto Press, 2012) & Kelly Devries, 'Catapults are not Atomic Bombs: Towards the redefinition of 'Effectiveness' in Premodern Military Technology', *War in History* 4 (4), pp. 454-470) as well as questioned on whether longbows were 'revolutionary', a new development, or whether they had existed in Europe unchanged for centuries prior (Mathew Strickland and Robert Hardy, *The Great Warbow: From Hastings to the Mary Rose* (Sparkford: Haynes Publishing, 2011)). The debate has also continued in articles by Rogers, 'the Efficacy of the English Longbow: A Response to Kelly Devries', *War in History* **5** (2), pp. 233-42 and 'The development of the longbow in late medieval England and 'technological determinism'', *Journal of Medieval History* **37** (2011), pp. 321-41.

after, whether in terms of archery or otherwise, and that is perhaps what makes Rogers' 'infantry revolution' and the technological determinism of the longbow so persuasive.[12]

For the source material of Agincourt itself, one of the major reasons for the prevalence of research on the subject is has been so prevalent in part because it is so well documented by contemporary standards. Financial records in England, though not complete, do provide many details into the minutia of state workings and numerical details of warfare in the fourteenth and fifteenth century. One of the greatest problems faced in the writing of this thesis has been accessing these records. In physical form, the records are centralized at the National Archives, Kew, UK. Digitalization of these records is ongoing, and hopefully one day these records will able to be searched through in their entirety online. However until that is the case, without physical access, research such as this thesis will be limited to gleanings from secondary sources. Some of these secondary sources have been kind enough to include primary sources as translations, like the 'Agincourt Rolls' reproduced in the work of Nicholas Harris Nicholas in the early 19th century.

The same is almost true for the expansive contemporary fifteenth century literary sources. This problem is partially remedied by the fantastic work of Anne Curry, whose book, *The Battle of Agincourt: Sources and Interpretations*, provides annotated translations of all these major sources.[13] Without this work, someone without an understanding of French, Medieval Latin and Middle English could not work with these sources. The texts include the anonymous, *Gesta Henrici Quinti*, written around 1417 is likely an officially authorised work of propaganda by the English government meant

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[12] Rogers infantry revolution thesis is also set against the backdrop of the broader military revolution theory: Michael Roberts, *The Military Revolution, 1560-1660* (Belfast: 1956), reprinted and slightly amended in *Essays in Swedish History* (London: 1967), pp. 195-225; Geoffrey Parker, *The Military Revolution: Military Innovation and the Rise of the West, 1500-1800*, 2nd Ed. (Cambridge: Press Syndicate of the University of Cambridge, 1996) & 'The "Military Revolution" 1560-1660—A Myth?', *The Journal of Modern History* 48, no. 2 (June, 1973), pp. 195-214; The military revolution theory has its own criticisms, see Jeremy Black, *Rethinking the Military Revolution: War in the Seventeenth Century World* (London: Palgrave-Macmillan, 2012); Jeremy Black, 'Was there a Military Revolution in Early Modern Europe?', *History Today* 58, no. 7 (July, 2008), pp. 34-41; Christopher Duffy, *Through German Eyes: the British and the Somme, 1916* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 2006).

[13] Anne Curry, *The Battle of Agincourt: Sources and Interpretations* (Woodbridge: the Boydell Press, 2000).

for consumption at the ongoing church council at Constance, which was attempting to decide on a solution to the continuing papal schism. Tito Livio Frulovisi's *Vita Henrici Quinti* was likely commissioned by Henry's last surviving brother Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester in the late 1430's to influence his nephew, the young Henry VI. The Brut, various continuations in the mid-late fifteenth century of the chronicle history of Britain dating back to its founding in the time of Brutus. Of French sources, the Religieux of Saint-Denis, Histoire de Charles VI, written between 1415 and 1422 is the closest literary work to an official account of the campaign. The highly similar accounts of Enguerran Monstrelet, Jean Waurin and Jean LeFèvre, are some of the most important eye-witness accounts of the battle, though they were written forty to fifty years afterwards, they also portray the Burgundian perspective on the campaign. There are many more, some of which will be referred to later in this work.

For a summary of modern secondary material for interpretations on the battle of Agincourt, Anne Curry provides a highly in depth synopsis of material from the 18th century to 2000, in *The Battle of Agincourt: Sources and Interpretations*.[14] To this I would add two monographs published in 2005: Anne Curry's *Agincourt: New History*, which includes a new hypothesis regarding the numbers of soldiers present at the battle, in opposition to the traditional view of the English army being highly outnumbered. Taking a more traditional, if eclectic understanding of the battle is Juliet Barker's *Agincourt: the King, the Campaign, the Battle*. Barker's focus is on the individual, the many individuals that appear within her account of the battle are very highly developed and draw on swathes of interesting source material. For all that her account of the campaign did not change anything from the traditional view.

For the Hundred Years' War more generally, there are an untold plethora of books, articles, plays and movies that touch on, or deal directly with the topic. For a narrative of the entire war, up to 1395, at present, the work of Jonathan Sumption is beyond comparison, the only unfortunate thing

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[14] Curry, Sources, pp. 370-405.

is that his next volume, set to be published this year with cover the period of the battle of

Agincourt.[15] A problem, and this can be said of all narrative history accounts, is that in representing

the Hundred Years' War as a continuous whole, without doubts in facts or debates on sources,

details and contrasting views are lost.

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[15] Jonathon Sumption, *The Hundred Years War I: Trial by Battle* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1990); *The Hundred Years War II: Trial by Fire* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999); *The Hundred Years War III: Divided Houses* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009).

Chapter 1: History of English Archery before the battle of Agincourt

This Chapter will cover archaeology, literary and iconographic evidence for archery in medieval England. covering approximately four hundred years of history, and more besides.

Archers and popular archery were a part of English life, even before it is popularly perceived to have been introduced in the Norman Conquest. Archaeological finds from as early as 200-450 AD, an example being the finds in the Nydam ship, show Danish Iron Age warriors possessed bows between 5'7" and 6' in length, and as such fit into the 'near-longbow', 'transitional bow' and true 'longbow' classes defined by Clifford Rogers.[16] These were powerful weapons, varying only in their thickness, being thinner, than the bows found on the *Mary Rose*, Henry VIII's ship that sank in 1545. According to bow expert Robert Hardy, this would likely make the Nydam bows less 'sturdy' because of their lack of depth, but that 'no Tudor archer would have found these bows anything but familiar.'[17] The Nydam bows are in an area believed to be the territorial origin of Anglo-Saxons prior to their settlement in England, thus it is likely that bows and archery existed in England after their arrival. Some finds from Anglo-Saxon inhumations in Bifrons (Kent) and Chessel Down (Isle of Wight) show the outlines of bows more than 5 feet long. Although the practises changed with their conversion to Christianity in the sixth and seventh centuries, these burials show that longbows continued being used after their immigration to Britain.[18] Roger Ascham in his sixteenth century treatise on archery, *Toxophilus*, recognised that whilst archery may not have been prevalent in Roman Britain, the arrival of the Anglo-Saxons, and the eventual war between Britons and Saxons was largely won with the

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[16] Nydam bows, see Erik Roth, *With A Bended Bow: Archery in Medieval and Renaissance Europe* (Stroud: Spellmount, 2012), p. 57; Richard Wadge, *Archery in Medieval England: Who were the Archers of Crecy?* (Stroud: The History Press, 2012); defining bows by length, see Clifford J. Rogers, "The development of the longbow in late medieval England and 'Technological Determinism'", *Journal of Medieval History* 37 (2011), pp. 321-41.

[17] Robert Hardy, *Longbow: a social and military history* (Sparkford: Haynes Publishing, 1992), p. 21.

[18] Strickland and Hardy, Warbow, p. 40.

latter's 'bow and shaft'.[19] One of the many difficulties in finding references to bows in Anglo-Saxon England is that the word for bow, *boga*, and the words for arrow and throwing spear were easily confused. Although there is one reference in the song of the battle of Maldon, 991, which states 'bogan waeron bysige', the bows were busy.[20]

Beyond native Anglo-Saxon traditions, England was also engaged with Scadinavian culture, itself having long traditions in archery, for war and hunting. The Viking settlement of Hedeby, located towards the southern end of the Jutland Peninsula, now a part of Germany, includes archaeological finds from between the ninth century and 1066, the town's destruction. Arguably the most important find is a complete longbow, 191 cm in length, with bent end sections similar to the manuscript illustration depicting the killing of St Edmund.[21] Another complete Viking longbow was found at Ballinderry, Northern Ireland, and pieces of a yew bow, only 4'12" long have been found at Waterford, Ireland, a town founded by Viking settlers. Although no Viking longbows have been found in England or Wales, powerful yew longbows existed in Viking culture, a people that contacted and settled in England. Beyond archaeology Norse sagas commonly represent archery as being a common part of Viking warfare. Olaf Trygvason's Saga depicts a sea battle fought largely with bows from the decks of longships; King Olaf himself shot a bow, and he and his opponent Erik Jarl both had an expert archer on their ship attempted to pick off their opposites.[22] This fact surfaces again in the Icelandic saga, Hemings þáttr, which survives in manuscript, but is largely based on the early histories of Norwegian Kings, as well as oral traditions, possibly English as well as Scandinavian. The story is based around the life of the titular character Heming, a Norwegian who leaves his homeland for England, befriending then Earl Harold Godwinson, and training him in the fighting skills which lead to his fame. The story follows the events of the 1060's, and includes an account of the Battle of

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[19] Roger Ascham, William Aldis Wright, ed., *English Works: Toxophilus, Report of the Affaires and State of Germany, The Scholemaster* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1904).

[20] Hardy, Longbow, p. 31; This was an interesting quote, because as an Australian, bogan is a colloquialism used to describe people of the lower working class, or of a more rustic persuasion. The link between archery and bogan culture is in need of greater research.

[21] Roth, *With A Bended Bow*, p. 59; image of St Edmund is no. 24 from Piermont Morgan Library, NY.

[22] Hardy, *Longbow*, p. 29.

Stamford Bridge, 1066. Here is it is Heming, an excellent archer, who at King Harold's side, is asked by the king to shoot the king of Norway, Harald Hadrada (hard-counsel), the ally of Harold's rebellious brother Tostig. Heming will not fatally shoot Harald, because his life had been saved by the life of St Olaf, Harald's brother. However he shoots and wounds Harald in the face, the cut marks him out, allowing King Harold to shoot him in the throat, killing him. Harold himself is reluctant to shoot his own brother, in spite of the damage he has caused in his rebellion, but Heming does not, and shoots him in the eye, and winning the battle.[23] The account is interesting in that it shows the use of archery in a pivotal moment, both of the battle and history. That archery was identified as a skill, to be taught to and used by the nobility and seen as valuable and useful in battle is at odds with the traditional perception that archery was looked down upon by European nobility as unchivalrous when used in warfare.[24] These accounts, as well as the archaeological evidence, show that the use of powerful bows by skilled archers dates back well before the battle of Hastings, the event typically seen as the moment when archery was reintroduced to England.

The battle of Hastings, fought only days after Stamford Bridge is a turning point in the history of archery in England. Traditionally the depictions of the battle in the Bayeux tapestry clearly show Norman archers, in large numbers and armed with short bows.[25] Regardless of whether you choose to take the tapestry as a realistic interpretation of archery at Hastings, or that it is stylistic and inaccurate, archery played a major role at the battle. The tapestry only shows a single archer among the Anglo-Saxons, the depiction is of a small figure hiding behind the larger spear and axemen and firing over their heads. The written accounts of the battle, particularly William of Poitiers gives the missile men (crossbowmen, archers and possibly slingers) a major role on both sides. It was the

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[23] *Icelandic Sagas and other Historical Documents relating to the Settlement and Descents of the Northmen on the British Isles*, ed. G. W. Dasent (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1894), vol. III, pp. 374-415; the account, unreferenced, is also found in Roth, *With a Bended Bow*, p. 219.

[24] A.T. Hatto, 'Archery and Chivalry: A Noble Prejudice', *The Modern Language Review* 35, no. 1 (January 1940), p. 54.

[25] Rogers refers to the tapestry, the scale of the bows to the archers as well as the archers grip, holding the bow string to the chest and not the ear, as reasoning for the bows being classed as short bows. This view is contested by Strickland and Hardy as the style used is symbolic rather than realistic, and the style is influenced by Roman representations of archery. Romans used composite bows, not longbows, thus the depiction is inaccurate for the time.

Norman archers who attacked first, firing up at the Saxons on the hill, whilst the heavily armed Norman infantry attacked the shield-wall directly. but the battle did not go well initially, and the Saxons fired their own weapons: 'they threw javelins and missiles of various kinds, murderous axes and stones tied to sticks'.[26] The attack seems to have been able to withdraw only after a charge of the Norman knights took pressure from the infantry. Later in the battle, after some of the less well trained English troops were lured from the hillside and destroyed by the Norman cavalry, more and more attacks were directed against those remaining, the household troops that surrounded King Harold. The archers played their famous role at this point; in the hail of arrows raining down upon the shrinking number of English, Harold, so the Bayeux tapestry shows, is shot in the eye, and then finished off by a Norman knight with a sword. His fate is similar to that of his army. In the later stages the English archery and javelins seem to be unable to effectively stop the Norman crossbowmen. The bolts from the crossbows went through shields and armour. With this deadly fire and their king mortally wounded, the army broke and fled.[27]With the defeat of the English army the Anglo-Norman military traditions became dominant in England, including archery.

During the reigns of Anglo-Norman dynasty, particularly that of Henry I and the wars of Stephen and Matilda, there are several occurrences that sign post the changes, but also the continuations of archery in England after the Conquest. Chronologically, the first is the small-scale engagement between the royal bodyguard of Henry I and rebellious Norman lords, in the cause of Henry's nephew, William Clito, at the battle of Bourgthéroulde, 1124. Henry was not present at the battle, but was represented by members of his household, with approximately 300 men, of whom 40 were archers. The royal troops dismounted, with the archers in front, whilst the rebels charged on horseback. The archers were instructed to aim for the knights' horses; many were killed causing their riders to fall, possibly trapped beneath their mounts. Those rebels that weren't killed or

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[26] William of Poitiers, *Gesta Guillelmi*, R.H.C. Davies and M. Chibnall, eds. and trans, *The Gesta Guillelmi of William of Poitiers*, ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), p. 128-9; translation changed slightly to better show the ambiguity of the original text as to whether it was archers or javelineers in Strickland and Hardy, *Warbow*, p. 63.
[27] William of Poitiers, *Gesta Guillelmi*, pp. 133-3.

captured fled. The accounts of the battle, Orderic Vitalis and Robert of Torigny differ as to where exactly the archers were positioned, which is a common problem in literary accounts of battles, but they also include that it was the young Count of Meulan and his dislike of king's household knights, who he saw as lower than himself, that he believed a single charge was all that was necessary to win the day. the other leader of the rebels, Amaury de Montfort took it differently: 'A mounted soldier who has dismounted with his men will not fly the field; he will either die or conquer.'[28] Later, and on a larger scale, the battle of Lincoln was fought between King Stephen and Robert of Gloucester in 1141, Stephen shows the other side of this. He dismounted his army and initially got the better of the fighting against the Welsh infantry fighting for Robert. But Robert's knights were still mounted and their charge shattered Stephen's army. The king was captured as, fighting on foot he was unable to escape, similar to the fate suffered by King John II of France at Poitiers in 1356, or English nobles at Patay in 1429. In 1138 at the battle of the Standard, the Northern English army dismounted to fight against the invading Scots. The Scottish cavalry were in the later stages of the battle able to punch through weak points in the English line, they were nearly surrounded and captured shortly afterwards, and the Scottish infantry suffered massive deaths and casualties from English arrows.[29]

After the battle of the Standard archers continued to fight in English armies in large numbers. During the invasion of Ireland in 1169, the English troops from the Welsh marches were predominantly archers.[30] Welsh soldiers formed special contingents of light-troops in the armies of Henry II fighting in France. English archers went on crusade with King Richard, but it was his crossbowmen that were favoured and famed. The deadliness of crossbowmen defending baron's castles against King John would cause the execution of many of them once the fortresses fell. At the Battles of Lewes and

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[28] Marjorie Chibnall, trans., *The Ecclesiastical History of Orderic Vitalis* (Oxford: Oxford Medieval Texts, 1968-80), vol. 6, pp. 350-1.

[29] Richard of Hexham, *De gestis regis Stephani et de bello Standardii*, in R. Howlett, ed., *Chronicles of the Reigns of Stephen, Henry II and Richard I*, III (London: Rolls Series, 1886), pp. 159-161; Ailred of Rievaulx, Relatio venerabilis Aelredi abbatis Rievallensis, de Standardo, R. Howlett, ed., Chronicles, pp. 189, 191; Strickland and Hardy, *Warbow*, pp. 75-76.

[30] Giraldus Cambrensis, *Topographica Hibernica*, in *Opera*, J.F. Dimock and G.F. Warner, v (Rolls Series, 1867); J.J. O'Meara, trans, *The History and Topography of Ireland* (revised edn: Harmondsworth, 1982).

Evesham in the thirteenth century, it was the charge of the heavy cavalry that won battles, not archery. In the wars of conquest fought by Edward I in Wales and Ireland, his Gascon crossbowmen were paid twice what an English archer earned. At the battle of Maes Moydog in 1295, Welsh spearmen were forced to attack by the arrows and bolts of English archers and crossbowmen. Most famously at the Battle of Falkirk, 1298, the English archers and crossbowmen massacred the densely packed Scottish schiltrons where the cavalry had previously failed. Archers were an important part of the English army during this period, but it was only in the 1330's that longbow archery is generally seen as having come to be fully visible for the military power it represented on the battlefield.

Chapter 2: The Archers of Agincourt, Recruitment and Retinues

There is a long legacy that precedes the battle of Agincourt. Archers fought at the battles of Hastings and Stamford Bridge, and longbows have been found dating back thousands of years. Longbow archery was a staple of English warfare long before the Hundred Years' War. Even acknowledging the developments and changes that occurred in the fourteenth century, Agincourt happened after all of this. But Agincourt is the famous battle; its archers are the famous archers. When Sir Walter Hungerford asked for ten thousand more archers; he was asking, in effect, for tripling the number of archers.5000 archers were listed in the *Gesta Henrici Quinti*, as being in the army at Agincourt.[31] The lengthy traditions that lie behind Agincourt have been discussed at some detail. Here I will attempt to answer why a knight would desire more archers with particular focus on how they were recruited; their pay; and the units in which they fought; in order that we may better understand the relationship between archers and men-at-arms, in society in the early fifteenth century.

Even before war recommenced as diplomacy failed, Henry V had already begun to recruit an army with which to invade France; eventually leading to the Agincourt campaign. To understand the archers present at the battle; we must first start with their recruitment, months before the first arrows flew. In the past, including the opening of the Hundred Years' War under Edward III, archers, other infantry, men-at-arms and knights had been recruited through the system of Commissions of Array.[32] Men served with equipment thought appropriate for their wealth; poorer men only needed a bow and arrows, and men who fought as men-at-arms had money and landed wealth sufficient to pay for armour, weapons and the stable of horses necessary for a battle or campaign. This system was originally intended to recruit, or at least assess all men between fifteen and sixty for service

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[31] *Gesta Henrici Quinti*, in Anne Curry, *Sources* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2000), p. 27.
[32] For discussion of recruitment by Commissioners of Array at the beginning of the Hundred Years War see Jonathn Sumption, *The Hundred Years War I: Trial by Battle* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1990), pp. 64-65; also for recruitment in the time of Edward I, see Michael Strickland and Robert Hardy, *The Great Warbow: From Hastings to the Mary Rose* (Sparkford: Haynes Publishing, 2011), pp. 150-53; for the history of archery and the Commissions of Array see Richard Wadge, *Archery in Medieval England: Who were the Archers of Crecy?* (Stroud: The History Press, 2012).

overseas or just for local defence and policing. By the beginning of the fourteenth century and the

end of Edward I's reign the recruitment of large, unwieldy armies of tens of thousands of poorly

equipped infantry was phased out. In its place, the recruitment of the best equipped and strongest

became the norm for infantry. The perpetual outnumbering during battles that Edward III

experienced fighting in Scotland and in France was a measure of the change in thought. The armies

were smaller; but on the whole better armed and disciplined, because of selectivity in recruitment.

Recruitment for the campaign of 1415 included the use of the Commissions of Array in an even more

rarefied sense. Issued in twenty counties on May 29th, the array was carried out by commissioners,

knights or esquires, who were themselves already captains within Henry's army. The fact that the

men were already involved with army recruitment was not always the case. Here it seems that the

Commission of Array was issued to notify potential soldiers that recruitment was under way, and

that they might join the retinue of the captains among the commissioners.[33] Where large scale

recruitment of the thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries had been done by Commissions of

Array; the retinue, a company of men-at-arms and archers recruited and captained by a lord, knight

or esquire; were the standard from the 1350's onwards, and was the case at Agincourt. The size of

the retinue was dictated by King Henry, but generally followed social precedence: the larger retinues

were those of the royal family; the king's brothers, the Dukes of Clarence and Gloucester indented

with the largest retinues, 960 and 800 respectively; whilst the king's other relatives, the Duke of York

and the Earl of Dorset, as well as Henry's best friend, the Earl of Arundel, had 400 men each. Not all

retinues were this large however. Because the king was campaigning in person there were many

smaller groups that indented with the crown directly, down to individual archers. But even larger

retinues were themselves made up of sub-indentures, often a single man-at-arms and a handful of

archers, the household, family and/or friends of an esquire. The overall proportions of the army

were generally set at one man-at-arms to three archers.[34] The indenture was so named because of

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[33] Anne Curry, *Agincourt: A New History* (Stroud: Tempus, 2005), p. 61.
[34] Curry, *New History*, p. 63; armies in the fourteenth century generally attempted ratios of one archer for every man-at-arms, although with the limited number of men-at-arms, generally there were a greater number

the form of the contract. Written in duplicate the indenture divided, one half was kept by the crown, the other by the captain. The unique pattern of upward and downward cutting strokes which separated the two copies meant that each side, given the matching indented cut could confirm that neither party had made alterations to the contract.[35] An example of the retinue found in the 'Agincourt Roll', the retinue of Sir Walter Hungerford, contained 20 men-at-arms, including him, and sixty archers. Of these, the men-at-arms, or lances were named, whilst the archers were just a number.[36] Anne Curry notes that in the compiling of the Agincourt Rolls by Robert Glover, Somerset Herald from 1571 to 1588, that the names of the archers were specifically excluded, presumably because these men of lower social standing were considered irrelevant by the 16th century heralds.[37] Thus the dearth of personal information regarding the English archers was not necessarily a fifteenth century attitude, but rather a Tudor bias.

Pay for soldiers during the Hundred Years' War was based on the destination of the expedition; whether it was heading for the English possession of Gascony in south-western France; or sailing for France itself. In 1415, whether as ruse or encouragement for recruitment, King Henry paid the first quarter of his army's pay at the rate for Gascony, the higher rate of 9d per day for an archer, and 18d for a man-at-arms.[38] However when the target of Harfleur in Normandy was announced to the

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of archers, but not to the degree common in the fifteenth century, see Andrew Ayton, 'English Armies in the Fourteenth Century' in Anne Curry & Michael Hughes, *Arms, Armies and Fortifications in the Hundred Years War* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 1994), pp. 21-38; details for English armies in the fifteenth century may be found in the companion chapter: Anne Curry, 'English Armies in the Fifteenth Century', in Anne Curry & Michael Hughes, *Arms, Armies and Fortifications in the Hundred Years War* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 1994), pp. 39-68.

[35] For the administrative and organizational details of the English army and the indenture system, including the common terms and conditions of service and payment of wages, see Curry, *Sources*, pp. 408-423; for an example of an sub-indenture made between the Earl of Salisbury and William Bedyk, see Sir Nicholas Harris Nicholas, *The History of the battle of Agincourt, and the expedition of Henry the Fifth into France; to which is added, the roll of the men-at-arms, in the English army* (London: Johnson, 1827), p. xxxvii, HathiTrust (Global Public Domain), < http://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=hvd.32044019639822;view=1up;seq=71 >, viewed 2 March 2015.

[36] Nicholas Harris Nicholas, *The History of the Battle of Agincourt* <http://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=hvd.32044019639822;view=1up;seq=494 > pp. 46-7.

[37] Curry, *Sources*, pp. 408-9.

[38] As a note on pay, English armies were paid at this time in quarters, three month blocks. The Agincourt campaign is unique because whilst the first quarter was paid to the indenture captains prior to embarkation, to second quarter was paid with the distribution of royal jewels. The jewels were provided in lieu of cash payment, with the intention of redemption by the government once later rounds of taxation had been brought

army, the rates of pay were adjusted for service in France, archers receiving 6d per day and men-at-arms 12d. Knights, knights banneret, earls and dukes all received higher rates than common men-at-arms, but relative to the outlay that was expected of these men to maintain themselves on campaign compared to an archer, it was not enough. This is because the nobility's reason to be was war, and they held their titles and the incomes that went with them for that purpose. Juliet Barker has pointed out that whilst the upper echelons of the army may not have found major incentives for campaigning, this was not true for the archers and esquires. An esquire with an income of approximately £18 5s per year, would likely have been better off in war than in peace, and according to the city of London 1412 subsidy rolls, of the 42 citizens claiming the rank of esquire, only 12 had more than £15 per year, suggesting that whilst there may have been exceptions, esquires who made up the bulk of the men-at-arms were better off fighting than not. An archer was by comparison even better off. Skilled artisans and workmen at this stage earned between 3 and 5d per day, and needed to provide for their own sustenance.[39] While some captains withheld some money to pay for the victuals of their retinue, on campaign some food was provided by the king, and a certain amount was foraged from areas that the army marched through, therefore we do not know exactly how much was deducted. Even with food to pay for, it seems likely that archers were paid at least as well as skilled craftsmen, or minor landowners, and with the distant possibility of lucrative ransoms and valuable loot, war presented the possibility of wealth and social advancement.

The importance of the retinue was that it joined archers and men-at-arms as soldiers, who prior to the Hundred Years' War would not often have served closely together. As a single unit, they created and strengthened bonds horizontally and vertically in society. Many retinues, though perhaps not all, were composed of men with shared relationships. Lords drew men from their tenants, office-holders

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in. In some cases captains sold or pawned the jewels for ready cash to pay their men, whilst others did eventually redeem the jewels, though with the war continuing after 1415, taxation was directed to new campaigns rather than paying for old ones, see Curry, *New History*, or for some of the exquisitely decorated jewels that were received by some of the nobility see Juliet Barker, *Agincourt: The King, the Campaign, the Battle* (London: Little, Brown, 2005), pp. 117-8.

[39] Barker, *Agincourt*, p. 116.

and from men who served them personally within their households. The retinue of Henry, Lord

Scrope, which was dispersed after the earl's involvement in the Southampton Plot included many

men that were already in his employment, including his barber, steward, baker, minstrels, armourer,

yeoman of his robes and of course his master of horse.[40] At the top of this system was the king.

When the king went to war many vestiges of splendour, as well as government went with him. Thus

the men who fought beside him at Agincourt were his chamber knights and squires, officials from

various organs of government as well as the servants, minstrels, bowyers, armourers, smiths,

chaplains and priests that were all necessary parts of the expedition. The higher within Henry's

household a man was in peace was reflected on the battlefield. Officials within the household served

as men-at-arms, and often brought further men-at-arms and archers. Servants of the king and of his

officials fought as archers.[41] On campaign the king had his servants to provide the comforts and

appearances of kingship, including his chapel and seventeen minstrels, and on the battlefield he was

surrounded by men he knew and trusted to fight beside him.[42] This structure was emulated through

the various retinues present during the campaign. Archers not only 'served' the king, but literally

served the king, and the lords, knights and squires that led their individual retinues. As Jonathan

Sumption eloquently put it when commenting on warfare in the 1350's, retinues were 'a miniature

of English provincial society projected onto the battlefields of France.'[43]

But there were men apart from archers and men-at-arms who indented to serve in the Agincourt

campaign. Nicholas Colnet, the king's physician, was part of the expedition, understandable given

the chance of injury for the king and those close to him; but what is interesting is that even a

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[40]For details of retinues see Curry, New History, p. 63; the Southampton plot was an attempted coup by Lord Scrope, the Earl of Cambridge and Sir Thomas Grey, to kill King Henry, his two brothers present with him, before marching on London and killing John, the final brother and crowning Edmund Mortimer, Earl of March as king. The plot was betrayed to the king by the Earl of March and the ringleaders were arrested, and after confessing their guilt executed on 5 August, whilst March was pardoned, see Curry, New History, pp. 48-9; also see Barker, *Agincourt*, pp. 78-83.

[41] Curry, *New History*, p. 59.

[42] A note on the minstrels, whilst archers were paid 6d per day, the minstrels employed by Henry received 12d per day, the same as a man-at-arms, as the employment of skilled minstrels was an important part of prestige, as well as comfort to the king who was known to be an admirer of music, see Barker, *Agincourt*, p. 138.

[43] Jonathan Sumption, *The Hundred Years War II: Trial by Fire* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999), p. 157.

physician, someone employed to correct injury and illness, indented to serve with three archers; whilst the surgeons, William Bradwardine and Thomas Morstede, indented to serve with their assistants and six archers. [44] These archers likely fought alongside other archers in the king's battle; however we can also speculate that much as other archers were servants for the men-at-arms they were recruited with.These archers may have acted as a form of assistant for the physician and surgeons, or perhaps as guards to protect them whilst they were working on the battlefield. Barker's interpretation varies from Curry in that she lists William Bradwardyn (spelling varies, but it is the same individual), as being in charge of nine surgeons, and not, three assistants and six archers.[45] That the positions are considered interchangeable by modern historians indicates that the position of these archers in particular is ambiguous and introduces the possibility that men might have served both roles interchangeably. Similar to the surgeons, records remain of William Tropenell, a master tailor who accompanied the expedition with two valet tailors and four archers.[46] The tailor served in making preparations for the royal household's departure for France and continued on, likely for maintenance of clothing and repairs. What a possible role for a tailor on the battlefield might have been, no sources extrapolate; but it is possible that he may have fought alongside his archers, or even as a man-at-arms. Similar questions can be asked of all the supernumeraries at Agincourt, they played important roles outside of battle, as bowyers, wagoners, armourers, almoners, bakers and barbers, but on the battlefield did they fight as archers? Did men listed by their civilian profession have a military career; much as archers, paid and recruited as soldiers, served non-military functions outside of battle, siege and skirmish?

The concept of militarized households is hardly new, playing an important role in Anglo-Norman warfare; but at Agincourt we can see that whilst these units formed the centres of retinues that they were only the centre. What I mean by this is that a lord's household was a part of whole; combining

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[44] The National Archive E28/31/84, in Curry, *Agincourt: A New History*, p. 59.

[45] Barker, *Agincourt*, pp. 144-6; for further details on the surgeons, Morstede and Bradwardine seeTheodore R. Beck, *The Cutting Edge: Early History of the Surgeons of London* (London and Bradford: Lund Humphries, 1974), pp. 76-8.

[46] The National Archive E101/695/35, in Curry, *Agincourt: A New History*, p. 60

those outside the household to create a larger joint retinue of archers and men-at-arms. Thus the form taken by the retinue at Agincourt was an extension of earlier practise, expanded to include most of the army. Another practise that was expanded from the twelfth century was that at Agincourt, large numbers of archers, almost all in fact, were mounted. In military terms these men fought on foot, but rode between battles, they did not fight as horse archers. It allowed archers to keep pace with the men-at-arms whilst on the march, and meant they reached battle better able to fight. The ownership of a horse, in addition to the equipment of an archer included a minimum of one bow, a sheath, generally of twenty four arrows, a sword, knife, buckler, body armour, whether of hardened leather, padded cloth or riveted brigandine, a helmet or iron cap, and in the fifteenth century a lead-headed hammer; all meant that an archer needed to be a man who could afford significant outlay before he was ever paid; more so than ever before. A mounted archer in the 1330's was thought to need land worth £15 per year, the income of a substantial farmer. [47] Even the humble foot archer was reckoned to need at least an income of £2 per annum. There were many mounted archers that served or fought at Agincourt that had incomes between these two marks, or had goods and money, but not a guaranteed income. Some archers owned substantial property; in the county palatine of Cheshire there remains evidence for the property of some the archers who had formed the guard of Richard II before he was deposed.

Thomas de Huxley, described as 'a man of some substance' by Anne Curry, owned landed property, some of which was rented, and others under were farmed for wheat and oats, a mill, six cows, two beds and a horse, totalling £21 14s 4d at his death in 1403. [48] Indeed de Huxley is an individual that straddled the divide between social classes, and it is very possible that he was had before his death reached a level of wealth and social standing that he may have changed from archer to man-at-arms. Thomas de Eddesley served on the same watch of the guard as de Huxley, but he was landless,

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[47] Sumption, *Trial by Battle*, p. 67.
[48] Annual Report of Deputy Keeper of the Public Records, vol. 36 (1876), pp. 54, 101 & 257; The National ArchiveCHES 25/10 m.1, in P. McNiven, 'The men of Cheshire and the rebellion of 1403', *Transactions of the Historic Society of Lancashire and Cheshire* 129 (1980 for 1979), p. 13.

though owning various goods and possessions worth 60s, including a cow, worth 10s that was taken

as mortuary payment by the vicar of Acton, much like the horse, worth 12s, owned by his fellow

archer, Hugh de Bickerton who also died at Shrewsbury.[49] Not all archers were landowners, but

wealth was necessary to afford military equipment when soldiers were not equipped by the state.

During the period of the Hundred Years' War there were many documented, and many more

undocumented instances of men rising from the rank of archer, to man-at-arms, and even to knight

and captain. The famous examples of Sir Robert Knolles, the free-company soldier, turned leader,

who was eventually knighted by two of his subordinates after the capture of the city of Auxerre.[50]

He would go on to command an expedition of 6,000 men in 1370. Another, though less famed and

prosperous rise was that of Robert de Fishlake. Serving as an archer in the late 1370's through to

1404 where he is listed as a scutifer, an esquire fighting as a man-at-arms. He also gave evidence at

the court of chivalry case between his companion in arms and often retinue leader Sir Edward

Hastings and Reginald, Lord Grey of Ruthin. As social rank was a determining factor in supporting

claims with courts of chivalry, the fact that Robert was called, whilst acknowledging the many

campaigns that Robert had served in the retinue of Sir Edward Hastings, it also showed his climb in

society from an archer to an esquire considered versed in chivalry. Robert may himself have been

the son or younger brother of Hugh de 'Fisselak', who served as a man-at-arms under John, Lord

Neville. He may also have had a son, John de Fishlake that served as a clerk and archer in the

company of John de Mowbray, Earl Marshall, in the Agincourt campaign, where he stayed and

fought in the battle after Mowbray was invalided home at Harfleur. Robert de Fishlake was part of a

family that seems to have been of the middling sort, with a tradition in military service, fighting as

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[49] Anne Curry, *Archers at the Battle of Shrewsbury*, created August 2008/ updated 30 September 2009, The Soldier in later Medieval England hosted by the University of Southampton and the University of Reading, UK < http://www.medievalsoldier.org/August2008.htm >, viewed 14 January 2014.

[50] R. Lescot, *Chronique*, ed., J. Lemoine (1896); *Grande Chroniques de France. Chronique des règnes de Jean II et de Charles V,* R. Delachenal, 4 vols (1910-20) in Sumption, *Trial by Fire*, p. 384.

archers in the earlier part of their careers before fighting as men-at-arms later.[51] The life and service

of de Fishlake reinforces a point made by Robert Hardy. De Fishlake returned to the same retinue

many times, this suggests loyalty to his captain, and that as he served in other retinues as well. His

re-enlistment indicates that men in English armies were treated well.[52] This is generally endorsed by

the larger pattern of service: a considerable number returned for further duty.[53]

It was also a common enough occurrence that the military standing of a man changed in his lifetime.

Sir Thomas Gray's *Scalacronica* records that many English soldiers during the fourteenth century war

in France began in youth as archers, and became men-at-arms and knights in turn.[54] Some like

Knolles even went on to be captains. But even the famous routier captain Sir Robert Knolles, a man

made immensely rich from the spoils of France, had his authority contested by knights and the sons

of nobility, his fellow captains during the 1370 expedition; a contest that eventually led to the

companies separating and being picked off by French forces.[55] Whilst only examples, men of humble

origins like Fishlake, Knolles and Huxley were outside the traditional nobility as much as they strove

to improve their standing. When Gray wrote of men rising from 'unknown' archer to knight, he was

commenting on their lack of family name in spite of their 'fine deeds of arms' but also on the fact

that in the 1350's and 60's they fought on their own account and not for the king in many cases.[56]

As the Hundred Years' War continued, it presented an opportunity for soldiers to become

professional, permanently employed in garrisons and standing forces serving in France or on the

Scottish border. At certain times, groups of soldiers, whether unemployed or otherwise, banded

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[51] David Simpkin, *Robert de Fishlake*, created Feburary 2008, Soldier in Later Medieval England hosted by the University of Southampton and the University of Reading, UK, <http://www.medievalsoldier.org/February2008.php>, viewed 15 January 2015.

[52] Robert Hardy, 'Longbow', in Curry and Hughes, *Arms, Armies and Fortifications*, p. 165.

[53] H.J. Hewitt, *The Organization of War under Edward III, 1338-62* (Manchester, 1966), p. 47.

[54] Sir Thomas Gray, *Scalacronica, 1272-1363*, in A. King, ed. & trans., *Surtees Society* 209 (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2005), p. 157.

[55] For details on more knights see M.J. Bennett, *Community, Class and Careerism. Cheshire and Lancashire Society in the Age of Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), p. 182.

[56] Gray, *Scalacronica*, p. 157, perhaps it is the author's self-pity showing through, but in saying that many great deeds were being done in France in the late 1350's by men of unknown name, he is lamenting his own lack of freedom. Perhaps it also stems from dissatisfaction with change, whether it be the formation of the free-companies or the rising of 'new' knights.

together, serving whoever paid them; or they formed their own companies. Many of those fighting

in and alongside the forces of Charles of Navarre in Normandy, the Gascon bands in Aquitaine or

free companies that wondered France in the 1350's and 60's, became highly experienced. No small

number; particularly those in northern France and Brittany were English archers of poor origins, and

some made vast fortunes from the spoils of war.[57]Even men not fighting in the free companies did

not necessarily have to be landowners themselves. It was the case with Agincourt that younger

members of households of the nobility, younger brothers or sons were introduced to war as archers.

Similar to household servants, their equipment was bought for them, and as that of an archer was

less expensive and the role of an archer arguably safer in battle than a man-at-arms. It was a chance

to initiate younger members of a family in war without overt risk. For the upper nobility, where price

was not a problem, sons and brothers fought as men-at-arms, but this was not without its risks; Tito

Livio Frulovisi's *Vita Henrici Quinti* gives the account on Henry V's brother Humphrey, Duke of

Gloucester, being knocked off his feet at Agincourt, wounded in the leg and unable to right himself,

he was defended by his brother the king, standing over his body until he could be taken to safety.[58]

Whether the anecdote is true or imagined it does show the dangers of the melee for a man, no

matter how well armed on his first campaign. Apart from the de Fishlakes, there are other families

that fought as men-at-arms and archers. The retinue of the earl of Northumberland fighting in

Scotland in the mid-1380's included William Chamberlayn, man-at-arms, John and Robert

Chamberlayn, archers, John Hedworth, man-at-arms, Nicholas Hedworth, archer, John and Robert

Corbet, men-at-arms, and John Corbet, archer.[59] Whilst there is certainly a possibility that the

surnames were coincidence, it was likely for family members to fight in the same retinue as well as

include older brothers or fathers as man-at-arms, whilst sons and younger siblings fought as archers.

Archers and man-at-arms may have been paid, and even treated differently, but there were many

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[57] For more details on warfare in the 1350's and 60's see Sumption, *Trial by Fire*.

[58] Anne Curry, *The Battle of Agincourt: Sources and Interpretations* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2000), p. 62.

[59] The National Archive, E101/40/5

connections between them for men of the middling sort, those that stood atop the line that divided both types of soldier.

Whilst the large majority of archers were recruited into retinues, there were some, more than a thousand for Agincourt, that were recruited by locality. During the period, the importance of landownership cannot be over stated. To own land reflected status and wealth, but also connections with others, owners and labourers within the same region. As retinues were largely based on recruitment of men known to the captain who recruited them, they were often men living and working within walking distance of land owned by that captain.[60] The king was the largest landowner, with manors and castles scattered throughout the country. But there were also special affinities between the crown and the county of Lancashire, the county palatine of Chester and the Principality of Wales. In the reign of Edward III, Wales had provided large numbers of archers and spearmen for his French campaigns, as well as those of his son, Edward, the Black Prince. For their successor and son respectively, Richard II, whilst arguments have been put forward that he attempted to create a fortified block of territory in the west with Wales at its heart; it was Cheshire that famously provided guards of archers for the king, some of whom are mentioned above.[61] The link with Lancashire comes with usurpation of Henry Bolingbroke, who became Henry IV, father of Henry V, bringing the inheritance of the House of Lancaster into the royal lands. From these three regions archers were recruited in large numbers on behalf of the crown. From Lancashire, 500 archers; from the southern territories of Wales, Carmarthen and Cardigan, 340 archers; from Brecon, 159, and from Cheshire, pay records indicate that whilst 247 were paid from county taxation, there was an intended target of 650. In each case these archers, sparing a few dozen who

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[60] For further details on medieval recruitment practises see Michael Prestwich, 'Cavalry Service in Early Fourteenth Century England', in John Gillingham and J.C. Holt, eds., War and Government in the Middle Ages: Essays in Honour of J.O. Prestwich (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 1984), pp. 147-158; Sumption, *Trial by Battle*, pp. 38-68, additionally references to recruitment can be found throughout the entirety of his Hundred Years War series, though unfortunately his fourth volume, which covers 1396-1422 is to be published to coincide with the 600th anniversary of the battle of Agincourt, will come out after this work is finalised.
[61] For full details on the guard of Richard II see J.L. Gillespie, 'Richard II's Cheshire Archers', *Transactions of the Historic Society of Lancashire and Cheshire*, 125 (1974), pp. 1-39; and further details of the contributions made by Cheshire to the English war effort see P. Morgan, *War and Society in Medieval Cheshire 1277-1403* (Manchester: Chetham Society, 1987).

were mounted, were on foot, unlike the archers in the retinues.[62] We do not know whether these men were selected, or otherwise compelled to go, but we do know that many sent replacements. Additionally, the fact that the no archers or men-at-arms came from North Wales, along with the reduced numbers from Cheshire show elements of instability that had only recently been quieted, thus limiting the reliability of recruitment for foreign adventures.[63] In practise the large scale recruitment of archers was a scaled up version of the indenture system, as the larger retinues, whilst being made up of sub-indentures, also included a contingent of archers recruited directly by the main captain. The retinue of the Duke of Clarence was composed of men recruited by him and seventy other men, where he provided 149 archers. Similarly, his brother the Duke of Gloucester contributed 126 archers to his retinue of eight hundred.[64] Henry's recruitment of more than twelve hundred archers served a similar purpose for the army as a whole, bulking out the numbers of archers. Arguably, the addition of these archers also represented a continuation of the pattern of bastard feudalism prevalent in the late fourteenth century. James Gillespie has made the argument that the recruitment of large numbers of archers from Cheshire by Richard II was an attempt to partially replace the crown's reliance on the military retinues of the nobility in war, and to balance the threat and civil discord that these liveried armies presented in peace to the crown's authority in peace.[65] That Henry V may have been continuing the practise of enlarging the royal contingent whilst on campaign, as well as encouraging the loyalty of his subjects in areas of the crown's traditional influence is possible, but, as the companies of his family and close friends made up the largest contingents in the army already there is little evidence to suggest that this was the case. It

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[62] For the numbers of men recruited see Curry, *New History*, pp. 60-1; for the payment of archers in Cheshire, see The National Archive SC6/776/4 m.3d; E403/624 m.3, E403/629 m.12; for the intended numbers from Cheshire see N.H. Nicholas, *History of the Battle of Agincourt*, 3rd Edn (London, 1833), p. 385.

[63] The rebellion of Owyn Glendower in Wales during the first decade of the fifteenth century was a cause of continuing discontent even after the rebellion had been shattered in battle, similarly the closeness of many soldiers from Cheshire with Richard II was cause for many men to join the Percy rebellion and fight at the battle of Shrewsbury in 1403, further details can be found in Curry, *New History*, pp. 14-51; Barker, *Agincourt*, pp. 22-37; Ralph A. Griffiths, *Conquerors and Conquered in Medieval Wales* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1994), pp. 123- 146.

[64] Curry, *New History*, pp. 62-3.

[65] James L. Gillespie, *The Cheshire Archers of Richard II: A Royal Experiment in Bastard Feudalism* (Princeton University Dissertation, October 1972), p. 4.

must also be considered that when attempted by Richard II, it contributed to his image as a tyrant, and perhaps ultimately the usurpation by Henry Bolingbroke in 1399. Therefore whether Henry V, the son of the usurper would have attempted anything similar seems unlikely if it could be avoided. These companies of archers were not just archers however. Each region also provided a handful of men-at-arms. Even as the large majority of these archers were on foot, indicating that they were likely the least well-equipped and least wealthy of all the soldiers present, they were still connected with and commanded by men-at-arms from their locality. From Lancashire, the five hundred were grouped into companies of fifty, each led by a knight or man-at-arms from the area, who might also have been captains of their own retines as well.[66]

Archers and men-at-arms were soldiers that could come from very different backgrounds and were treated differently by historians and contemporaries because of that difference. But as the many aspects of their recruitment for war show, whether by their inclusion in mixed retinues, the familial links that existed between men-at-arms and archers, as well as bonds of service, loyalty and experience in war, archers were closely tied to men-at-arms and vice versa. For a knight to say to his king that he wished their army had more archers, they were discussing a topic that all men-at-arms were well aware of and intimately linked with. As much as the legacy of archery stretching back many hundreds of years lay behind archery in war, the inclusion and desire for more archers was tied with the personal links these very different looking parts of the army. Waurin and Le Fèvre may have described the appearance of the English archers in less than favourable terms. It is all too easy to see differences and not the similarities, the Burgundian chroniclers may have been some of few chroniclers who were eye-witnesses at the battle, but much in the case of Tudor heralds not thinking the names of archers to be of any worth, Waurin and Le Fèvre may also be biased by their own times when remembering the appearances of the archers. Very different practises existed in the English garrisons of Normandy, compared to the army at Agincourt. It is possible that the archers were not

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[66] For Lancashire, the account of the sheriff, Sir Robert Urswyk, details all the companies, The National Archive E101/46/35

the scruffy band they were described to be. They were in some cases men of equal wealth to the men-at-arms. There does not need to be a stark contrast. The army had marched a very long way and was short of food, had been exposed to sun, wind and rain, none of them likely looked as they had setting out from England.

Chapter 3: Archers on the Field of Agincourt

The Retinue system of recruitment placed archers and men-at-arms within the same companies, extending the dynamics of relationships in civilian life into military campaigns. The road to Agincourt is an overused phrase, but I will use it here this once so as not to buck the trend, but in 1415 there was a long path between the recruitment of the army and the battlefield. The army set sail from Southampton on 11 August, and arrived at the Seine estuary on the 13th, and disembarking began the next day, but was not fully finished until the 17th. From the landing beach near the headland of Chef de Caux, or in the lee of the hill of Sainte-Addresse (depending on which modern reassessment is believed), a short march was needed to lay siege to the town of Harfleur, a walled port town which had been a centre for recent piracy against English ships.[67] The siege lasted until the town surrendered on 22 September. During the siege the archers likely provided supporting fire against the battlements of the town whilst assaults, of which there were several, took place and protected the siege camps and trenches against attack from the town. But the major problem when looking for the actions of the archers is that contemporary sources do not mention them. The same is true for the march towards Calais. The march that would lead the English army from Normandy, across the Somme and into Picardy was the result of the decision by the king that with his army weakened by death and sickness from dysentery in the insanitary siege camps, that he would march his army overland from Harfleur, to the only other English possession in northern France, the Pale of Calais, approximately 160 miles distant. Henry's plans are a mystery, as are what would have happened if dysentery had not struck. We can only assume that he may have attempted what he again did in 1417: the invasion and conquest of Normandy. The march began on the 8 October; it was not uneventful. At Arques the army came drew up itself in battle formation when the castle began to rain down fire with its artillery, but eventually negotiations were made for food, wine and passage

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[67] It is the opinion of Curry that the landing beach described in the *Gesta Henrici Quinti* better fits the beach near Sainte-Addresse, rather than the traditional landing beach of adjacent to Chef de Caux: Curry, New History, p. 75; for the more traditional view see Robert Hardy, *Longbow: A social and military history* (Sparkford: Patrick Stephens, 1992), p. 101 or Barker, *Agincourt*, p. 157.

over the River Béthune. At Eu, French troops sallied from the gates of the town and there was vicious fighting before they retreated, once again negotiations for food and wine were made for the English not destroying the district. The first major difficulty on the march was the crossing of the Somme. As the army approached, scouts found that wooden stakes blocked passage at the ford of Blanchetacque, the same one used by Edward III in 1346, and possibly a prisoner was taken informing the English that the French army waited on the other side of the ford ready to attack. Whatever the actual cause, the army turned inland, leading a much longer journey and severe shortage of bread and wine, the standard victuals of a medieval army; according to the account of Thomas Walsingham, the English were forced to eat hazelnuts and dried meat, whilst drinking only water, for lack of wine and beer (an uncommon occurrence).[68] At the town of Corbie, French forces once again attacked the English, but the result again was a French retreat, 'by the actions of the archers.'[69] The crossing of the Somme is the only other part of the march in which archers are specifically referred to. Likely taking place south of Péronne on 19 October, where a ford and broken causeway were found undefended, here a joint company of archers and men-at-arms are the first to cross the ford, and stationed themselves to defend against any attack made against the crossing army. This company was also responsible for breaking a gathering force of French horsemen before they could pose a threat.[70] After a few more days, and several minor river crossings the English were confronted by the French army waiting for them at the villages of Agincourt and Tramecourt. The battle took place on the 25th, the day of Saints Crispin and Crispinian.

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[68] Thomas Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle 1406-1420*, ed. V.H. Galbraith (Oxford, 1937), p. 93; Curry, *Sources*, p. 50 for the translation of 'assis carnibus' meaning dried, rather than roasted meat).
[69] The involvement of the archers is only mentioned in a single source: John Capgrave, *De Illustribus Henricis* in Curry, *Sources*, p. 77.
[70] The *Gesta*, as well as other sources made a great deal of the crossing of the Somme, in shortening the by eight days the English journey to Calais. Meanwhile French sources are want to lay blame particularly at the door of the Constable, d'Albret, whose responsibility it was to guard the Somme crossings around Nesle for much the same reason. *Gesta Henrici Quinti*, in Curry, *Sources*, pp. 31-32; *Chronique de Perceval de Cagny*, in Curry, *Sources*, p. 121, blames the officers of the king in Vermandois for the failure to stop the English; Chronique de Ruisseauville, in Curry, Sources, p. 124, blames d'Albret because he 'stayed in the towns and gave the order on behalf of the king forbidding anyone to fight.'

There is one other episode in the march to Calais, according to the *Gesta*, it took place after the sortie at Corbie, but prior to the crossing of the Somme. Where it was the direct result of the tactics used by the French cavalry, or information from a prisoner taken during the sortie, directly after Henry gave the order for every archer 'to prepare and fashion for himself a stake or staff, either square or round, but six feet long, of sufficient thickness, and sharpened ends.'[71] This was not the first time that stakes were used; even in this very campaign stakes had been used to block the ford of Blanchetacque, as well as others along the Somme.[72] But it was the first time that stakes are recorded as being used within the Hundred Years' War as a form of personal fortification; the Gesta continues: 'whenever the French army drew near to do battle and to break the ranks by such columns of horse, all the archers were to drive in their stakes in front of them in line abreast...so that the cavalry, when their charge had brought them close and in sight of the stakes, would either withdraw in great fear or, reckless of their own safety, run the risk of having both horses and riders impaled.' In battle, Nicopolis was the first recorded time that stakes had been used, and as Mathew Bennett has said, it certainly flows full with irony that the Crusading army, and a French contingent, containing the famous Marshal Boucicault was defeated here by a combination of stakes and archery, as at Agincourt.[73] It has been suggested that Henry learned of the Ottoman tactics from Boucicault's 'Book of the Deeds and Sayings of Marshal Boucicault', 'published' in the loose medieval sense in 1411, or from the possibility that English survivors from the battle of Nicopolis were present in the army.[74] Whether or not either possibility is the truth, Henry deployed thousands of stakes at Agincourt, and though he did not copy the overall tactics of the Ottomans, the stakes played a role in most versions of the English victory. The Ottomans set their stakes as a scattered field of substantial depth within which their archers were safe from the Crusader cavalry, and it was only after many of the knights had dismounted and many of the stakes removed that the archers were chased off. But it

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[71] *Gesta*, in Curry, *Sources*, p. 30.

[72] 'Because it had been defended in advance by the enemy by means of sharp stakes fixed close together, it allowed the English no chance of crossing', Tito Livio Frulovisi, *Vita Henrici Quinti*, in Curry, *Sources*, p. 57.

[73] Mathew Bennett, 'The Development of Battle Tactics in the Hundred Years War', in Curry & Hughes, *Arms, Armies and Fortifications*, p. 16.

[74] Bennett, 'Development of Battle Tactics', p. 16; Curry, *New History*, pp. 190-1.

was the charge of the Ottomans own heavy cavalry, the sipahis, against the dismounted and exhausted crusaders as they crested the hill behind the stakes that won the day.[75]Henry had not reserve of heavy cavalry, all the English men-at-arms fought dismounted including the king, therefore the stakes only acted a barrier, a necessarily permeable barrier to that the archers could get behind them once they had been hammered into the ground, and to allow the archers to go beyond the stakes if necessary. Another opinion is offered by John Keegan, that the stakes were spread in a checkerboard fashion deep enough that the archers could stand and shoot from in among them, rather than as a loose fence in front of the archers.[76] This believe is based on his disbelief that the French cavalry would charge at a highly visible wall of stakes, unless the stakes were hidden amongst the archers, the target of the charge, thus when the archers retreated out of the newly revealed stakes, it was too late for the charge to stop without the horses and riders impaling themselves. The *Gesta* notes that in the initial cavalry charge many 'were stopped by the stakes driven into the ground.' Tito Livio has the stakes being used not only by the archers, but every man in the army: 'each carried a great sharp stake' during their first advance and stopping within bow shot of the French, '[a]ll the English fixed in the ground the stakes as a shield for themselves so that the advancing cavalry of the enemy was forced to pull back from fear or else was fixed, wounded and killed, both horses and men.' Contrarily the *Pseudo-Elmham* comments that the stakes were set up and left behind as the English advanced, 'in case meeting the French horsemen', these were later driven off with arrows alone. In the Brut continuations, the stakes feature highly: 'our stakes made them fall over, each on top of the other, so that they lay in heaps two spear's length in height.' Whether such heaps were physically possible I am unsure, but it likely an exaggeration. A second continuation of the Brut mentions that 'the Frenchmen pressed so thick and fast on our people that they fell on the stakes that were planted in the ground, horse and man, so thick, each on top of the other, that a great number of them were slain without making any stroke.' A third version

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[75] Barbara Tuchman, *A Distant Mirror: the Calamitous Fourteenth Century* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1978), pp. 560-1; David Nicole, *Nicopolis, 1396: The Last Crusade* (London: Osprey Publishing, 1999), pp. 57-8.
[76] John Keegan, *The Face of Battle* (London: Jonathon Cape, 1976), pp. 94-7.

of the Brut is more concise: 'Our stakes made the French fall headlong, one on top of another so that they lay in heaps.'[77] Thomas Elmham, Thomas Walsingham, John Capgrave, John Hardyng, Peter Basset and the London Chronicles, from among the English sources made no mention of the stakes being used. As these include some of the most perfunctory and brief accounts of the battle, it is understandable that stakes do not rate a mention, but some like Elmham and Walsingham attribute the defeat of the French cavalry to the arrows of the archers alone. Of the French sources, the Religieux of Saint-Denis similarly accounts for the failure of the cavalry because of English archery, and makes no mention of stakes. There is however reference to a 'type of weapon until then unknown – great lead-covered mallets' which unmentioned by other sources, could have been the very same instruments used by the archers to hammer in their stakes.[78] The *Chronique de Ruisseauville* briefly describes that the English were lodged between the woods and a hedge of stakes (haie de pieux), but does not mentions its effect at all.[79] The account of Enguerran de Monstrelet is one of the few French chronicles who mentions the stakes: 'the archers each fixed in front of them a stake sharpened at both ends.' Jean de Waurin and Jean Le Fèvre, in addition to saying that the stakes had been ordered made on the 20th, coinciding with the meeting of King Henry and the French heralds, also add that at the battle, the stakes placed in front of the archers would protect them. Whilst the English sources when mentioning the stakes have them play a major role, Waurin and Le Fèvre attribute only the falls of three knight's horses amongst the stakes, causing their deaths as they were killed by the archers, including an overly brave knight, Sir Guillaume de Saveuses, who charged out ahead of the rest.[80] Waurin and Le Fèvre were chroniclers in later life,

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[77] Gesta, in Curry, *Sources*, p.36; Tito Livio, in Curry, *Sources*, pp. 61-2; Pseudo-Elmham, in Curry, *Sources*, p. 72; The Brut, 1377 to 1419, Cambridge University Library, MS Kk 112, in Curry, *Sources*, p. 92; The Brut, 1377-1437, British Library, Harley MS 53, in Curry, *Sources*, p. 94; *The Brut*, written 1478-9, Lambeth MS 84, in Curry, *Sources*, p. 95;
[78] Religieux (Monk) of Saint-Denis, *Histoire de Charles VI*, in Curry, *Sources*, p. 107.
[79] *Chronique de Ruisseauville*, in Curry, *Sources*, p. 125.
[80] *La Chronique d'Enguerran de Monstrelet*, L. Douet-D'Arcq, ed., 6 vols (Paris: Société de l'Histoire de France, 1857-62), vol 3 (1859), pp. 89-124, in Curry, ed. & trans, *Sources*, p. 158; *Chronique de Jean Le Fèvre, Seigneur de Saint Remy*, F. Morand, ed., 2 vols (Paris: Société de l'Histoire de France, 1876-81), vol 1 (1876), pp. 230-69, in Curry, ed. & trans, *Sources*, pp. 159 & 161; *Recueil des Croniques et Anchiennes istories de la Grant Bretagne a present nomme Engleterre par Jehan de Waurin*, W.L. Hardy and E.L.C.P. Hardy, eds, 5 vols (London: Rolls

the 1450's and 60's in Burgundian territory. Waurin even served with English armies, likely a page or minor herald at Agincourt, and fighting with them at Verneuil in 1424, as such these two chroniclers, whilst not English in outlook, are a hybrid of English and French in their particular focal points of the battle. Other fifteenth century French sources do not mention the English stakes, emphasising rather the fearful rain of archery, or looking for scapegoats for the failure of the cavalry charge. The use of stakes at Agincourt, and how they helped the English archers, is something very much decided by which perspective you are looking from. To the English, the stakes stopped the French cavalry, making it impossible for them to be overrun, and possibly shielding the entire army, as well as injuring many hundreds of their enemies, on horse and foot. But where both sides agree, is that regardless of the stakes, it was the skill and number of the archers that stopped the cavalry.

For modern historians, the longbow as a weapon is one of the most contentious pieces of equipment to be used during the Middle Ages. Some, like Strickland and Hardy believe that longbow archery had been a part of English armies for hundreds of years before Agincourt, whereas for Clifford Rogers, the longbow is one of the defining new technologies of the fourteenth century infantry 'revolution'.[81] Apart from the role the bow played and its importance to the rise or continued use of the archer, are the technical capabilities of the bow, and whether or not arrows fired from the bow could penetrate the armour of a French man-at-arms at the Battle of Agincourt. Where both sides of this particular debate agree, is that the archers at Agincourt had powerful bows. Taller than the height of the archer and having the same weight of draw as the bows unearthed from the Mary Rose, which boasted bows, longer than six feet, with a weight of draw in excess one hundred and fifty pounds. Even the smaller bows found were estimated to have draw-weights of two-thirds

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Series, 1864-91), vol. 2, pp. 185-222, in Curry, ed. & trans, *Sources*, pp. 159 & 161. The deployment of the stakes is on p. 159, whilst their effect on the cavalry is on p. 161.

[81] Mathew Strickland and Robert Hardy, The Great Warbow: From Hastings to the Mary Rose (Sparkford: Haynes Publishing, 2011); Clifford J. Rogers, 'The Military Revolutions of the Hundred Years' War', *The Journal of Military History* 57, no. 2 (April 1993), pp. 241-278; Clifford J. Rogers, 'The development of the longbow in late medieval England and "technological determinism"', *Journal of Medieval History* 37 (2011), pp. 321-341.

that.[82] Keeping these modern assumptions in mind there is a wealth of chronicle writings that include vivid descriptions of the effect of archery, and hence readily explain a desire for more archers.

The Gesta's version of English archery is the earliest, but by no means was it described as overly destructive. The power of the arrows is cause for fear amongst the French, but only because 'our missiles which by their very force pierced the sides and visors of their helmets.'[83] The arrows seem to have been incapable of puncturing the steel plate of the French armour, particularly at long range, but it seems that because of the sheer number of arrows being fired, the French were concerned about the weakest points of their armour. The French accounts emphasis this too. Jean Juvenal des Ursins makes the point that as the French crossbowmen and archers had the sun in their eyes, and could not return fire, it left the dismounted men-at-arms to weather the English arrows: 'they lowerd their heads and inclined them towards the ground.'[84] Whilst not mentioning the lowered heads, Pierre de Fenin, notes that the English archers were in very large numbers and 'began to shoot strongly against the French.' He makes no mention of casualties either, but does say that because the French were so heavily armed, to which we can probably add armoured, that they tired quickly in their advance.[85] Thomas Elmham follows Fenin nearly verbatim: 'Our arrows were carried and penetrated, and the enemy was worn out under the weight of their armour', albeit giving the archers a bit more credit.[86] In these four sources, the pattern is of massed archery of the English, whilst stalling the French attack, and having an effect on their morale, because of the quality of the armour among the French men-at-arms it was only through volume of fire that any French were killed or wounded.

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[82] Robert Hardy, 'The Longbow', in Curry and Hughes, *Arms, Armies and Fortifications*, pp. 161-180.
[83] Gesta, in Curry, *Sources*, p. 36.
[84] Jean Juvenal des Ursins, *Histoire de Charles VI, roy de France*, in Curry, *Sources*, p. 133.
[85] *Memoires de Pierre de Fenin*, in Curry, *Sources*, p. 118.
[86] Thomas Elmham, Liber Metricus de Henrico Quinto, in Curry, Sources, p. 47

The Religieux provides a more destructive account of the effect of the archers' shots: 'at the first volley of arrows which the archers caused to rain down upon them [the French cavalry] they turned and fled, to their eternal shame...' and with regards to firing against the dismounted men-at-arms: 'the disorder brought about by their archers whose shots, as dense as a hailstorm, obscured the sky and wounded a great many of their opponents.'[87] Monstrelet, Le Fèvre and Waurin follow a similar line, emphasising the wounds and fear the arrows caused to the French horses, which in turn disrupted the French infantry in their haste to escape. The Brut, meanwhile emphasises the accurate and deadly potential of the English: 'But God and our archers caused them soon to stumble, for our archers did not shoot a single arrow which did not kill and bring to the ground man or horse, for they were shooting that day for a wager.'[88] In the Pseudo Elmham, the archers alone are responsible, without the help of stakes which had been left behind, of defeating the French cavalry, as well as describing in apocalyptic terms the melee with the 'prating of arrows' and 'clouds of rain missiles.'[89]

The major achievement of the archers was their decision to join the melee when the arrows were used up. It remains unclear whether it was an order from Henry V, or an independent decision made by individuals or groups of archers. The first possibility is supported by the Religieux of Saint-Denis, the English archers surrounded the king and his men in a circle to protect them from the initial French attack. The second, follows closely the course set out by the Gesta. The archers of the Gesta were not equipped to fight men-at-arms, they picked up fallen weapons dropped across the field. Some even pulled the stakes from the ground and used them as spears.

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[87] The Religieux of Saint-Denis, in Curry, *Sources*, pp. 106-7.

[88] The Brut, 1478-9 version, Lambeth MS 84, modernised from Brie, Brut, in Curry, *Sources*, p. 95

[89] Pseudo Elmham, *Vita et Gesta Henrici Quinti*, in Curry, *Sources*, pp. 72-3, as an aside this account has some of the most violent and gruesome imagery of all the Agincourt sources: 'and one [man] vomits forth his soul in blood' Curry makes no notes as to why this particular account contains such poetic flourishes, I would only add that it includes similar language to the Chanson de Geste, like Roland, where the titular character blew a horn so hard that his lungs came out. It is a reminder that no matter how time may sanitise war, there will always be reminders of its true nature, in case we forget.

Conclusion:

The connections between archers and men-at-arms during the Hundred Years' War and the Battle of Agincourt cannot be too highly stressed. The military practises of England were the result of these two types of soldiers, side by side. At Agincourt, the stakes, bows and arrows, and swords, hammers, axes and the rest helped to even out the advantages of the French, but it was together that the English won the day.

In hindsight, the English archers that fought at the battle of Agincourt are some of the most commented on soldiers in the medieval world. To add to this comprehensive field of discourse and debate is perhaps beyond the scope of what is possible within such a limited space as this single thesis. For all the work that has come before, there is still more that can be done. With regards to the legacy and background of the archers, there still remains no conclusive explanation for the early fourteenth century and changes that occurred in English archery. The invention and utilization of longbows was an important part of English success during the Hundred Years' War, and more research into how and why it happened should always be welcomed.

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