

14th-15th Century:  
 Hundred Years War  
 Historical Theology  
 8/27/2022  
 Bryan Meyer

3 Major Events in this general time frame:

- 1) Great Western Schism
- 2) Black Death
- 3) Hundred Years War

\*All 3 massively changed the structure of European society

Introduction Question: What do we know about the relationship between France and England today? Rivals? Frinemies?

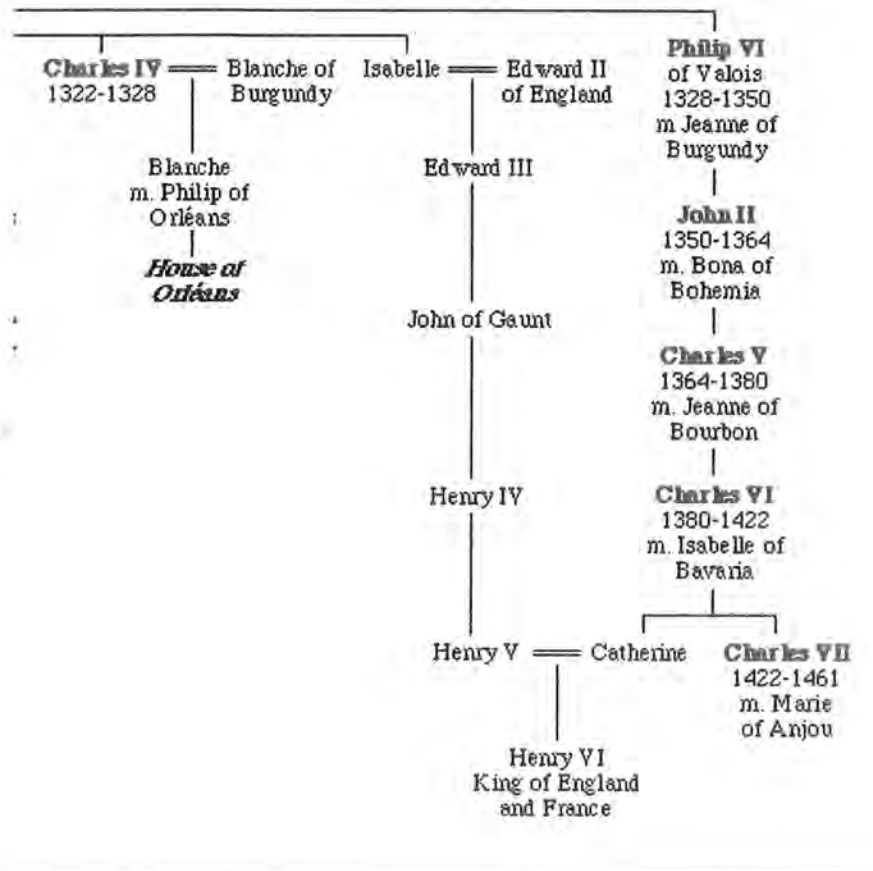
\*\*During the middle ages, both countries were relatively intertwined, particularly the noblemen and higher classes of those respective societies.

Hundred Years' War, (1337–1453, 1066-1904 in actuality) Intermittent armed conflict between England and France over territorial rights and the issue of succession to the French throne.

- Edward III invaded Flanders in 1337 in order to assert his claim to the French crown. Backstory below:
  - Charles IV died on February 1, 1328, leaving no male heir. Since there existed at that time no definitive rule about the succession to the French crown in such circumstances, it was left to

an assembly of magnates to decide who ought to be the new king. The two principal claimants were Edward III of England, who derived his claim through his mother, Isabella, sister of Charles IV, and Philip, count of Valois, son of Philip IV's brother Charles.

- The assembly decided in favor of the count of Valois, who became king as Philip VI. Edward III protested vigorously, threatening to defend his rights by every possible means.



- Edward won a major victory at the Battle of Crécy (1346)
- After his son Edward the Black Prince managed to capture John II at the Battle of Poitiers (1356), the French were obliged to surrender extensive lands under the treaties of Brétigny and Calais (1360).
- When John II died in captivity, his son Charles V refused to respect the treaties and reopened the conflict, putting the English on the defensive.
- After Charles V's death in 1380 both countries were preoccupied with internal power struggles, and the war lapsed into uncertain peace.
- In 1415, however, Henry V decided to take advantage of civil war in France to press English claims to the French throne (see Battle of Agincourt).
  - Henry V: advantage of the long bow in battle. Could be outnumbered
  - Henry V did what other noblemen hadn't previously: he was willing to kill the French noblemen which was a breach of normal protocol
  - Fun (kind of) fact: If captured, English longbow men would have their index and middle finger

chopped off, disabling them from using their bow. This is where the derogatory use of the middle finger comes from.

- By 1422, the English and their Burgundian allies controlled Aquitaine and all France north of the Loire, including Paris. A turning point came in 1429, when Joan of Arc raised the English siege of Orléans.
- The French king Charles VII conquered Normandy and then retook Aquitaine in 1453, leaving the English in possession only of Calais.
- The war laid waste to much of France and caused enormous suffering; it virtually destroyed the feudal nobility and thereby brought about a new social order. By ending England's status as a power on the continent, it led the English to expand their reach and power at sea.



### Causes of the war:

- The seizure of English-held Gascony (Aquitaine, south-west France) by Philip VI of France.
- The claim by the English king Edward III to be the rightful king of France through his mother.
- The expedition of Edward III to take by force territories in France, protect international trade and win booty and estates for his nobles.
- The ambition of Charles V of France to remove the English from France's feudal territories.
- The descent into madness of Charles VI of France and the debilitating infighting amongst the French nobility.
- The ambition of Henry V of England to legitimize his reign in England and make himself the king of France through conquest.
- The determination of the Dauphin, future King Charles VII of France (r. 1422-1461), to regain his birthright and unify all of France.

### Main takeaways:

- 1) Even though the English won nearly every major battle throughout the war, the French ended up winning the war. As the invading

force, the English ended up losing some of its territory (see map on previous page).

- 2) Society went through many changes economically and politically as a result of this war.

### The consequences and effects of the Hundred Years' War may be summarized as:

- The loss of all English-held territory in France except Calais.
- A high number of casualties amongst the nobility, particularly in France.
- A decline in trade, especially English wool and Gascon wine.
- A great wave of taxes to pay for the war which contributed to social unrest in both countries.
- Innovations in forms of tax collection.
- The development of a stronger Parliament in England.
- The almost total bankruptcy of the English treasury at the war's end.
- The disagreement over the conduct of the war and its failure fuelled the dynastic conflict in England known as the Wars of the Roses (1455-1487 CE).
- The devastation of French towns and villages by mercenary soldiers between battles.
- Developments in weapons technology such as cannons.

- The consolidation of the French monarch's control over all of France.
- A greater use of international diplomacy and specialized diplomats.
- A greater feeling of nationalism amongst the populations of both countries.
- The creation of national heroes, notably Henry V in England and Joan of Arc in France.

How did this conflict impact the Church?

#### The Church

The medieval Church as an institution on either side tended to support the war, giving patriotic services, saying prayers, and ringing out bells whenever there was a victory. The Christian faith, though, did receive some challenges on a pan-European scale. The Great Schism of 1378 CE (aka Western Schism) in the Catholic Church ultimately saw three popes all in office at the same time. The situation was not resolved until 1417 CE as the rival camps jockeyed for the support of French and English kings. Further, the Church in Rome was weakened as the kings of England and France sought to limit taxes going to anywhere else except their own military campaigns. A consequence of this policy was the creation of 'national churches' in each country. Local churches also became the hubs of community news with news of the wars' events being posted on their notice boards and official communications being read out in the preacher's pulpit.

Sources:

<https://www.britannica.com/event/Hundred-Years-War>

<https://www.worldhistory.org/article/1520/the-hundred-years-war-consequences--effects/>