

The 100 Years War

Handout

I. Introduction

- A. The 100 Years War (HYW)(1337-1453) is a historical construct of 19th century European historians.
 - 1. This war forced France and England to start taking steps towards pre-modern Europe and eventually modern nation states.
- B. Actual enmity between England and France started with the Norman conquest of 1066 and would continue off and on until 1815. (749 years)
 - 1. **Who was the rightful King of France?**
 - a. This question was raised by the complexities of familial relationships between the royal families of England and France.
 - 2. **Who owed what fealty to whom?**
 - a. This question was raised by the holding of territory in France by the Kings of England.
 - 3. In 1337 warfare flared up that would continue despite some temporary truces and treaties until the two questions were finally settled by facts on the ground.
- C. Methodology
 - 1. We will look at this war as four periods of major combat broken up by two periods of relative and temporary peace plus some background information.
 - a. Background information
 - b. The Edwardian War (1337-1360) (Edward III of England)
 - c. The Treaty of Brètigny (1360)
 - d. The Caroline War (1364-1389) (Charles V of France)
 - e. The Truce of Leulinghem (1389) and the deposition of Richard II in 1399 (1381-1399)
 - f. The Lancastrian War (1399-1431) (Henry's IV/V & Joan of Arc)
 - g. The Lancastrian War (1431-1453) (Charles VII)
- D. Four problems with studying the Hundred Years War
 - 1. Popular history
 - 2. Money: I will convert the amounts (roughly) into the equivalent of today's dollars
 - 3. Names: French, English or other?
 - 4. Battle statistics

II. **Tactics, Arms, Armor, and Fortifications:** Significant improvements (or at least changes) took place during the Hundred Years War.

A. Tactics:

- a) At the beginning, the French put their faith in their heavy cavalry (which was the best in Europe) supported by crossbowmen.
- b) The English put their faith in longbows and unmounted men-at-arms carrying swords, spears, and hammers (maces). This was consistent with most other European countries.
- c) Men-at-arms simply means armed and armored soldiers mounted or not.
- d) By the 15th century the English were still using the longbow but had equipped most of their men-at-arms with polearms.
- e) The French then shifted to mostly gunpowder weapons supported by a few crossbowmen and unmounted men-at-arms equipped with polearms plus heavy cavalry.

B. Arms:

1. Pole arms: These started making their appearance around 1400. Both sides quickly adopted them and because they required two hands to use, shields just as quickly disappeared for unmounted men.
2. Projection weapons: Both sides made much use of these.
 - a. Firearms: Made their serious appearance in about 1400.
 - b. Firearms came in two general types:
 - i. Siege weapons
 - ii. Hand-held firearms
3. By the 15th century however, the matchlock had made its appearance and the French adopted both types of firearms with gusto.

C. There were two types of warriors during the HYW

1. Men-at-Arms

- I. Early in the HYW, these were armored soldiers using short range edged weapons (swords, spears, maces, etc.)

- II. After about 1400, pole arms were introduced and rapidly became the weapon of choice (although there were some 20 different types of pole arms, halberds soon became the most popular)

2. Archers

- a. Archers were both mounted and on-foot.
- b. Archers used either crossbows or longbows.
 - i. The English used the longbow throughout the war and continued to use it well into the 16th century.
 - ii. The French never adopted the longbow to any great extent and used crossbows. After 1400 they began transitioning to gunpowder weapons.
 - iii. The advantage in gunpowder weapons were:
 - 1. Hitting power
 - 2. Ease of use and training.

D. Feudalism (along with Fealty, and Chivalry) arose in Europe at the end of the first millennium A.D. and served as the basic organizing system.

- 1. It was based on the medieval believe that all land had to be owned by someone.
- 2. The basic unit was the manor, a small plot of land with a house and under the control of a knight.
- 3. Fealty was the act which made feudalism work. It was the key element in an overall ceremony called homage.
 - a) To the medieval mind, breaking such an oath was to damn one's soul forever.
 - b) There were two kinds of homage: simple and liege.
 - c) Behind this relatively simple explanation lays the root cause of the Hundred Years War.

4. Chivalry

- i. Chivalry was developed to provide some element of control over the actions of the violent and thuggish knights of the Middle Ages.
- ii. The real purpose of chivalric rules was to protect the interests of the elites from each other.

E. Warfare at Sea

- 1. Naval warfare played an important role.

2. Naval warfare was really land warfare on boats.
3. There were two types of boats in general use as warships.
 - a. Galleys were Mediterranean design, used oars and were used more often by the French and their allies.
 - b. Cogs were northern European design and were designed as merchant vessels. However, the addition of stern and bow castles (fo'c'sle) made them into effective warships.

III. Run Up to the war.

- A. The Anarchy and the "First" hundred Years War (1159-1259)
 - a) The Anarchy; a twenty-year English civil war (1135 – 1154)
 - b) By 1154, Henry II (the first Plantagenet) was crowned King of England. This was the beginning of the Angevin Empire.
 - c) By 1216, when King John died, he had lost what was essentially the entire Angevin Empire to the highly effective French king, Philip II (Augustus) (1180-1223); the first French King.
 - d) In 1259, John's son Henry III signed the Treaty of Paris with Louis IX which gave France control of almost all French territory that was once the Angevin Empire and required English Kings to do homage for the remainder (the Aquitaine)
- B. For the next 78 years, there was relative peace and stability.
 - a) However, in France a major royal Capetian succession crisis erupted.
 - b) Meanwhile, in England Edward III was crowned in 1327.
- IV. The Edwardian War (1337-1360) (Edward III of England)
 - a) The closest claimant to the French throne was Edward III. However, the French chose Philip VI as the first Valois king of France in 1328 after a reinterpretation of Salic Law.
 - b) Other issues that exacerbated relations between the two kings.
 - I. Homage for the Aquitaine.
 - II. French continued interference in the Aquitaine
 - III. Scotland alliance with France (The Auld Alliance)
 - IV. Robert of Artois.
 - V. In 1337, Philip ordered the seizure of the Aquitaine.
 - VI. In 1340 Edward declared himself the rightful King of France and the war was on.
 - c) Early combat
 - I. A total of about 30 battles were fought during the next 27 years.

- II. A French army invaded the Aquitaine.
- III. An English and a French army chased each other around northeastern France.
- IV. A significant amount of coastal and shipping raids by the French navy.

d) Sluys

- I. In 1340, Philip put together an invasion fleet of 213 galleys from France, Monaco, and Genoa.
- II. Edward put together a fleet of 120-150 cogs and sailed to the port of Sluys on the Belgium coast where the French were anchored (June 1340)
- III. The English destroyed the French fleet killing about 18,000 men for the loss of about 500.
- IV. Strategically, this ended any serious effort by the French to invade England.

e) 1341 – 1364; The War of Breton Succession kept the two sides at war for 23 years. The Hundred Years War might well have ended after Sluys if it had not been for this proxy war in Brittany.

f) The Crècy Campaign

- I. In July 1346, Edward launched an invasion of northern France that caught the French completely by surprise. Caen was captured in one day.
- II. He then launched the first chevauchée of the war.
- III. Philip VI put together a huge army and was determined to bring Edward to battle before he could escape northern France.
- IV. The two armies met in August 1346 outside the village of Crècy.
 - a. The French heavily outnumbered the English, about 25,000 to 8500
 - b. The French were again slaughtered \approx 12,000 to 300.
- V. Edward then took Calais which the English would hold until 1558.
 - a. Calais provided a secure route for the English to resupply and reinforce their armies in northern France for the rest of the HYW.

g) The Black Death. In 1347, the Black Death struck both England and France, killing in the range of 40% of the population in both southern England and northern France.

- h) Chevauchée Warfare. In 1355, the Black Prince conducted the “grand Chevauchée” in central and southern Aquitaine.
- i) A second chevauchée. In August of 1356, the Black Prince started a second large chevauchée in northern Aquitaine.
- j) Poitiers. King John of France recruited a large army and determined to chase down and bring to combat the prince's army.
 - I. The English army consisted of 6000 men.
 - II. The French army was much larger, ≈ 15,000 men.
 - III. Once again, the French were slaughtered mostly by the longbow.
 - IV. John and his youngest son were captured.
 - V. English losses are not known but were low (probably in the low hundreds). French losses on the other hand came to 6000 dead and about 3000 taken prisoner.

B. Peace and the Treaty of Brétigny (1356-1369)

- a) After 3 years of failed negotiations the two sides signed the Treaty of Brétigny in May 1360.
 - I. It gave Edward absolute ownership (no homage required) of some 18 French lands, some minor but several large and important areas including an enlarged Aquitaine.
 - II. King John's ransom was set at \$2.8 billion in today's money. (two thirds was never paid.)
 - III. King Edward renounced his claim to the French throne. (Was he ever really serious?)
 - IV. This treaty was the high-water mark of English power in France during this phase.
 - V. In 1364, King John died, still a prisoner and his son became Charles V. Having never really accepted the terms of the treaty, he would declare war on England in 1369.
 - VI. Charles spent the intervening five years developing a small highly professional army led by men of proven skill and experience rather than birth.
- b) In the background of this period was the Castilian Civil War (1351-1369) in which France and England saw the potential for a proxy war to support their own conflict when they were not technically at war.
 - I. Charles recalled his best general, du Guesclin from Castille in 1369 and made him Constable of France

in 1370. This was a major step in the professionalization of the French army.

II. At the end of this war, the Black Prince got very ill and returned to England.

C. The Caroline War (1369-1381) (Charles V of France)

a) June 1372- Castilian fleet defeated the English at LaRochele.

I. The entire English fleet of 57 ships was destroyed along with \approx 9000 English casualties. Castilian casualties were negligible.

b) August-Sept. 1373; John of Gaunt conducted a large chevauchée (930miles) from Calais to Bordeaux. It was an abject failure costing 6000 of the 9000 men who started out with essentially no payoff in either ransoms or plunder.

c) With Edward III also very sick, leadership in England deteriorated quickly. Edward died in 1377 one year after the Black Prince. His 10-year-old grandson became Richard II.

I. Throughout this period of weakened English leadership, Charles V of France essentially recaptured all French territory ceded to England by the Treaty of Brétigny.

a. Richard who reigned from 1388 to 1399 proved to be while very religious, a poor king.

b. Charles V was replaced by Charles VI in 1380 who also proved much weaker than his father.

D. England changes royal families (The Truce of Leulinghem (1381-1399) and the deposition of Richard II in 1399)

a) Neither England nor France was in favor of continuing the war.

b) The two kings met together at Leulinghem near Calais in 1389 and signed a truce of 27 years.

E. The Lancastrian War (1399-1429) Phase 1: English ascendancy, the French Civil War, and Joan of Arc.

a) In 1389, Henry Bolingbroke, a grandson of Edward III and a member of the Lancaster family gathered a group of supporters, landed in England, imprisoned Richard and assumed the throne as Henry IV, the first Lancaster.

I. In 1392 after Charles's mental breakdown, disagreement broke out in France over who would

control a regency, the Armagnacs or the Burgundians. The result temporarily was an Armagnac / English War rather than a French / English War.

b) Meanwhile Henry IV spent his reign establishing control over his island.

c) In 1413, Henry died, and his son was crowned Henry V.

I. He immediately reasserted his claim to the French throne.

II. He invaded France in August 1415

III. After capturing Harfleur Henry then decided to march across Normandy to Calais giving substance to his claim on the French territory.

d) Agincourt (October 1415)

I. Charles VI ordered a complete mustering of all available French (Armagnac) forces while Burgundy announced its neutrality.

II. The two armies met at Agincourt on 24 October and met in battle the next day.

III. The French had about 15,000 soldiers plus another 10,000 "potential fighters" (varlets; armed servants) for a total of about 25,000 men.

IV. The English had about 6000 men, 5000 of them longbowmen. This army had marched 260 miles in two weeks with little food or rest, much illness, and under miserable weather.

V. The battlefield was freshly plowed, soaked with rain and was made up of deep thick mud.

VI. Once again, the battle was a slaughter. English losses were around 400, while the French lost about 14,000 men.

VII. Henry immediately returned to London in triumph.

a. Agincourt was the first step in England's recovery of French lands.

b. It also could be seen as a major step in Henry's quest of the French throne.

e) Henry immediately initiated negotiations with the French.

- I. During these negotiations Henry increased the English commitment to the war taking Caen and all of lower Normandy in 1417 and spent 1418 besieging Rouen which fell in January 1419.
- II. The French were basically helpless because of their civil war.
- III. Henry V then met with Charles VI at Troyes to hammer out a treaty which was signed in May 1420. It:
 - a. Solidified English control of Normandy.
 - b. Arranged the marriage of Henry to Catherine of Valois (Charles VI's younger daughter)
 - c. Made Henry successor to the French throne.
 - d. Disinherited Charles's son, the Dauphin (who one day would become Charles VII).
- IV. Henry captured the fortress at Dreux in 1422 and having caught an illness there, he died in May 1422. Charles VI died the following October.
- V. Henry's only son was crowned in London in November 1422 as Henry VI, age 9 months. He was crowned King of France in Paris in December 1431. He would prove to be a disaster. The dauphin was widely recognized as the lawful King of France.
- VI. The English continued consolidated Northern France under the command of the Duke of Bedford winning several battles including the key battle at Verneuil in 1424 (sometimes called the second Agincourt)
- VII. In 1428, Bedford laid siege to the city of Orlèans

f) The role of Joan of Arc (1429 – 1431)

- a. In 1429, Joan was a 17-year-old illiterate hyper-religious peasant girl from eastern France.
- b. Joan presented herself to Charles VII at his court at Chinon claiming to be given orders from voices sent by God.
- c. Charles sent Joan to Orlèans with a relief column and after 9 days of almost constant combat the English retreated ending the siege.
- d. Joan then convinced Charles to go to Reims and be crowned King of France.

- e. The English army was now in full retreat and was badly defeated at the Battle of Patay. French losses were 100, English were 3000 to 4000. For the first time, a French force of heavy calvary (180 knights) struck the English bowmen before they were ready and decimated them.
 - f. Charles followed Joan to Reims, and was crowned Charles VII on July 17, 1429.
 - g. During a battle at the Burgundian held town of Compiègne Joan was captured by the Burgundians.
 - h. She was sold to the English, tried by a church court, and found guilty of heresy. She was burned at the stake in May 1431, age 19.
 - i. In 1456 a church court overturned her verdict, in 1920 she was canonized, and in 1922 she was declared a patron saint of France.
- F. The Lancastrian War (1429-1453) Phase 2: French ascendancy and the end of the Hundred Years War
- a) In 1435, Bedford the English commander in France dies and the English/Burgundian alliance immediately fell apart.
 - I. Burgundy signed the Treaty of Arras
 - a. The Armagnac/Burgundian Civil war was officially ended, and a unified France could now focus on England.
 - II. During the next five years, Charles reorganized his army, and centralized the French government, especially its finances.
 - a. England was now severely outgunned, the longbow completely outclassed by gunpowder artillery.
 - b) By 1440, Charles was ready to reestablish French ascendancy, and created two armies, a large one in Normandy and a smaller force in the Aquitaine.
 - I. At Formigny in April 1450 with a force of 5000, they badly defeated an English army of 6000 that was marching to relieve Caen.
 - a. The French army inflicted about 5000 casualties while losing about 550 men.

- b. Again, French artillery paving the way for heavy calvary proved dominant.
 - II. In July 1450, the French captured Caen.
 - a. Formigny plus Caen ended English occupation of northern France except for Calais.
 - III. In 1451, the “southern” French army captured Bordeaux and Bayonne permanently driving the English from the Aquitaine after 300 years.
 - IV. In the summer of 1453, the English Constable of France (John Talbot) tried to retake Bordeaux and was killed at the French victory at Castillon.
 - V. Castillon is generally accepted as the last battle of the HYW and the one that forced the English from southwest France permanently.
 - a. Castillon also is thought to be last battle in the age of chivalry, a battle where an unsupported cavalry force charged directly at emplaced artillery and was destroyed.
 - VI. Although the two sides refrained from fighting for 20 more years, the formal end to the Hundred Years War was the treaty of Picquigny signed in 1475. In it, Edward IV renounced his claim to the French throne.
- c) Despite Edwards declaration, subsequent Kings and Queen of England continued to style themselves as French rulers until 1803.

V. The results and importance of it all

- A. The Valois became the ruling family of France. Even after the last Valois died out in 1589, rule passed to a cadet branch of the family, the Bourbons.
- B. Both countries can be seen to start down the path from a family fiefdom to pre-modern European countries with things like standing armies and formal financial system. This movement towards becoming pre-modern countries would be complete by the 30 Years War and the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648.
- C. The end of the HYW marked the beginning of the end of the feudal system, the chivalric system, and by extension the end of the Middle Ages.
- D. Despite the end of the Hundred Years War, enmity between the two countries would continue for another 459 years until 1815. In the 120 years leading to Waterloo (1815) they would fight an additional fourteen wars.

- E. The transition to gunpowder would become important in the last half of the HYW and would be dominant thereafter.
- F. A final break would occur between the English and French languages. Henry V was the first English king to use English as his native tongue.

The Hundred Years War

Bibliography

(It is generally accepted that the best references on the French experience in the Hundred Years War are written in French and “ Je ne parle pas français.” However, most of the books included below while in English, do give a complete picture of the French experience.)

1. **The Hundred Years War (Robin Neillands – 1990)**, A very good introductory book on this war and at 270 pages quite accessible. It is a chronological history written in a lively narrative style.
2. **The Hundred Years War: A People’s History (David Green; 2014)**, A comprehensive treatment of the war based on the people involved rather than the more usual chronology. It is an interesting and well-written book broken up by groupings of people, Soldiers, Priests, Women, Kings, Peasants, etc. At 567 pages, it is long but worth-while if you are looking for a book that is both comprehensive and interesting.
3. **The Hundred Years War: The English in France 1337-1453 (Desmond Seward; 1978)**, This is a well-written chronology of the war and while it focuses on the English, it is comprehensive enough to give the reader a clear picture of both sides. At 370 pages it is very accessible while certainly complete enough for the general reader.
4. **Osprey Guide to The Hundred Years War, 1337-1453: (Anne Curry; 2002)**, A wonderful little book of only ninety-two pages and yet somehow Professor Curry has captured the essence of the war. She is widely considered one of the most respected writers of this war and has written several voluminous tomes on this subject and it is amazing to see her boil all that knowledge down into a little book easily read by a high schooler.
5. **Agincourt: A New History (Anne Curry, 2005)** Here is one of her best-known works which served to overthrow many long-held misconceptions about the most famous battle of the Hundred Years War. Very readable at 250 pages, it was originally considered “the book” on Agincourt. However, two years later Juliet Barker came out with her book (#7 below), a bigger and more detailed study. Now, they compete for the title.
6. **The Hundred years War (A Cambridge Medieval Textbook) (Christopher Allmand; 1988)** Another very assessable book at only two hundred pages. If you read the longer books,

you begin to realize how much rich detail must be left out from shorter books like this and #4 above. Yet this book captures a complete and accurate history of the war.

7. **Agincourt: Henry V and the Battle That Made England: Juliet Barker; 2007**), Widely considered the best book available on the most famous and recognized battle of the Hundred Years War with lots of background. It has 440 pages but is an easy read. Far from resting on her laurels however, she has continued to write on this period producing what I consider her best work; the book listed below:

8. **Conquest: The English Kingdom of France, 1417-1450: (Juliet Barker; 2012)**, A terrific book, it fills in this period of time which is often glossed over in other books on the complete war. Again, 450 pages of easy reading.

9. **The Face of Battle: A Study of Agincourt, Waterloo, and the Somme (John Keegan – 1983)**, This is military history at its best and is widely recognized as the finest study available of the actual experience of the soldier in battle.

10. **Ian Mortimer**: There are numerous excellent biographies available that focus on one or the other important character from the Hundred Years War, including several French and English Kings, The Black Prince, and of course about a thousand on Joan of Arc. However, one of the most important and prolific authors in this category is Ian Mortimer, “The most remarkable medieval historian of our time. – The Times (of London). He focuses on English kings and here are a few of his books:

a. **Edward III: The Perfect King** – My personal favorite and one of the best biographies I have ever read.

b. **Edward IV: The Righteous King**

c. **Henry V: The Warrior King of 1415**

d. **Edward II: The Unconventional King**

e. **The Reputation and Legacy of Henry IV**

11. **Arms, Armies, and Fortifications in the Hundred Years War: (Ed. Anne Curry and Michael Hughes, 1994)**, This book covers exactly what the title says and as Anne Curry is both the principal editor and writes the chapter on the 15th century English army, you can anticipate a batch of facts and figures. You do not need this book to understand the war but if you want to get into the military details, this book will provide. It’s not a particularly easy read but it is only 200 pages.

12. **Jonathan Sumption**: A soon to be completed set of five volumes already viewed as the standard of available history in English of the Hundred Years War. Written by a fellow of Magdalen College, Oxford

- a. **The Hundred Years War I: Trial by Battle (1328-1346) (630 pages)**
- b. **The Hundred Years War II: Trial by Fire (1347-1367) (696 pages)**
- c. **The Hundred Years War III: (1368-1399) (1024 pages)**
- d. **The Hundred Years War IV: (1400-1422) (928 pages)**
- e. **The Hundred Years War V: (1423- 1453)(Not yet published)**

I have read Volume I and it is superb albeit very detailed. It was the only one available in the library. Volumes 2, 3 & 4 are available from Amazon for ≈\$100 and I decided not to spring for them. I can tell you that Volume III won a bunch of awards and Volume V is due out any time.

13. Mistress of the Monarchy: (Alison Weir- 2009) A gem by one of the very best narrative historians of the period, this is the story of Katherine Swynford (1349 – 1403) a woman of the minor nobility who rose to be the mistress and ultimately the wife of the richest and most powerful noble in England, the Duke of Lancaster. A great book to get a snapshot of the effect of the war on a woman not in any way involved in the fighting. Her descendants include every monarch of England from 1461 up to Charles III, Winston Churchill, and six US presidents: Washington, Jefferson, John Quincy Adams, FDR and both George W. and George H.W. Bush.

Who fought in this war?

- **Kingdom of England**

- Wales
- Aquitaine
- Duchy of Brittany
- County of Flanders
- County of Hainaut
- State of Burgundy
 - 1419 - 1435

- **Kingdom of France**

- Kingdom of Scotland
- Republic of Genoa
- Kingdom of Bohemia
- Duchy of Lorraine
- Kingdom of Majorca
- Kingdom of Navarre
- Kingdom of Castile
- State of Burgundy
 - 1337 - 1419
 - 1435 - 1453

The Royal Families of the

100 Years War: 1337-1453

England (House of Plantagenet)

Edward I: 1272-1307

Edward II: 1307-1327

Edward III: 1327-1377

Richard II: 1377-1399

*** House of Lancaster****

Henry IV: 1399-1413

Henry V: 1413-1422

Henry VI: 1422-1461@

@ The Kings & Queens of England styled themselves as ruler of France from 1422 until 1803

France (House of Capet)

Philip III (The Bold): 1270-1285

Philip IV (The Fair): 1285-1314

Louis X: 1314-1316

John I: 1316-1316 (5 days)

Philip V: 1316-1322

Charles IV: 1322-1328

*** House of Valois ****

Philip VI: 1328-1350

John II (The Good): 1350-1364 (1356-1364)*

Charles V: 1364-1380

Charles VI: 1380-1422 (1392-1422)*

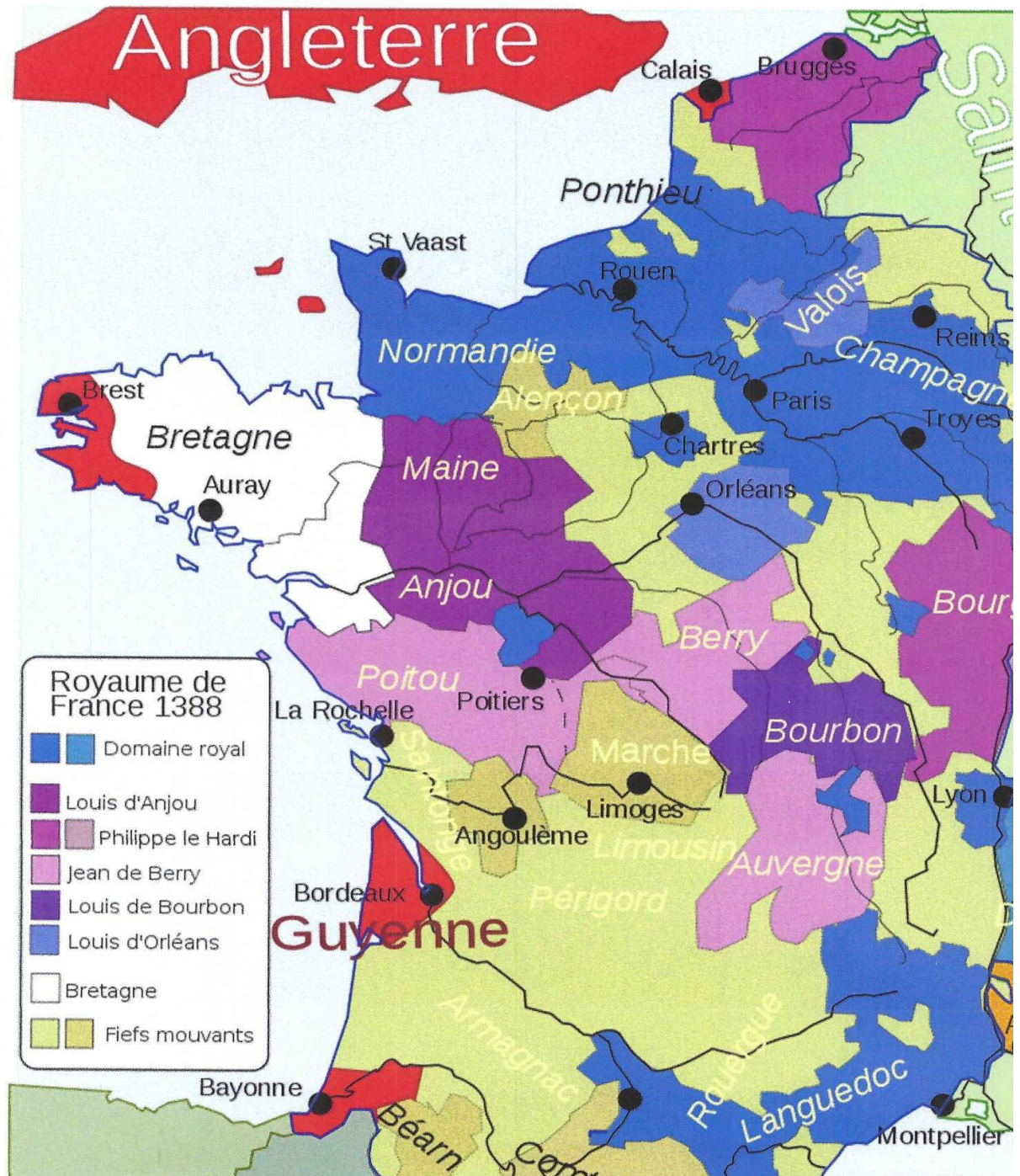
Charles VII: 1422-1461 (1422-1429)*

* Periods of no crowned ruler

Civil War: (1392-1435)

The Counties of France - 1388

The Counties of France



The Rivers of France

