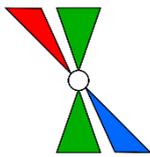


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bncdoc.id	EDF
bncdoc.author	Allmand, C
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bncdoc.title	The Hundred Years War: England and France at war, c. 1300-c.1450.
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<p><674/c></p>  <p>Key: Footprint ConEn1 Footprint ConEn2 Footprint ConEn3</p>	<p>patrie ... triumphator hostium?). The traditional way of doing this was through war. The need for war, then, was fairly generally accepted, although it was widely recognized that it brought destruction and death. Although the innocent might suffer, such tragedies were often accepted philosophically as part of the divine will or punishment. In such a way of thinking, war was regarded as an invitation for divine intervention, carried out through the divine instrument, the soldier. Yet it was not merely an appeal to the strength of God that was being made. God was Goodness: He was Justice: Christ had shown himself humble even unto death. God would reward good; his judgements in battle would be just; he would favour the humble who honoured him and recognised his strength by bringing down the proud. Human power was as nothing compared with the strength of God. Numbers on the field of battle counted for little. When Archbishop Bradwardine preached before Edward III after English victories at Crécy and Neville's Cross in 1346 he claimed that God granted victory to whomever he willed, and he had willed to grant it to the virtuous. Experience clearly showed, Bradwardine declared, that virtue, not numbers, triumphed over the iniquity of the enemy. Similarly Henry V was seen as the Judas Maccabeus of his day who, faced by great odds at Agincourt, worried little about his lack of forces but trusted in the rightness of his cause, the piety of his people at home praying for him and for his army, and in divine strength. The result of the battle showed how just was the cause of England's king. In effect, God had declared himself for the English and against the French. Had the French not been so proud, the anonymous chaplain of Henry V's household asserted, they would have recognised that earlier defeats which they had experienced (he was referring to the battles fought at Sluys in 1340 and at Poitiers in 1356), constituted a clear sign of divine arbitrament, and much bloodshed would have been avoided. But what else could be expected from such a stiff-necked people? How did defeat, even the possibility of defeat, fit into this pattern of thought? Since it was to act against hope, it was wrong to assume that defeat was an explicit sign of divine condemnation of a cause from which there could be no recovery. To think that way made it almost impossible to understand a pattern of battle results other than that which pointed consistently in one direction. How, then, to explain defeat in a war which was regarded as just? The answer lay in seeing such defeats as signs of God's temporary displeasure with a people, not with their cause, a displeasure which resulted from their sinfulness which was now being punished. On more than one occasion French writers explained the defeats and set-backs suffered by their kings and military leaders by emphasising that these were divine punishments for civil disorder and pride. Once the people had been chastised by God's flail (˘ flagellum Dei?), with the English acting as the instruments of his punishment, then the days of victory would return. Events were to justify such a view of things, and God was duly thanked, by the royal order that masses should be said to commemorate the defeat of the English at Formigny in April 1450, for the way he had turned his gaze towards the French cause which, for</p>
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	<p>so long, had appeared to be lacking his support. If Frenchmen had doubts, Englishmen had them, too. What if the arguments conjured up to justify a war were false, or a king's motives reflected factors (naked ambition, for instance) less worthy than a seeking after justice? The lingering doubts were probably always there, even if a war received the approval of the Church that it was being fought for a good cause. For men were worried not only by the fact that the cause for which they fought might not be morally sound. A more important matter concerned them: the fate of their souls in eternity if they were to die fighting for an unjust cause. Would men, misled into fighting for a cause which, in spite of claims made on its behalf, was a war fought for the wrong motives, be eternally damned if they met their death suddenly in battle, even if they were fighting out of loyalty to their king? In such a case it was argued, following St Augustine, that since the soldier was in the service of his lord, it was the lord who must accept responsibility. A different answer, however, might be given to a soldier who followed a leader of his own choosing - for pay; he could not plead obedience if his conscience left him uneasy. St Antonino of Florence felt that the professional soldier could not fight in a war the justice of which was not above doubt, nor could he be given absolution as long as he continued to fight in that cause. The whole problem was one which drew some fine theatre from Shakespeare in Henry V. The playwright was only reflecting, dramatically, upon one aspect of the problem of death, and its consequences, which soldiers of the later Middle Ages had constantly before them. To the knighthood, or chivalry, of the Middle Ages war had long given a</p>
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