Literary Models for Teaching Business Ethics: Shakespeare's Henry V

by

Dr. Katrin C. Varner
Assistant Professor
Finance, Insurance and Law
Illinois State University
Normal, Illinois, USA

Dr. Carson H. Varner, Jr.
Professor
Finance, Insurance and Law
Illinois State University
Normal, Illinois

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INTRODUCTION

In times of ethical crisis, a society in the process of cleansing itself should be able to look back on its own history for relevant, guiding models of leadership. This paper takes the reader back to the 16th century and examines a play from our greatest writer, William Shakespeare. The play is *Henry* V, which, as we shall see, is a play about the struggles and challenges of ethical leadership. From this 16th century source, it is hoped that we today can begin to get some bearings as we move forward into the 21st century.

This paper is intended as an explanation of how Shakespeare portrays the problems of ethical leadership in a critical time in English history. It will make comparisons between King Henry's decisions, which are political and military, and those of today's business leaders. The paper is also designed as a guide to teachers who may wish to use this or some other work of literature as a vehicle for teaching ethical leadership skills.

Before discussing the critical elements of the play in detail, we will discuss the context in which Shakespeare wrote, the historical context of the play, and how one makes a comparison between political and military leadership and business leadership.

SHAKESPEARE'S CONTEXT

Henry V was written in 1599, the last year of the 16th century. It centers on the reign on Henry V and his victory at the Battle of Agincourt against overwhelming odds in 1415, which is approximately the same historical distance as we today have from the Alamo. England in Shakespeare's time was not the great, world-wide imperial force we would later see in the 18th and 19th centuries; the English had in fact barely even touched the New World. Spain, by contrast, had already established a major American empire. The English were, however, beginning to make their mark as a nation to be reckoned with since having defeated the Spanish Armada eleven years before.

The pride of England were the privateers, such as Sir Francis Drake, who preyed on the Spanish ships bringing home gold from their conquests. The other element of pride was the greatest of all English monarchs, Elizabeth I. Her abilities and skills were leading England in the direction of greatness. Elizabeth, who was born in 1533 and crowned in 1558, was now old. It was well known, as illustrated by the American colony of Virginia, named for the Virgin Queen, that she would have no issue. It was only a matter of time before new leadership would come to the throne. *Henry V* was written at the right moment to give an example of ethical leadership to an emerging, dynamic nation; there would be an ongoing discussion of the qualities England would need in order to continue its rise to power.

THE BACKGROUND OF THE PLAY

After a strong beginning, the 15th century was to be one of the most miserable in all of English history. Shakespeare writes of this history in his early history plays,

including *Henry VI, Parts I, II,* and *III*, and *Richard III.* This series ends happily with the conclusion of the bloody Wars of the Roses and the establishment of the Tudor reign of which Elizabeth was to be the culmination. In a second series of history plays, *Richard II, Henry IV Parts I* and *II*, and finally *Henry V*, Shakespeare tells the history behind the histories.

Four hundred years of problems began in 1066 when William "the Bastard," Duke of Normandy, conquered England at the Battle of Hastings. He became King of England, but simultaneously remained Duke of Normandy. The English ruling classes would thereafter speak French and would continue to claim possessions in France. Outside of England itself, no one spoke English, and the ruling classes would only very slowly learn the language over the course of several centuries. England clearly was the very end of the world and was regarded as being of little consequence.

The critical part of Henry's story begins in the 1300s when the King of France died without issue. He had only a sister to take the throne. She was married to Edward III, King of England. The French were obviously not in favor of such a monarch and therefore claimed that something called Salic Law barred a woman from raking the throne or being able to pass it on to her heirs. From this point until the 1700s, the English kings laid claim to the throne of France. The story of Henry V recounts the attempts to claim it.

Upon the death of Edward III, his eldest son, Edward, the Black Prince, had already died, so the crown fell to the Black Prince's son, who became Richard II. Under Richard[1], England enjoyed good administration and a literary flowering.[2] Things, however, took a downward turn when the throne was seized by Richard's cousin, who is crowned Henry IV, and for good measure, has Richard murdered. Henry has now not only usurped the throne from God's appointed, but has blood on his hands.

Henry IV pays for his actions with a series of civil wars. Meanwhile his son, Prince Hal, while an excellent warrior, lives a riotous life and shows no promise as a future king. Upon Henry IV's death, Prince Hal becomes the new king, Henry V. Shakespeare's portrayal of history is fairly accurate and his play *Henry V* opens with the young king about to be tested with opportunity in France and politics at home.

OUTLINE OF HENRY V

The play is a dramatic whole, but the lessons in ethical leadership are taken from seven individual scenes in which Henry must make critical decisions. Shakespeare is very aware of the ethical nature of the decisions, so one does not have to search very hard for those lessons. The scenes are as follows:

1. **The decision to go to war** (I.ii): Should Henry assert his right to the French throne? The decision, which is scene as ethical is at the bottom a mix of legal right, just war doctrine, the consequences of war, and politics, both domestic and international.

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[1] Richard, incidentally, was the first literate English monarch, as well as the first English monarch actually to speak English (rather than just French).

[2] It was, for example, the time of Geoffrey Chaucer.

2. **Justice and mercy** (II.ii): How does a leader dispense justice and mercy? Henry, in this highly dramatic scene, deals with a common soldier for a minor infraction and then with three close advisors who have sold out to the French.
3. **The ethics of battle** (III.i): How should one conduct oneself in battle? And how does one treat the other side, remembering the war's objectives?
4. **Discipline in difficult times** (III.iv): Henry orders an old friend hanged for breach of discipline.
5. **The conscience of command** (IV.i): Henry learns that there is only one person at the top; it's all on him.
6. **The speech** (IV.iii): "We band of brothers"; when do you risk it all to accomplish the mission?
7. **The compromise** (V): What are the ethics of calling it a day?

In addition to these key scenes, the play has moments where we meet the French as well as a host of low-life characters in the sub-plots of the play. For purposes of the study of ethical leadership, we focus on the seven scenes listed above because each one deals with a critical aspect of leadership.

Students have the text of the play, but often find it difficult to navigate the 400 year-old English. I make available outside of class the 1989 Kenneth Branagh film, and for advanced students, I have them see the 1944 Laurence Olivier version.[3]

ETHICAL LEADERSHIP: THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN BUSINESS AND MILITARY/POLITICAL LEADERSHIP

One might reasonably ask, why not study business ethics directly. The values and goals of military and political leadership differ from those of business. A good story, however, will be remembered for a long time - and who tells a story better than Shakespeare? Words well put also stick in the mind, and Shakespeare is our number one wordsmith. Ethical values come out of our culture, and students in studying this play see that our current values were not invented yesterday. Our students are notoriously weak in anything to do with history, geography, and great literature. These disciplines define who we are and thus this play gives students a boost in all of these areas. Additionally, Shakespeare was a successful businessman who wrote his plays for money. As business professors, we give a different slant on the play than one might expect from the English Department, but this is health for our students. In their lives, our students will almost all be doers rather than thinkers. As business professors, we stand somewhere in between and can thus give useful perspectives.

Analogies only take one so far and it is important to recognize this and not push things too far. Yet there are many parallels between military/political actions and business. The law, justice, and wisdom of actions require a very similar analysis. Acquisition of power and concern for the value of others are central themes in both. Analysis of risk and reward in determining objectives is also very similar.

[3] Based on the Olivier version, one would swear that France was England's enemy in World War II.

We also like to draw pictures for students showing similarities between the corporation and political/military leadership. Under the law, the corporation is created for the benefit of the shareholders. The CEO has a fiduciary duty to serve the interests of the shareholders and not themselves or even the employees. In this play, Henry can be seen as a CEO whose obligation is to the people of England and not to his own comfort and glory. Kings at the time may have asserted their divine right, but there was no dispute at the time of Shakespeare that they were there to serve the good of the nation.

It may be stretching things a bit to say that the Board of Directors is analogous to the legislature, but in any case, officers are appointed in both military and corporate life, and ordinary employees or soldiers are enlisted. Both the financial investment of the shareholders/country and employees/soldiers are expendable in achieving corporate/national goals. The employees/soldiers know this and willingly take on the risk. It is not a one-way street, as employees/soldiers sign on for their own gain. In Shakespeare's time, a soldier might achieve honor and glory, but also a measure of power and possible wealth in a successful military campaign. Loot or booty was a part of life at the time, as well as reward from the ransom received in repatriation of prisoners. That the Department of War should have been renamed the Department of Defense would not have been part of the thinking in this more aggressive time.

Going into battle is a very high-stakes operation, but so is the opening of an aggressive business campaign to gain market share at the expense of the competition. On May 13, 1940, Winston Churchill in his "Blood, toil, tears, and sweat" speech spoke of policy and objectives that could well have come from a military leader. He said, "You ask, what is our policy? I will say, it is to wage war.... with all the strength and might that God can give us. And you ask, what is our aim? I can answer in one word: Victory."

Under our laws, excessive cooperation with the enemy or with the competition is illegal. That sets the stakes of competition very high. In a business venture, if things go poorly, the shareholders lose their investment and the employees their jobs. In battle, stakes are higher. Shakespeare, through Henry, is well aware of the pain and suffering caused by battle to soldiers and their families, but it is also clear that it is wrong to shrink from battle when the cause is good.

Now let us examine in detail the individual scenes from the play:

The Decision to go to War

We first meet the young, untried, untested king in Act I, scene ii as he is in the process of consulting advisors on various aspects of a possible military campaign against the French. We note that his advisors, especially the churchmen, favor war. A cautious, but not timid Henry listens and asks questions.

Does Henry have a legal claim to the French throne? Learning, law, and ethics were dominated by the Church at this time, so advice must also come from this source. Henry's great-grandfather, King Edward III's wife and mother of his children was Isabel, daughter of the King of France. Isabel had three brothers, all of whom in turn became King of France after their father died. All of them died without issue.

This should have left the French throne to Isabel and her descendants, all now English. Not surprisingly, the French would have none of it and put a distant relative on the throne.

All of this had happened many years before, but fact remained that Henry had the closest and most direct bloodline to be King of France. The crown, the French made clear, could only be taken by force. What was to be done? The French claimed that Henry was not in line to be king because of something known as Salic Law. This law prohibited the crown going to a woman, or through the bloodline of a woman. Contemporary English source and modern French sources tell us that this is simply a ruse. The fact is that the French simply did not want an English king.

The clerics tell Henry that according to bloodline, he should be King of France, and that on a number of occasions French kings had taken the throne through the bloodline of a woman. Salic Law did exist; it was, however, in force between the rivers Saale and Elbe - that is, Germany, not France.

Is a War Just?

Henry's strong claim to the throne of France does not necessarily justify a war. Before 20th century experience, most rulers would have thought no more of going to war than a modern CEO would of taking over a rival or starting a campaign to put a rival out of business. Henry asks the pertinent question in the right way:

> Therefore take heed how you impawn our person,
> How you awake our sleeping sword of war.
> We charge in the name of God take heed.
> For never two such kingdoms did contend
> Without much fall of blood. (I.ii.21-25)

No 21st century leader could be so articulate, but the question is just right. Henry is told, "Your Grace hath cause, means, and might." (I.ii.125) Just cause in theory was fairly developed at this time and it consisted of a four-prong test. First, there must be a wrong in the world. In Henry's case it is his being denied his rightful place on the throne of France. Second, all reasonable means of righting the wrong must fail. Numerous English ambassadors, for example, had tried to negotiate a solution. Thirdly, there must be an element of self-interest. Critics of the Gulf War said that the Western powers went into Kuwait because of the oil. Assuming that the other elements of the test had been met, it would actually not have been "just" to go to Kuwait simply because we felt for them in their struggle. Involvement must include some self-interest, too. Finally, for a war to be just, the objectives must be accomplished at a reasonable cost.

Henry then says, May I with right and conscience make this claim?" (I.ii.96) The case for a legal claim and a just war have been made. Is it still the right thing to do? Henry is further told, in raising the next part of the ethical question that the evil, as well as promise of war have been made clear, but what might come of doing nothing? The clergy makes the point in two ways. First they remind him of his ancestors: "Go, my dread lord, to your great-grandsire's tomb." (I.ii.103) Henry is reminded of the heroic deeds of those who came before and then, as the emotions rise, he is told, "The

blood and courage that renowned them runs in your veins." (I.ii.118-119) This emotional appeal also reaches out to the audience to remind them of the glory of English history. Still, there are yet some steps to go before going to war can be considered not only just, but wise:

> Your brother kings and monarchs of the earth
> Do all expect that you should rouse yourself,
> As did the former lions of your blood. (I.ii. 122-124)

A king or CEO is tested everyday, but when he is new in the job, the competition watches with particular intensity. It is understood that if the king does not rise to the challenge that the "brother kings and monarchs of the earth" will find an excuse to test him in their own good time. The nation must prove itself strong or be subject to invasion. Weakness at the top also brings on rebellion and civil war at home.

The case is ultimately summed up: "Your Grace hath cause and means and might." (I.ii.125) Not only is the case for a just war made, but it is also shown to be a wise action.

In the final part of the scene, an emissary from the French arrives. It is an official message from the Dauphin, or Prince. This is in itself an insult because protocol would demand that an official message be sent to the king from a king. The Dauphin sends King Henry a present of tennis balls, referencing his younger, rebellious years and also telling Henry in effect to go play games and leave France alone. The audience is of course enraged and this French insolence and Henry now has no real choice but to choose war as the remedy.

Shakespeare shows us that ethical leadership is a complex mixture of law, emotion, and practical politics and is all done for the highest stakes under the watchful eye of the Supernal Judge who sits on high.

Justice and Mercy

Leadership ethics is a mix of justice or discipline, and mercy. A leader who exacts the maximum penalty for the smallest breaches of order becomes a tyrant and this in time breeds rebellion and low morale. Yet the leader who lacks the fortitude to enforce justice will encourage anarchy.

Henry deals with both in a very dramatic scene. Three of his most trusted advisors have been selling information to the French - obviously a capital crime. He calls the unsuspecting traitors in to face them down and have them put to death. But first, in their presence, he tells Exeter:

> Enlarge the man committed yesterday
> That railed against our person. We consider
> It was excess of wine that set him on,
> And on his more advice we pardon him. (II.ii.40-43)

The traitors say that he is being too easy on the man and that more discipline would be appropriate. Henry, however, feels that mercy is appropriate and has the man released. For the traitors, on the other hand, there will be no mercy:

God quit you in his mercy! Hear your sentence,
You have conspired against our royal person,
Joined with an enemy proclaimed, and from his coffers
Received the golden earnest of our death.

Wherein you would have sold your King to slaughter,
His Princes and his peers to servitude,
His subjects to oppression and contempt,
And his whole kingdom into desolation.
Touching our person seek we no revenge,
But we our kingdom's safety must so tender,
Whose ruin you have sought that to her laws
We do deliver you. Get you therefore hence,
Poor miserable wretches, to your death,
The taste whereof, God of his mercy give
You patience to endure, and true repentance
Of all your dear offenses! Bear them hence. (II.ii.166-181)

This highly effective scene shows that an ethical ruler can sort out the trivial from the important and thus gain the respect of his soldiers and people.

The Ethics of Battle

In the 1970 film, *Patton*, another story of a memorable leader, General George S. Patton, says the following to an assembly of American soldiers: "Now I want you to remember that no bastard ever won a war by dying for his country. He won it by making the other poor, dumb bastard die for his country." King Henry has, when besieging a French city, a similarly inspiring message for his men, if a slightly different way of putting it:

Once more unto the breach, dear friends, once more,
Or close the wall up with our English dead.
In peace there's nothing so becomes a man
As modest stillness and humility,
But when the blast of war blows in our ears,
Then imitate the action of a tiger,
Stiffen the sinews, summon up the blood,
Disguise fair nature with hard-favored rage,
Then lend the eye a terrible aspect,
Let it pry through the portage of the head
Like the brass cannon. Let the brow o'erwhelm it
As fearfully as doth a galled rock
O'erhand and jutty his confounded base,
Swilled with the wild and wasteful ocean....
Dishonor not your mothers. Now attest
That those whom you called fathers did beget you.
Be copy now to men of grosser blood,

And teach them how to war. And you, good yeomen,
Whose limbs were made in England, show us here
The mettle of your pasture. Let us swear
That you are worth your breeding, which I doubt not,
For there is none of you so mean and base
That hath not noble luster in your eyes.

I see you stand like greyhounds in the slips,
Straining upon the start. The game's afoot.
Follow your spirit, and upon this charge
Cry "God for Harry, England, and Saint George!" (III.ii.l-14, 22-35)

The stirred up, inspired soldiers charge the town of Harfleur and Henry demands the unconditional surrender of the local governor:

Defy us to our worst. For, as I am a soldier -
A name that in my thought becomes me best -
If I begin the battery once again,
I will not leave the half-achieved Harfleur
Till in her ashes she lie buried.
The gates of mercy shall be all shut up....
As send precepts to the leviathan
To come ashore. Therefore, you men of Harfleur,
Take pity of your town and of your people
Whiles yet my soldiers are in my command. (III.ii.5-10, 26-29)

This scene makes one wince a little. Henry demands surrender, or he will have everyone killed. This may be a breach of the law of war; but at some point, the mission and future of his nation are more important. His decision may be debatable, but it was essentially the Allied policy against Japan and Germany during World War II. When does a leader overlook law and ethics for the higher good? Managers must sometimes be prepared to test their moral limits - To what lengths are they willing to go to achieve their goals? Luckily, the town of Harfleur surrenders and Henry orders his men to "use mercy to them all." (III.iii.54) Was it all a bluff? A leader must know what he can get away with and what he must be prepared to do.

Discipline in Difficult Times

After the surrender of Harfleur, things take a difficult turn for the English. In the cold and rain, Henry's troops are in a forced march across France. Discipline must be maintained or the army loses any effectiveness and becomes no more than a band of roving brigands. Henry, exercising his position as king not only of the English, but of the French civilians in the army's path, orders the French civilian population to be treated with respect. Then his old friend, Bardolph, is caught stealing a cross from a church.

Only a few years before, Henry and Bardolph had been part of the same crowd. They drank together and even worked together to commit various muggings and robberies. Stealing a cross, as Bardolph has done, was precisely the sort of activity in which the king would have been involved during his Prince Hal days. Now,

however, there is much more at stake. Henry must demonstrate the seriousness of his command; he orders Bardolph hanged. Leadership ethics demand the maximum at times and favoritism to an old friend could prove fatal to his leadership.

The "Nurenburg" Lines

Bates: We know enough if we know we are the King's subjects. If his cause be wrong, our obedience to the king wipes the crime of it out of us. (IV.i.136-139)

This is the only point in the play when the modern leader would disagree with Shakespeare. His ethic is that following orders is an excuse for a soldier's action. The situation in the play is not quite the same as in our day. The context is the overall justice of Henry's cause. Except for the top leadership, the Allies did not hold individual German soldiers responsible for fighting within the laws of war in World War II. Most who felt the Vietnam War to be illegal would still not fault a soldier for fighting for his country. It does not quite come up to what the ethic is when one is ordered to commit a war crime, although it is implied that the duty to follow orders is the stronger ethic.

The analogy does not quite apply to business because, in contrast to military duty, an employment relationship can be terminated at any time. The business scandals of recent years show many examples of otherwise good people being swept up into illegality. Many decided to follow the illegal culture that so many companies had developed. For them, the lessons of Nurenburg are better than this part of Shakespeare. It is interesting to note that in all other cases we are comfortable with the leadership ethics of 400 years ago.

The Conscience of Command

It is the night before the Battle of Agincourt and Henry is alone with God.

> Upon the King! Let us our lives, our souls,
> Our debts, our careful wives,
> Our children, and our sins lay on the King!
> We must bear all. Oh, hard condition,
> Twin-born with greatness, subject to the breath
> Of every fool, whose sense no more can feel
> But his own wringing! What infinite heartsease
> Must kings neglect that private men enjoy!
> And what have kings that private men have not too,
> Save ceremony, save general ceremony?
> And what art thou, thou idol ceremony?....
> What drink'st thou oft, instead of homage sweet,
> But poisoned flattery? Oh, be sick, great greatness,
> And bid thy ceremony give thee cure!....
> No, not all these, thrice-gorgeous ceremony,
> Not all these, laid in bed majestical,
> Can sleep so soundly as the wretched slave
> Who with a body filled and vacant mind

Gets him to rest crammed with distressful bread."
(IV.i. 247-257, 267-269, 283-287)

It is a feeling of every leader in tough times that the command decision is his alone. The ethical leader recognizes that there is no alternative but to bear the burden. General Eisenhower must have felt this when he ordered the Allied troops to invade Normandy and, to some extent, when the Presidents Bush ordered the attacks against Iraq. Henry is generally shown as an unfailing leader who always knows what to do. Here he bears his soul, and we get a lesson in what any conscientious leader must feel.

The Speech

This story shall the good man teach his son,
And Crispin Crispian shall ne'er go by,
From this day to the ending of the world,
But we in it shall be remembered -
We few, we happy few, we band of brothers.
For he today that sheds his blood with me
Shall be my brother. Be he ne'er so vile,
This day shall gentle his condition.
And gentlemen in England now abed
Shall think themselves accursed they were not here,
And hold their manhoods cheap whiles any speaks
That fought with us upon Saint Crispin's Day. (IV.iii.56-67)

Many regard this speech as the most stirring oratory in Shakespeare or indeed in all of literature. What is behind it? Henry has real alternatives before the battle. The French have repeatedly offered terms of surrender. Henry could save his own life as well as the lives of his troops. As is the custom of the time, the French would have ransomed the soldiers and in effect have sold them back to England. Military glory may be a noble thing, but money has its advantages. All scholars agree that the French outnumbered the English 60,000 to 12,000 and that they stood between Henry's army and safety at Calais.

Here we see the analogy between the army and the corporation. The soldiers had signed on for better or for worse; and while their lives counted for something, they were expendable. Henry as CEO also owed the country and its people more than he did to himself or his army. Had he surrendered, England would have suffered incredibly from the resulting conflict between those loyal to him and those who would take over. If he were killed in battle, there would be no ransom to pay and England could more easily go on. He decides to risk it all for his country.

Business is not all sacrifice; but naturally, there is the element of personal gain. In business it is money and soldiers it is honor. Henry tells his troops that the battle's anniversary day shall not go by "from this day to the ending of the world,/ but we in it shall be remembered" (IV.iii.58-59) Agincourt was one of the great English military victories of all time; and with Shakespeare to write for him, Henry's boast pretty much came true.

Facing 60,000 well-armed enemy with only 12,000 of your own is a high-risk operation to say the least. The odds are not so different for many start-up technology any chance of overcoming the odds. Henry begins by presenting his men with a challenge to "show [their] mettle." He then demonstrates to them how much they are all in the fight together; that his cause is theirs, too. Henry's case goes on to say that the fewer that share in the glory, the more glory for each of them. He describes them as "We few, we happy few, we band of brothers." (IV.iii.60) These words were picked up centuries later when Winston Churchill in the Battle of Britain referred to the pilots of the Royal Air Force as "the few." More recently, a television series about World War II in Northern France - the same ground that Henry found over - was titled "Band of Brothers."

The final point is not lost on the troops. He says to them that "gentlemen in England now abed/Shall think themselves accursed they were not here,/And hold their manhoods cheap whiles any speaks/Who fought with us upon Saint Crispin's Day." (IV.iii.64-67) How true. There is a respectful silence when a Civil War veteran or a former G.I. quietly and modestly relates his experiences.

A note on the Battle of Agincourt: As part of the background for teaching this assignment, I went to visit the battlefield itself. There is a small museum seldom visited by the French that displays artifacts from the fields and shows the battle lines of Henry and the French. The actual battle took place in October after several weeks of unceasing rain. I visited in March after it had also rained for quite some time. In October and March there are no crops, only mud. This part of Northern France (the Pas de Calais) has a clay-like soil that is oozy and sticky. These fields would have been merciless to horse and rider, especially those who were heavily armed and armored.

Henry took full advantage of the situation. It was customary in battles of the time, after a final parlay, to try to find compromise. Both armies would charge and meet one another in midfield. Henry, however, dug in, formed his lines, and let the enemy try to come to him. Under the circumstances, "try" is the correct word. His chief weapon was the English longbow. An archer could shoot five arrows a minute and the effective range was 100 to 150 yards. The French, on the other hand, had crossbows that could fire an arrow once every 90 seconds with a range of 50 to 75 yards. The French archers were never even in the fight.

The French dead formed an impregnable barrier between the armies. A lot of business and military success amounts to being in the right place at the right time and having the skill to recognize that opportunity. Winston Churchill, in describing Agincourt, said that the English archers developed a firepower that was not equaled with guns until the American Civil War. There is an interesting lesson on morale: Historians on both sides agree that the French lost about 10,000 men and the English about 1,000. This means that the French on the following day outnumbered the English 50,000 to 11,000 and the English had probably used most of their arrows. The French morale, however, was spent, in spite of their overwhelming strength. How many strong business ventures have gone under because of low morale?

The Compromise

Antitrust or competition law discourages cooperation between competitors. Still, in business one must know when to stand down. One victory in Northern France is a

long way from taking the whole country, as the English would learn later in that century. Henry makes a deal with the French. He marries the French King's daughter and an agreement is made that their heir will rule both France and England. Once more, Salic Law comes into the picture; and of course, the agreement buys time for the French, who ultimately never buy into a dual monarchy dominated by the English. In the short run, however, the Dauphin is passed over.

EPILOGUE

The Battle of Agincourt took place in 1415. It was a stellar moment in English history, but the glory was brief. Henry died in 1522, leaving a one-year-old son as Henry VI. It was to be, as Shakespeare said, "a long and troublesome reign." There was in that century a civil war and the ultimate loss of England's possessions in France. The 1420s started out well and English fortunes improved until 1428. The old king had died and the Dauphin from *Henry V* remained uncrowned as the French lost territory to the advancing English. France, however, was saved by the Maid of Lorraine, Joan of Arc. But that is a story for another day....

ADDENDUM

History is often point of view. This is interestingly illustrated from the attached pages from a French school text book. Le Moyen Age, Autrand, Françoise, Bordas, Paris, Bruxelles, Montreal, 1970.

The chapter is about the beginning of the Hundred Years War that has its roots in the succession to the French throne on the death in 1328 of Charles IV who left only a sister Isabel who was married to the then 14 year old Edward III, King of England.

Paragraph 3 tells us that Edward was through marriage the closest in succession but an assembly met for which there seemed to be only modest historical precedent and chose a distant cousin to be king because he was "born in the kingdom." We are told they justified after the facrt the use of "Salic law" which forbids a woman to succeed.

In a twist we see in paragraph 1 we see a young Edward III paying homage to the assembly's choice for king Philippe VI. Edward would have owed Philippe homage as he also held the rank of duke in France.

We arte also told this did not last long. The other French disaster of the Middle Ages was the battle of Crecy, alluded to in *Henry V*, and is described in some detail.

XXII. LA GUERRE DE CENT ANS (I)

Origines et débuts de la guerre.

En obtenant l'hommage du roi d'Angleterre pour la Guyenne, Saint Louis avait espéré établir une paix durable entre le roi de France et son vassal. Mais, des la fin du XIIIe siècle, le conflit renaît lorsque Philippe le Bel intervient dans le duché pour exercer ses droits de souverain. Ce ne sont plus un seigneur et un vassal qui se heurtent, mais deux Etats. Edouard III, cependant, prête hommage à Philippe VI lorsque celui-ci devient roi de France.

Un autre conflit existe entre les deux souverains. Dans le comte de Flandre atteint par la crise économique, le peuple des villes s'était révolté contre le comte. Philippe VI aide ce dernier en écrasant les milices flamandes à Cassel, tandis que les révoltes ont l'appui des Anglais qui vendent leur laine en Flandre.

La succession au tr6ne de France, dont Edouard III est écarte, fournit au roi d'Angleterre un prétexte pour renier l'hommage qu'il a prêté, et aux Flamands une excuse pour leur rébellion contre leur roi. En 1337, le roi de France confisque la Guyenne, Edouard III envoie alors son défi à Philippe VI et prend le titre de roi de France. C'est le début d'une très longue guerre entre la France et l'Angleterre.

Les défaites françaises (1340-1360).

En 1340, la flotte anglo-flamande surprend et détruit les navires français dans l'avant-port de Bruges, l'Ecluse. Six ans plus tard, Edouard III débarque à Saint-Vaast-la-Hougue, conduit une chevauchée du Cotentin en Picardie, écrase l'armée française à Crécy, prend Calais où il établit une solide <<tête de pont>>. Apres la PesteNoire, une nouvelle chevauchée est menée par le Prince Noir, fils aine d'Edouard III, à partir de la Guyenne. L'armée française est battue près de Poitiers en 1356, le roi Jean le Bon, fils de Philippe VI, est fait prisonnier. Le traite de Brétigny, en 1360. lui rend la liberté contre une énorme rançon. Le roi d'Angleterre renonce à la couronne de France. En échange, il conserve tout le sud-ouest de la France, le Ponthieu et Calais, sans prêter hommage au roi de France.

La reconquête du royaume sous Charles V.

Charles V (1364-1380) ne se résigne pas à la situation. En 1369, la guerre reprend. Petit à petit, en assiégeant une place forte après l'autre, Charles V, aide de Du Guesclin, reconquiert les provinces du roi d'Angleterre. En 1380, celui-ci n'a plus en France que la cote de Guyenne avec les places de Bordeaux et de Bayonne, Brest, Cherbourg et Calais.

1▲

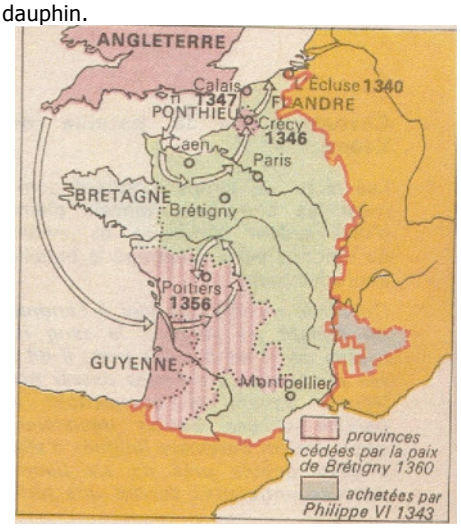
Edouard III d'Angleterre prête hommage à Philippe VI de Valois.

Edouard III d'Angleterre hésita long temps à prêter hommage a Philippe VI. Quand il s'y décida, en 1329, on eut l'impression que tout conflit était évité. Aussi la scène a-t-elle été souvent reproduite par les miniaturistes français.

2▼

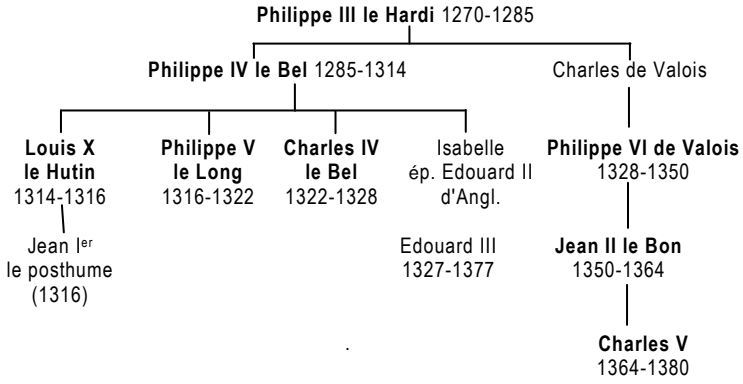
La France de 1340 à 1360.

En 1343, Philippe VI acheta le Dauphine qui devait être l'apanage* du fils aine du roi de France et lui valoir désormais le titre de dauphin.



3 ▶

La succession au trône de France.
Apres la mort sans héritier male des trois fils de Philippe le Bel, deux princes pouvaient prétendre à la couronne de France : Edouard III, petit-fils par sa mère de Philippe le Bel, et Philippe de Valois, petit-fils de Philippe III. Recourant à l'ancien principe de l'élection, on réunit une assemble qui choisit Philippe de Valois en raison de son age, de sa personnalité politique et aussi parce qu'il était << natif du royaume >>. Pour justifier ce choix, on prétendit, après coup, que la loi salique écartait les femmes de la succession au trône



4 ▶

La bataille de Crécy (miniature du temps).

En août 1346, armée d'Edouard III, marchant sur la Flandre, est poursuivie par armée française. Redoutant le combat avec cette énorme armée forte de toute la chevalerie du royaume, Edouard III adopte une position de défense, Ses troupes sont retranchées sur une colline près de Crécy; les archers, places en avant, brisent la charge de la chevalerie française sous une pluie de flèches et mettent en déroute les arbalétriers génois.
Sur la miniature, on voit l'engagement du combat. A droite, les Anglais dont l'étendard porte, avec les léopards des Plantagenêts, les lys de France. A gauche, les Français autour de l'oriflamme où l'on peut lire Saint Denis. Les deux armées ont la même composition ; cavaliers lourds appelés gens d'armes, fantassins et gens de trait, mais ceux-ci sont des archers dans le camp anglais, des arbalétriers, mercenaires génois, du cote français. Décrire les armes. Comparer l'armement défensif des gens d'armes et des gens de trait, Expliquer l'étendard anglais.

Cl. B.N

5

Chronique de la bataille de Crécy.

Les récits du temps montrent comment les chevaliers français pleins d'une ardeur téméraire et avides de rançons avaient engage la bataille imprudemment :

Quand le roi Philippe vint à l'endroit où étaient les Anglais, le sang lui tourna car il les haïssait trop; il dit à ses maréchaux : << Faites passer nos Génois devant et commencez la bataille >>. Les Génois déclarèrent qu'ils étaient durement fatigues d'aller à pied depuis près de six lieues. Sur ces entrefaites survint une pluie d'orage et quand le soleil reluit, les Français l'avaient droit dans l'œil et les Anglais par derrière. Quand les Génois furent rassembles, ils tendirent leurs arbalètes, et commencèrent à tirer. Mais les archers d'Angleterre avancèrent d'un pas et firent voler leurs flèches de telle façon que ce semblait neige; et les Anglais démasquèrent quelques canons pour ébahir les Génois, Les Génois furent déconfits mais les troupes des grands seigneurs étaient si jalouses les unes des autres qu'elles ne s'attendirent pas. Elles coururent en désordre si bien qu'elles enfermèrent les Génois entre elles et les Anglais. Les chevaux les plus faibles tombaient sur eux, les autres les bousculaient et tombaient l'un sur l'autre en tas comme des porcs. Et, d'autre part, les archers tiraient si bien sur les cavaliers que les chevaux refusaient d'avancer.
Et les chevaliers anglais qui étaient rangés à pied s'avançaient et frappaient parmi les gens qui ne pouvaient s'aider ni d'eux ni de leur monture.

La Vraie Chronique de Jean le Bel, cite par Bossuat, Les Chroniqueurs français du Moyen Age Larousse.

QUel est le rôle de l'artillerie dans la bataille? Quelles furent les causes de la défaite selon le chroniqueur?