A QUESTION OF CONTROL: VIOLENCE AND LATE MEDIEVAL SOCIETY DURING THE HUNDRED YEARS WAR

By

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ABSTRACT

The military communities operating within the scope of the Hundred Years War have received significant attention in recent years. Nevertheless, the study of violence—both state-sanctioned and otherwise—during the late-medieval period is still largely incomplete. Existing studies of statehood and the development of "proto-fiscal military states" during the fourteenth and fifteenth century are often limited, overwhelmingly in their focus upon exclusively royal-seigniorial powers and the economic limitations of European monarchs. Incorporating a wide range of ecclesiastical and common perspectives, alongside traditional examinations of royal centralization, allows one to expand studies of the monopolization of violence beyond royal-seigniorial power and into a broader context.

My analyses of attempts to monopolize violence are centered on two facets of authority during the late-medieval period: ecclesiastical authorities and a combination of urban burghers and rural commons, known as popular authorities. I argue that royal-seigniorial power—despite its incredible influence—was not the only impetus for an effective monopolization of violence during the Hundred Years' War, but rather one part of a complex and often contradicting myriad of competing political, economic, social, and religious motivations, propagated by all aspects of medieval society. Furthermore, I demonstrate how military communities operating independent of royal power—primarily, though not limited to, the *routiers*—served as a catalyst for extensive societal change and the evolution of professional military service.

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INTRODUCTION

The ramifications of widespread violence in the late medieval world extend far beyond the rigid military examinations which so often accompany studies of the Hundred Years War. A lack of centralized control over military affairs, an increase in non-noble involvement in warfare, and the gradual privatization of military service had far-reaching consequences for English and French society as a whole, not just their capacity for war.[1] As society shifted under the pressures of sustained multi-generational conflict, so too did the foundations of the late-medieval war state.[2] Traditional systems of revenue, military service, and the relationship between subject and ruler would evolve, as military failure and dangerous circumstances thrust change upon the leadership of both realms. The Anglo-French conflicts of the fourteenth century, initially waged by the kings themselves, would quickly grow into national endeavors, as general populations, national economies, legal systems, and institutions were leveraged for the war effort.

The growing militarization of English and French society during the fourteenth century, a direct result of frequent exposure to military activities and the state's growing need for war materials, did not result in uniform change; nor did it provoke a unified response from authority structures.[3] Different facets of society, influenced by their

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[1] Nicholas Wright, *Knights and Peasants: The Hundred Years War in the French Countryside* (Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 1998), 3-8; Henry Knighton and G. H. Martin, *Knighton's Chronicle 1337-1396* (Clarendon Press: 1995), 152-163.
[2] Clifford J. Rogers, *War Cruel and Sharp: English Strategy under Edward III, 1327-1360* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2014), 142-146.
[3] Justine Firnhaber-Baker, *Violence and the State in Languedoc, 1250-1400* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 60-63,65-69; Wright, *Knights and Peasants*, 51-56; Frederick H. Russell, *The Just*

capacity to marshal resources and competing political, economic, and societal interests, shared a unique relationship with violence and war making entities. Furthermore, these interactions with, and reactions to, warfare—defined over a century of legitimate "public" war between Valois and Plantagenet and the illegitimate "private" war between garrisons, freebooters, and *routiers* in the countryside—were not inherently negative, with many parties using conflict, or its resolution, to further their own agendas.[4]

The complex relationship between English kings and the military communities engaging in brigandage and small-scale fighting in France epitomizes this phenomenon. The employment or tacit approval of private armies ravaging the kingdom, which began as a mutually beneficial association for English kings, enabled them to strike at their enemies through indirect, inexpensive, and less bureaucratically demanding means. However, such relationships did not exist in a vacuum and alliances of convenience were vulnerable to outside factors, like the fortunes of war, financial difficulties, and the fickle nature of mercenaries. Following the ceasefires and truces of the mid-fourteenth century, rouge bands of former English, Gascon, Breton, and French soldiers were a constant impediment to diplomacy.[5] During the 1350s, a series of armed migrations by unemployed soldiery, Seguin de Badefol's occupation of the Rhône River Valley, and

War in the Middle Ages (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 41-49, 51-53; Rollo-Koster Joëlle, *Avignon and Its Papacy, 1309-1417: Popes, Institutions, and Society* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2017), 98-104; David Green, *The Hundred Years War: a People's History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2015), 44-50.

[4] Kenneth Fowler, *Medieval Mercenaries* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), 96-102; Sir John Froissart, *Chronicles of England, France, and Spain*, translated by Thomas Johnes, (London: Bohn, 1852), 483-486; Clifford J. Rogers, *The Wars of Edward III: Sources and Interpretations* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2011), 196-200.

[5] Wright, *Knights and Peasants,* 52-57, Roland Delachenal, *Histoire de Charles V* (Paris: A. Picard et fils, 1927), 234-236.

conflicts between various Gascon lords would routinely disrupt Anglo-French efforts to enforce peace.[6]

Alongside their marauding, was a stubborn refusal by private soldiery to relinquish the castles, towns, and other positions they had occupied across France, often while claiming service to the English or French cause.[7] Attempts to control illegitimate robber barons like Seguin de Badefol and his compatriots across France or mitigate aspects of the public war—such as the chevauchée raids favored by English armies—did not only shape regional attempts to direct violent actors. Despite their often-limited effectiveness and local scope, the methods used to direct violence by ecclesiastical and popular authorities were equally important to those applied by the crown or landed aristocracy. Comprehension of the role played by regional actors and their contribution to the development of an effective monopolization of violence in France—and to a lesser extent England—sheds light on the nature of the state formation during the fourteenth century.[8] This re-examination of local facets of authority provides not only a more complete understanding of the relationship between war and late-medieval society, but the role of military communities in developing those connections.

Historiography

Over the past five decades there have been numerous studies of violence as a phenomenon during the Hundred Years' War, ranging from state sanctioned military

[6] Jonathan Sumption, *The Hundred Years War: Trial by Battle* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999), 420-431; Jonathan Sumption, *The Hundred Years War. Trial by Fire* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001), 373-385, 398-403.
[7] Sumption, *The Hundred Years War. Trial by Fire,* 462-467.
[8] The word "state" is used interchangeably with government, kingdom, and other terms to describe the administration and leadership of a given nation. When specifically referencing the monarchy of England or France, terms such as king, royal, monarchial, and crown will be used to describe it.

activities to outlawry and private conflicts between nobles.[9] The study of societies at war during the fourteenth century is incredibly diverse, with the geographic scope, breadth of available resources, and unique methodological lenses creating an environment ripe for comparative study. However, prior to the 1960's, few authors adequately investigated interactions between soldiery, in all their forms, and the whole of medieval society. Historians Michael Postan, Kenneth McFarlane, and Maurice Keen are notable exceptions to this trend, as they were some of the first authors to effectively examine violence during fourteenth century through a social and cultural lens.[10] Postan's "Some Social Consequences of the Hundred Years' War," and McFarlane's "Bastard Feudalism," both analyze shifts in medieval society as a result of violence and war-time pressures, applying the strain of pursuing conflict, rather than the physical cost of war itself, as an impetus for societal change. Furthermore, both authors acutely emphasized the need for a more in-depth examination of existing materials, which thus far had not yet been used, and the need for further examination.

Among the plethora of social, economic, and political histories which emerged from 1970 to the late 1990s, there are several whose influence on future historiography cannot be ignored. Christopher Allmand, John Barnie, and Nicholas Wright are among the most influential authors of this period and the study violence during the Hundred

[9] Fowler, *Medieval Mercenaries*; Firnhaber-Baker, *Violence and the State in Languedoc*; Wright, *Knights and Peasants.* Each of these authors have emphasized the capacity of various non-royal entities to control or apply violence on a regional level, providing an excellent foundation for studies of violence in fourteenth century France.

[10] Michael Postan, "Some Social Consequences of the Hundred Years' War," *The Economic History Review* 12, no. 1/2 (1942), https://doi.org/10.2307/2590387; Kenneth. McFarlane, "Bastard Feudalism*", Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research* 20, (1945): 161; Kenneth McFarlane, "Parliament and 'Bastard Feudalism,'" *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 26 (1944): 53-79, https://doi.org/10.2307/3678532.

Years War.[11] Allmand's reexamination of late-medieval societies at war and the pressures placed upon them as a result, is a foundational element found within many recent studies of fourteenth century violence. In his broad chronological work, *Society at War: The Experience of England and France during the Hundred Years War*, Allmand shifted studies of violence away from the rigid scope of traditional military history and pushed it into a much broader context, one emphasizing the importance of the relationship between war and society.[12] He investigates, in brief, the unique experiences of English and French society during the Anglo-French conflicts, making use of a wide range of administrative documents, legal records, and other sources. It should be noted that despite its importance, the author's wide-ranging analysis remains fairly descriptive, for it is limited to interactions between war-making entities and society overall, rather than their constituent parts.

John Barnie's more focused approach to the study of violence—in *War in Medieval English Society; Social Values in the Hundred Years War*—builds upon Allmand's previous work, shedding light on interactions between violent actors and different facets of society.[13] His comprehensive examination of this subject provides unique insight into the mechanisms of wartime societal interactions in England (such as ransoms between aristocrats and non-noble soldiery).[14] Barnie also explores English intellectual and legal debates concerning just war and the king's conflict in France,

[11] C. T. Allmand, *The Hundred Years War: England and France at War c. 1300 - c. 1450* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005); C. T. Allmand and Christopher Thomas Allmand, *War, Government and Power in Late Medieval France*, (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2000); John Barnie, *War in Medieval Society: Social Values and the Hundred Years War, 1337-99* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1974); Wright, *Knights and Peasants*.
[12] C. T. Allmand, *Society at War; the Experience of England and France during the Hundred Years War* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1998), 98-106.
[13] Barnie, *War in Medieval Society*, 32-36.
[14] Barnie, *War in Medieval Society*, 59-72.

primarily the writings of moralists such as Thomas Hoccleve, John Gower, and William Langland.[15] However, his examination is limited by its emphasis on aristocratic and ecclesiastical experiences in England, only occasionally referencing the general population.

Nicholas Wright's monograph, *Knights and Peasants: The Hundred Years War in the French Countryside*, remedies this flaw in the existing historiography and is still considered the preeminent study on late-medieval regional violence. [16] Wright's extensive use of *lettre de rémissions* and local chronicles sheds light on the realities of regional conflict and the influence of protracted multi-generational wars. Wright manages to not only effectively demonstrate how conflict influenced different elements within society, but also built a model for future examinations of the Hundred Years War.[17] His conceptualization of the "public" and "private" war serves as the foundation of this thesis. The term "public" war—defined as military activities for the purpose of supporting, or acting under the guise of, the war between Plantagenet and Valois—is his umbrella term for any violent action which could be interpreted as in support of the crown's war aims, however vague the intentions of the group responsible.[18] "Private" war refers to actions which were condemned by contemporaries, legally or by popular opinion, to be endeavors undertaken for self-interest, greed, and "ill-intent."[19]

The vagaries of this distinction between legitimate and illegal warfare are further complicated by the influence of chivalric thought and Christian theology. Commentaries

[15] Barnie, *War in Medieval Society*, 118-126.
[16] Wright, *Knights and Peasants.*
[17] Wright, *Knights and Peasants,* 25-39.
[18] Wright, *Knights and Peasants,* 2-3.
[19] Wright, *Knights and Peasants,* 3, 30.

by fourteenth century ecclesiastics, academics, and jurists on the concept of Just War—the belief that conflict under proper circumstances was inherently "good", until it was "perverted by bad practices"—highlights the sheer diversity of perspectives on this subject.[20] It must also be noted that contemporary discourse on the nature of "just service to one's lord" was not limited to the warrior aristocracy.[21] Despite the negative presentation of non-noble soldiery in chivalric chronicles, the abundance of literature demonstrating "proper" behavior in war—regardless of status—highlights at least some involvement by the lower-orders, even those as infamous as the *routiers* or companies of the road.[22] Overall, Wright's analysis of violence in southern France and his creation of a model for future analysis, though limited to activities in the French countryside, is an indispensable resource for this thesis.

The frequency of incidents where plundering and ransoming were used to incentivize military service makes the use of Wright's model essential. Differentiating acts of personal greed and self-aggrandizement from those "seeking to improve the king's cause abroad," becomes nearly impossible in some instances.[23] To examine this phenomenon, an understanding of the men who comprised the *routier* bands, their operational methods, and how different facets of society interacted with them is required. Denis Hay and Anthony Tuck were some of the first to address this question.[24] In his

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[20] Adam Murimuth, Edward Maunde Thompson, and Robert, *Adæ Murimuth Continuatio Chronicarum. Robertus De Avesbury De Gestis Mirabilibus Regis Edwardi Tertii* (Wiesbaden: Kraus Reprint, 1965), 196-207; Kirkstall Abby and John Taylor, *The Kirkstall Abbey Chronicles* (Leeds, 1952), 52-61; Edward Maunde Thompson, *Chronicon Angliae* (London: Longman & Co., 1874), 129; Thoman Walsingham, *Walsingham's Panegyric on Edward III* in *War in Medieval Society*, translated by John Barnie, 139-142.
[21] Wright, *Knights and Peasants,* 27-31.
[22] Wright, *Knights and Peasants,* 31-37.
[23] Wright, *Knights and Peasants,* 35; Fowler, *Medieval Mercenaries*, 53-55; Knighton, *Knighton's Chronicle*, 163.
[24] Anthony Tuck, "Why men fought in the Hundred Years War?" *History Today*, Volume 33, (April 1983), 3-4.

article, “Why men fought in the Hundred Years War?” Tuck examined motivations for military service broadly, investigating military communities and the process of ransoming across a broad socio-economic spectrum.[25]

Other studies focus on a particular aspect of the free companies, such as local interactions with clergy, the careers of specific captains, and their service to certain nobles. Kenneth Fowler’s *Medieval Mercenaries* is the most comprehensive study of the men who comprised a significant portion of English and French armies during the mid-fourteenth century.[26] An expert on late-medieval military service, he repeatedly demonstrates that the military communities operating alongside or in connection to free companies were incredibly diverse, with different motivations, social backgrounds, and *modus operandi*.[27] While military matters are frequently examined, this author emphasizes looking beyond banditry and the battlefield. Fowler devotes incredible attention to the importance of individual relationships developed—through reputable or infamous means—between the companies and various cities, patrons, and prominent magnates. Furthermore, he painstakingly maps not only the physical movement of the companies and their military activities throughout southern France, but also the progression of their employment and the evolution of their interactions with medieval society.

The importance of individual relationships and the connections established between different military communities has also intrigued many other scholars. In his *Hundred Years War* series, Jonathan Sumption frequently investigates the growth of

[25] Anthony Tuck, “Why men fought in the Hundred Years War,” 3-4.
[26] Fowler, *Medieval Mercenaries*.
[27] Fowler, *Medieval Mercenaries*, 10, 34, 57.

personal and economic connections through military service, the careers of Waulter Mauney, Hugh Calveley, and Bertrand du Guesclin being notable aristocratic examples.[28] His examination of service to the crown and social mobility is not restricted to the "chivalric few" however, with varlets, men-at-arms, and non-noble soldiery often being the focus of his study.[29] This is most evidently seen in his investigation of *Le Jouvancel*, the semi-biographical and partly fictitious story written by Jean IV de Bueil, who sought to instruct young men-at-arms so that they are "always to do well and to increase their honor and prowess in the marvelous adventures of war."[30] Despite its chronologically driven and overwhelmingly narrative style, the meticulously crafted *Hundred Years War* series is unrivaled in its breadth of research. Sumption's global approach to the study of the Hundred Years War has pushed beyond a historiographical emphasis on the great "protagonists," England and France, seen in past decades. This shift towards the peripheral regions of the conflict, such as the Lowlands, Spain, the Rhône River Valley, and Brittany, remains one of Sumption's greatest contributions to recent historiography.

Other authors have focused on violent actors in the context of state-building, commerce, and legal tradition. Justine Firnhaber-Baker's study of conflict resolution in Languedoc is one example, presenting an alternative approach to late-medieval monopolizations of violence.[31] Firnhaber-Baker stresses the use of conflict-resolution by royal powers—rather than force—for the expansion of state authority in periods of difficulty.[32] This fresh approach calls attention to gaps in existing historiography,

[28] Sumption, *The Hundred Years War. Trial by Fire*, 343-344, 533-538.
[29] Sumption, *The Hundred Years War. Trial by Fire*, 167, 288; Wright, *Knights and Peasants,* 26-31.
[30] Jean de Bueil, Craig Taylor, and Taylor Jane H M., *Jean De Bueil: Le Jouvencel* (Woodbridge, UK: The Boydell Press, 2020), 21.
[31] Firnhaber-Baker, *Violence and the State in Languedoc*, 5-12.
[32] Firnhaber-Baker, *Violence and the State in Languedoc*, 20-23

highlights the use of legal authority by royal entities, and challenges views that hold royal monopolizations of violence as inherently brutal and thuggish.[33]

The abundance of literature on late-medieval violence and attempts to control it during the fourteenth century raises an important question: Does the need for a new study exist? The answer, this author believes, is firmly positive. An over-emphasis on royal and seigneurial interactions with violent actors in recent historiography has overshadowed the experiences of different elements in society. The re-examination of ecclesiastical and popular involvement in attempts to restrain violence would shed light on less explored aspects of the Hundred Years War. For instance, how state measures—intended to mitigate violence and restrict the spread of uncontrolled soldiery—resulted in the destruction of church property. In addition to filling gaps left by previous studies, this thesis will challenge several accepted perceptions within recent historiography. Primarily, the degree to which attempts by ecclesiastical and popular authorities to control violence**,** influenced the monopolization of violence by state entities. To build upon Dr. Firnhaber-Baker's alternative approach to the relationship between violence and the development of state authority, this thesis will emphasize the experiences of low-status ecclesiastics and popular society during periods of state decline.

Sources and Methodology

This thesis will focus on the first fifty-two years of the Hundred Years War, encompassing the entirety of the Edwardian (1337-1360) and Carolinian (1369-1389) phases of the conflict. Beginning with Edward's initial declaration of war and ending with the Treaty of Leulingham in 1389. This section of the larger Anglo-French war—

[33] Firnhaber-Baker, *Violence and the State in Languedoc*, 69-72, 80-81.

defined by the development of state resources, the eventual decline of royal authority, and the rise of the *routiers* and other freebooting movements—presents unique opportunities for the comparative study of violence. Periods of initial military and political success, seen most evidently in the English context during the 1340s and 1350s, are in stark contrast to later decades where states, France in particular, lacked the strength to effectively monopolize violence. The eventual decline of royal power in the 1360s and 1370s, highlights this loss of control by the state and the ability of non-royal entities to exercise their authority on a local and regional level.

This study is rooted in the examination of administrative documents, narrative histories, and other primary sources across England and France, engaging with materials under a variety of legal systems and institutions. In conducting my research, I placed an emphasis on the diversity of primary sources and the holistic examination of documents from different facets of late-medieval society. This approach provides a more inclusive interpretation of late-medieval statehood and shifts studies of violence into a broader context.[34] What follows is a brief classification of prominent materials which formed the foundation of my research.

Administrative records — The capacity of late-medieval England and France to effectively finance and conduct war required a wide array of support structures, such as offices for the collection and distribution of taxes, systems of purveyance, and other various bureaucratic apparatus. These offices, often serving directly under the crown, not only formed the foundation of a king's ability to project power—domestically and

[34] The ability of military communities, private and public, to inject rapid political change on a regional level has been thoroughly researched. No one, however, has yet to comparatively study such interactions with an emphasis on liminal spaces and inter-kingdom connections.

abroad—but were also essential to the good governance of the realm. Without accurate tax assessments and good monetary policy royal incomes would eventually decline, clerks and other essential personnel would go unpaid, and the daily activities of government would grind to a halt. Administrative documents—taken from the offices of the Chancery, the King's Wardrobe, and other departments from both kingdoms—are invaluable sources of information, without which this study would not be possible.

The Gascon rolls, an official record of the English administration of Aquitaine from 1273 to 1467, are an essential source of information on English activities in southern France.[35] Recorded within the rolls are commercial contracts, official grain imports, muster records, disputes over land, accounts of piracy, petitions for royal protection, the creation of royal commissions and other diverse topics.[36] Though only occasionally providing documentation directly relating to the defense of Aquitaine and military matters, the rolls shed light on the gradual degradation of English authority in southern France and difficulties facing regional leadership as a result.[37] Due to the duchy of Aquitaine's tenuous position on the French mainland, removed from the safety of the isles, surrounded by enemies, and crippled by the fiscal difficulties of Edward's government, the *capitales domini* (principal lords) of Gascony, such as the *Captal de Buch*, Jean III de Grailly, often found their resources stretched thin and incapable of meeting the military or financial needs of the duchy.[38] These limitations are especially evident following periods of truce, military failure, and royal demobilization. Following

[35] "The Gascon Rolls Project," Home | The Gascon Rolls Project, accessed June 16, 2020, http://www.gasconrolls.org/en/.
[36] *The National Archives*, "The Gascon Rolls," C 61/94-21,19,18.
[37] *The National Archives*, "The Gascon Rolls," C 61/96.
[38] Sumption, *The Hundred Years War. Trial by Fire*, 85-97, 190-192.

its creation, the newly formed principality of Aquitaine—and the crown—lacked the resources to sustain a constant, and sufficiently sized, military presence needed to effectively control violence and deter foreign aggression. Petitions for an increased military presence, musters for local defense, and royal compensation for war-time damages—typically seen through grants of delayed payment to creditors—were common in the 1370s and 1380s.[39]

The details within these documents—though largely concerned with trade—are not limited to the public war between Plantagenet and Valois, serving to highlight the role played by alternative authority structures within Aquitaine in the absence of a strong royal presence. Private conflicts between principle commercial centers, important urban communities, and prominent magnates were not uncommon.[40] Indeed, in several incidents during the 1340s and 1350s, the people of Bayonne, Basque subjects of Edward III, and Castilian mariners under the lordship of Biscay engaged in private conflicts against one another over commercial interests.[41] Reprisals against former enemies and competing communities, often exacted through piracy, would eventually become so damaging that existing letters of marque and reprisal were nullified, their owners compensated, and further grants delayed in the region for several decades.[42]

The Patent Rolls of the English Chancery, known as the *Rotuli litterarum patentium*, stand alongside the Gascon Rolls as another invaluable source for this thesis. Though the Patent rolls only partially engage with military matters or attempts to control violence, they shed light on the lives of men which fueled the machinery of England's

[39] *The National Archives*, "The Gascon Rolls," C 61/61, C 61/64, C 61/85.
[40] *The National Archives*, "The Gascon Rolls," C 61/61, C 61/62, C 61/63.
[41] *The National Archives*, "The Gascon Rolls," C 61/87, C 61/88, C 61/90.
[42] *TNA,* C 61/63; Wright, *Knights and Peasants,* 4-8.

war on the mainland, primarily soldiers and mariners. Throughout the rolls one will find references to pardons for "good service in France," "service in the kings war," and "service in the king's army."[43] The incentivization of military service through the provision of royal pardons for past crimes, or crimes committed after the conclusion of service, was a tactic employed frequently by Edward III and his successors.[44] The Patent rolls, in addition to pardons, also reference legal prosecution over false claims of service, typically through the impersonation of royal officials and officers, and outlawry by former soldiers.[45] Other notable administrative documents include petitions to parliament, the king, or his council, the income registries of English captains serving in France, and the Scotch Rolls, a collection of documents containing information on Scottish military affairs, prisoners of war, and other similar topics.[46]

Narrative Records – Late medieval "chivalric" chroniclers, many of whom were former knights or men at arms, often discuss military matters and violence. However, the sheer number of existing narrative records limits what can be discussed in this brief exposition. For the Edwardian and Carolinian phases of the Hundred Years War, Jean le Bel and Jean Froissart's chronicles are among the most extensive contemporary histories.[47] However, the political leanings of their patrons, an emphasis upon great "chivalric figures," and a lack of concern for the lower orders of medieval society, and events concerning them, make them of limited value when examining topics outside of

[43] Henry Maxwell, *Calendar of the Charter Rolls Preserved in the Public Record Office 1226-1516* (Nendeln/Liechtenstein: Kraus Reprint, 1972) 323-327, 394-396.
[44] For pardons and military service in the French context see: Firnhaber-Baker, *Violence and the State in Languedoc*, 12-17.
[45] *Calendar of the Charter Rolls*, 79-81, 88.
[46] *The National Archives*, SC 8, *Special Collections: Ancient Petitions*; *The National Archives*, C 71, *Chancery: Scotch Rolls*.
[47] Froissart, *Chronicles*; Le Jehan Bel and Nigel Bryant, *The True Chronicles of Jean Le Bel, 1290-1360* (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2015).

the "chivalrous war." Despite these limitations, chronicles written to glorify chivalric ideals provide realistic detail on the war-time activities of nobles and the men serving under them. In addition, such chronicles also serve to highlight contemporary expectations for "knightly" behavior and what constitutes a "most chivalrous and good knight."[48] Froissart and Knighton's chronicles are especially useful for this purpose as they were written, in part, to inspire younger and less experienced knights to greater feats of gallantry. It is important to note, however, that such works often obscure the brutal realities of late-medieval warfare and focus upon aspects of the "chivalrous war" which were exemplified by the author, his patrons, and readers.

In contrast to the grand "chivalric tales," are records which are understood to have been written by men of non-noble status, including *varlets*, lesser men-at-arms, and other positions. The *Chronique Normande* and St. Omer Chronicle were both written by individuals thought to have served in garrisons in Gascony and northern France during the 1340s and provide extensive detail on low intensity military operations, such as pillaging, garrison life, and small unit engagements.[49] Other notable chronicles include the Chronicle of Adam Murimuth, Knighton's Chronicle, and others.[50]

Alongside chronicles are a variety of dispatches and private correspondences between prominent magnates, guildsman, and other notables. The dispatches of Sir Thomas Dagworth following the battle of La Roche-Derrien and the Black Prince's dispatch during his *Grande Chevauchée* across southern France are excellent examples of

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[48] Froissart, *Chronicles, 28.*
[49] *Chronique Normande*, 67-9 accessed in *The Wars of Edward III*; *St. Omer Chronicle, 255-68* accessed in *The Wars of Edward III.*
[50] Adam Murimuth, Edward Maunde Thompson, and Robert, *Adæ Murimuth Continuatio Chronicarum. Robertus De Avesbury De Gestis Mirabilibus Regis Edwardi Tertii* (Nedeln: Krauss Reprint, 1965); Knighton, *Knighton's Chronicle*.

campaign records, which shed light on the daily activities of an entire army on the march, not just the "chivalrous" few.[51] Letters from ecclesiastical officials are another excellent source of information, often mentioning the plight of their local charges and diocese in extensive detail.[52] Sir John Wingfield's letters to the Bishop of Worchester concerning the "destruction never before seen" following the Black Prince's *chevauchée* in Languedoc was one such example.[53] News bulletins are another source of information, often written by lesser men-at-arms as a dispatch for officials. The Tournai Bulletin, which describes events preceding Edward III's siege of Tournai and the activities of royal soldiers in the surrounding countryside, is a common example. However, the information within them and the locations they reference are, according to Clifford Rodgers, "often very difficult to decipher and it is often impossible to identify them with full certainty."[54]

These records reinforce the realities of multi-generational wars of attrition, with constant references to the complete destruction and looting of communities. Furthermore, they provide incomplete, but valuable, glimpses into contemporary views concerning the impact of strategic raiding and regional warfare on local populations.[55] Unfortunately, due to the nature of medieval education and society, chronicles only occasionally echo the voices of peasants and townspeople.

Legal Records — As previously mentioned, pardons are an essential source when examining the activities of late-medieval soldiery, interactions with royal power, and the

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[51] Richard Barber, *The Life and Campaigns of the Black Prince: from Contemporary Letters, Diaries, and Chronicles, Including Chandos Herald's Life of the Black Prince* (New York: The Boydel Press, 2002), 68; Murimuth, *Adæ Murimuth Continuatio Chronicarum*, 388-389.
[52] Barber, *The Life and Campaigns of the Black Prince*.
[53] Barber, *The Life and Campaigns of the Black Prince,* 52; Murimuth, *Adæ Murimuth Continuatio Chronicarum*, 445-447.
[54] Rogers, *The Wars of Edward III*, 93-98; Murimuth, *Adæ Murimuth Continuatio Chronicarum*, 372-374.
[55] Rogers, *The Wars of Edward III*, 93-98.

development of professional armies. The extensive use of royal pardons as an incentive for military service and an alternative to paid wages—alongside the frequency of looting, rape, murder, ransoming, and torture in source materials—highlights the nature of some men serving in royal armies during this period.[56] In 1359 alone, 624 men were offered royal pardons by the English crown for homicide, 109 for larceny, sixty-five for robbery, and twenty-three for rape.[57] Attempts to curtail the excess brutality of soldiers varied, depending on the commander of an army, their strategic and political objectives, financial status, and other factors.[58] Military ordinances were one method used by royal power to restrain the violent nature of soldiers under their command, and were drafted by the kings of England and France prior to going on campaign.[59] Ordinances, such as Richard II's ordinance for the English invasion of Scotland in 1385, typically provided an order of march, outlined the goals of a campaign, established disciplinary codes, and other specifics details.[60]

Pardons were not only issued to those using violence to aggrandize themselves, with many being granted for non-violent—though still criminal—acts against the crown, such as counterfeiting, the impersonation of royal officers, and in some cases treason.[61] Subjects of the Valois near English Gascony or along the Mediterranean coast, removed from the center of French royal power in northern France, were often forced—under

[56] Firnhaber-Baker, *Violence and the State in Languedoc*, 12-17; University of South Hampton, "Military Pardons Database for 1345 and 1359," Medieval Soldier, July 2, 2018, https://www.medievalsoldier.org/about/miscellanea/introduction-military-pardons-database-for-1345-and-1359/.
[57] Anne Curry, "The Military Ordinances of Henry V: Texts and Contexts," *War, Government and Aristocracy in the British Isles, C.1150–1500*, 2008, 214-249.
[58] Anne Curry, "Disciplinary Ordinances for English and Franco-Scottish Armies in 1385: An International Code?" *Journal of Medieval History* 37, no. 3 (2011): pp. 269-294.
[59] Anne Curry, "Disciplinary Ordinances for English and Franco-Scottish Armies in 1385," 274-286.
[60] Anne Curry, "Disciplinary Ordinances for English and Franco-Scottish Armies in 1385," 274-286.
[61] *Calendar of the Charter Rolls*, 79-81, 88.

threat of violence—to swear oaths of allegiance to Edward III or the Prince of Wales, who ruled the Principality of Aquitaine following its creation in 1362.[62] During periods of English military and financial decline, former subjects of the Valois, now facing a resurgent France, would be judged for their duplicity. Many urban leaders, guildsmen, and nobles would find their land despoiled or titles revoked, however, not all were brutally punished.[63] Charles VI's letter of pardon and safeguard to the abbot of Saint-Léonard de Ferrières, whom was "threatened with expulsion and having their abbey razed, they had to, yielding to violence, take an oath of allegiance to the Prince of Wales," is one such example.[64] Other noteworthy legal documents examined in this study include indentures of war and commissions of array—written contracts for military service between a public or private party and the king—as well as letters of protection, which granted soldiers serving abroad a degree of legal immunity.

Structure

Royal powers, despite historiographical emphasis upon them, were not the only impetus for an "effective monopolization" of violence during the late fourteenth century, but rather one part of a complex, often contradictory myriad of competing agents with their own political, economic, and social agendas. Focus upon royal and seignorial attempts to monopolize violence can obscure local and regional interactions by other political bodies in late-medieval society. Holistically examining attempts by all facets of society to direct violent interactions highlights the realities of establishing effective governmental authorities and better reflects the relationship between war, states, and the

[62] Rogers, *War Cruel and Sharp*, 313.
[63] Rogers, *War Cruel and Sharp*, 313-326
[64] Rogers, *War Cruel and Sharp*, 318.

whole of medieval society. My analyses of attempts to monopolize violence are centered around two overshadowed facets of authority during the late-medieval period: ecclesiastical, and a combination of urban burghers and rural commons, known from now on as popular. To ensure an effective and balanced interpretation of the relationship between violence and the whole of late-medieval society, this thesis will be divided into three chapters.

Chapter one serves as the contextual basis for this thesis, where I will briefly explore violence as a phenomenon in the early fourteenth century and the relationship between secular powers and military communities. Specifically, the relationship between mercenary and freebooting movements of the later fourteenth century and their royal-seignorial employers. Each of the following chapters will engage with a different, though broadly defined, facet of authority and their interactions with violence, beginning with popular and ending with ecclesiastical. Due to this study's emphasis on violence as a transnational phenomenon, my examination is not restricted to violent interactions in a specific geographic or political space, but rather the entirety of the English and French kingdoms. The organization of my thesis reflects this, with a section of each chapter dedicated to English and French variations in their experiences with, and reactions to, violence.

It must be noted that it is not the purpose of this thesis to provide an in-depth examination of all violent incidents during the opening decades of the Hundred Years War. Rather, it investigates trends in violent activities and attempts by different parties to direct or control violence. Furthermore, the sources and incidents examined in later chapters are not representative of all interactions on a regional or sub-regional level.

Anglo-Scottish border skirmishes in the southern highlands, Gascon raids across eastern Aquitaine, and *routiers'* campaigns along the Rhône have factors which make their interactions with violence unique, with each conflict area encompassing a different political landscape, rural and urban climate, and cultural characteristics. Extensive quotations translated from Latin, alongside German, Dutch, and Spanish secondary literature, serves to mitigate this problem.

CHAPTER I:

THE HUNDRED YEARS WAR: CONTEXT AND PERSPECTIVES

On July 19, 1333, Edward III (1327-1377), the Plantagenet King of England, alongside Edward Balliol—his vassal and claimant to the throne of Scotland—defeated the army of Sir Archibald Douglas at Halidon Hill. The defeat of Sir Douglas effectively ended anti-Balliol, and thus anti-English, resistance in the Scottish Lowlands. This victory also appeared to finally resolve the question of Scottish sovereignty—an issue unresolved since the reign of Edward I—after nearly forty years of semi-independence. However, this brief period of success was not to last. Balliol's reprisals against former enemies, the cession of Lothian to English rule, and his blatant favoritism toward English land-holders—coupled with the unruly and anti-English sentiments of the Scots—would see him removed from the throne of Scotland and forced from his new realm. Unable to accept Scotland's defiance of English power, Edward—in one of several exercises in futility—marched north to reassert his authority and once again put Balliol on the throne of Scotland. This seemingly minor cycle of occupation, re-installment, and deposition—initially limited to issues of Scottish sovereignty—would continue for several years and gradually expand into a series of intermittent conflicts, spanning roughly 116 years and involving a significant portion of Western Europe.

From 1337 to 1453 the Hundred Years War would rage across Western Europe as the Plantagenet (English) and Valois (French) dynasties clashed over the sovereignty of Scotland, Aquitaine, and eventually their rights to the French throne. In order to

prosecute their ruinously expensive campaigns, the kings of England and France would be forced to implement drastic economic, administrative, and military reform; as attempts to finance and wage the conflict became increasingly more difficult—if not impossible—and traditional systems of revenue were pushed to their limit.[65] The arrival of the Black Death in 1347 and the onset of the Little Ice Age would further accelerate the decline of internal stability and demand a complete reevaluation of each king's fiscal capacity. Several attempts were made by Edward III and Philip VI at the outbreak of war to solve their financial shortcomings, through improvements upon existing systems, the creation of new taxes, and less popular means. For instance, the reimplementation of the *gabelle* (salt tax) and currency devaluation in France. In the English context, an expansion of the crown's system of royal purveyance and Edward III's eventual exploitation of the wool trade fulfilled a similar role.

However, the previously mentioned measures were often quickly implemented and poorly designed overestimations—designed to quickly inject funds into each kings' war treasury or equip their soldiers—regardless of the potential long-term economic damage.[66] Bureaucratic corruption, administrative inefficiencies, a resistant tax base, stupendous expenditures, and many other factors would quickly render these ad-hoc systems obsolete, gradually forcing both kingdoms to further centralize their institutions of taxation. Over time, the once patchwork methods of the state would become strengthened and institutionalized, to the irritation of many church officials, merchants,

[65]Michael Postan, "Purveyance and Peasants At The Beginning Of The Hundred Years War: Maddicott Reexamined," *The Hundred Years War (Part II)*, January 2008, 343-365; Michael Postan, "The Costs of the Hundred Years War," *Past and Present* 27, no. 1 (1964): pp. 34-53, https://doi.org/10.1093/past/27.1.34.
[66] Postan, "The Costs of the Hundred Years War," 46; E.B. Fryde, "Edward III's Wool Monopoly of 1337: A Fourteenth-Century Royal Trading Venture," *Studies in Medieval Trade and Finance*, 1952, 27.

and the commons of each kingdom. The development of more centralized taxation systems would eventually allow for the creation of standing armies, seen briefly during the reign of Charles V, and later form the foundation of "proto-fiscal military states" seen in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

While patchwork methods alleviated the financial shortcomings of kings in the short-term—allowing them to remain on war footing and actively campaign during the opening decades of the conflict—their ambitions were not matched by their fiscal capacities.[67] These limitations would often leave the wages of English and French soldiers in arrears and forced high-ranking leaders to delegate authority, even the war itself in some instances, to individuals who could afford to sustain their own campaigns**.** Following the failure of Edward's "continental alliance strategy" in the 1340s—which left him £500,000 in debt, amounting to roughly fifteen years of state revenue—and the limited success of his Rheims campaign, English armies would become progressively smaller. The disastrous French defeat at the battle of Poitiers in 1356, where King John II (1350-1364) was captured and the cream of the aristocracy perished, resulted in a similar change as both kings could not continue the struggle as they had previously. Consequently, for the rest of the fourteenth century—apart from Edward's Rheims campaign—French and English armies would not reach the same enormity in size and expenditures seen during the initial years of the conflict. This led to the Treaty of Calais—signed after the Battle of Poitiers—and its later extensions which, in theory, established the first of several major truces between each kingdom.

[67] Sumption, *The Hundred Years War: Trial by Battle*, 360-369; Sumption, *The Hundred Years War. Trial by Fire*, 78, 82; Rogers, *War Cruel and Sharp*, 37-36.

To the grave misfortune of France, the conflict which had thus far employed and supported the existence of thousands of soldiers—in garrisons, raiding parties, mercenary bands, and armies across the kingdom—could not be so easily stopped. As previously mentioned, the wages of soldiers in royal service were frequently in arrears.[68] Due to financial difficulties, leaders were often forced to allow men to "forage" from nearby communities and negotiate for continued service with elements of their own armies.[69] This short-term need for men to "forage" goods from nearby communities—which effectively amounted to legal theft—would evolve as the nature of military service changed during the mid-fourteenth century. This "ransoming of the countryside" would quickly shift from an ad-hoc system of military requisition to the foundation of long-term military service, with many captains—both English and French—being granted the legal right to plunder the very populations they were "defending."[70] The incentivization of plunder and ransoms in place of wages, or in supplementation to them, would have drastic consequences for France. England, protected by the English Channel and lacking the internal conflicts which plagued the kingdom of France during the early-to-mid fourteenth century, would suffer relatively little damage at the hands of private actors. While the implementation of this war-time measure may appear harmless when isolated to the context of one campaign, it would sow the seeds of future strife: eventually forming the bedrock of English military strategy, defining the French experience during the conflict, and destroying the fabric of truces.

[68] Kenneth McFarlane, "War, The Economy and Social Change: England and The Hundred Years War," *England in the Fifteenth Century: Collected Essays*, 1962, https://doi.org/10.5040/9781472599889.ch-007.
[69] Wright, *Knights and Peasants,* 36-47; Fowler, *Medieval Mercenaries*, 164-169.
[70] Wright, *Knights and Peasants,* 36-47; Fowler, *Medieval Mercenaries*, 164-169.

The latter half of the fourteenth century would bear witness to drastic shifts in political power, as the decline of state revenue in England, the ratification of the Treaty of Bretagne, and the collapse of royal power in France, broke the *status quo*. Royal armies and garrisons, bereft of purpose and pay with the public war now ended, were disbanded *en masse*.[71] Immediately following the conclusion of peace talks, thousands of soldiers suddenly found themselves without work, wages, and often the means to return home. The mass unemployment of soldiers led to a series of large and heavily armed migrations across France. Unemployed soldiers, known by French contemporaries as *routiers*, or rutters by the English, traveled throughout France looking for food, plunder, and work. Eventually, these men, who initially "foraged" and "ransomed the countryside" under the auspices of the crown, would begin doing so on their prerogative. Ranging in size from small bands to armies hundreds and even thousands strong, the *routiers*, and their successor movements, would terrorize France until the end of the fourteenth century.

Deprived of the means to organize effective resistance—as treasuries were exhausted, the king was a prisoner, and plunder could not be incentivized due to the truce—the Dauphine was forced to let the provinces mostly fend for themselves. Unleashed from government control, ironically, by the same royal powers which had originally gathered and organized them, the *routiers* swiftly became a force to be reckoned with, even by kings.[72] As royal powers fought their domestic rials to centralize their realm and defended against their enemies from abroad, the greatest expression of

[71] Sumption, *The Hundred Years War. Trial by Fire*, 454-470; Fowler, *Medieval Mercenaries*, 297-301.
[72] Fowler, *Medieval Mercenaries*, 49-52; Sumption, *The Hundred Years War. Trial by Fire*, 85-97, 383-385.

their power evolved into perhaps the foremost challenge to their will.[73] While wise leadership and royal legitimacy occasionally served to strengthen medieval kingdoms, the power of sitting rulers was ultimately tied to the strength of their supporters, financial security, and the armies they could marshal.[74] Despite their role as a vital cog in the mechanism of a medieval war-state, *routiers* and other military communities did not always take the interests of their kingdom to heart or respect the grand ambitions of their rulers.

The paradoxical existence of *routiers,* acting as the greatest expression of royal authority while simultaneously rejecting and violating royal laws, is the impetus for this thesis. The royal desire to engage in conflict, coinciding with the decline of traditional late-medieval levy armies, resulted in the growth of royal dependence upon private military communities. Over time, the royal-seignorial need to constantly pursue military adventures would swell the ranks of these organizations, as each war—and the peace which inevitably followed—bolstered the companies with ex-soldiers, young knights, and brigands. The pervasive nature of these movements—built upon the state's need for professional soldiers to purse conflict—ensured their continuation as a political and military force during the fourteenth century, regardless of their penchant for casual destruction and their ability to undermine their patrons and employers. Eventually, some freebooting movements would come to represent not only a challenge to royal power, but also an alternative authority structure, with their own monopolizations of violence and the institutionalization of their power.

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[73] Fowler, *Medieval Mercenaries*, 61-83; Firnhaber-Baker, *Violence and the State in Languedoc*, 118-128; Wright, *Knights and Peasants,* 50-57.
[74] Firnhaber-Baker, *Violence and the State in Languedoc*, 94-103.

The irony of this existence was not lost on contemporaries. Thomas Basin, Bishop of Lisieux, frequently commented on the nature of military service during this period and the destruction wrought by soldiery.[75] In one commentary, describing the fate of various region around Paris, Basin states they were "deserted, uncultivated, abandoned, empty of inhabitants, covered with scrub and brambles" due to the avarice and dishonorable behavior of men-at-arms.[76] Developing the means to control violence perpetrated by soldiery—without dissolving or bankrupting a kingdom—would be at the forefront of state-formation during the Hundred Years War.[77]

Uncontrollable violence, lawlessness on a regional level, and the mass migration of unemployed semi-professional soldiers, though threats to be respected, were not the only challenges emanating from soldiery during this period. The "legitimization" of private soldiers— through claims of service to a king or one of his subjects—presented a significant threat to both England and France as their veracity could not be quickly verified. These threats, though present throughout the conflict, were most evidently seen during peace talks prior to the intermittent truces established between England and France. Diplomacy between the Valois and Plantagenets, typically mediated by Papal legates and negotiated by prominent ecclesiastics from each kingdom, did not occur in a vacuum. Proceedings were constantly undermined by both public and private operations, undertaken by a variety of military personnel, including *routiers*. Frequent shifts in the bargaining position of each kingdom, which were directly impacted by the state of military affairs, made negotiations inherently untenable and distrust between parties

[75] Wright, *Knights and Peasants,* 35, 58-69.
[76] Wright, *Knights and Peasants,* 29.
[77] Firnhaber-Baker, *Violence and the State in Languedoc,* 104-114.

common. Sieges were often a source of contention, as they required a significant investment in time and materials, making kings loathe to end them before their success. These difficulties would be exacerbated by the activities of private forces, as it would take time for their allegiance or lack of it to be made public knowledge.

When peace could be established it was difficult, if not impossible, to enforce during periods of state financial difficulty because, without money, the king could not supply his hired men with victuals or support their wages.[78] Without professional mercenaries, the king would be forced to rely upon immensely unpopular means of raising troops, including commissions of array, militia levies, and forced service. Contemporaries saw such levies as limited in military value and were not trusted to stand against professional soldiers or endure long campaigns. Urban levies, alongside their dubious military value, were exceptionally difficult to organize as they required the consent of popular authority structures and the cooperation of the people. However, it must be noted that state was not entirely without recourse. During times of truce *routiers*, which normally engaged in acts of freebooting under the guise of public war, were forced to act outside the law and openly participate in private conflict against the state. While some captains, like Seguin du Badeful, would embrace this refutation of medieval "legal" warfare, many illegitimately claimed service to one side or another in hopes of lending some credibility to their actions and avoiding immediate execution if captured**.**

John Dancaster's Guînes raid of 1352—which saw a young soldier capture the "gateway to Artois and the Île-de-France," on his own initiative, precipitating a reignition

[78] Sumption, *The Hundred Years War. Trial by Fire*, 31-39, 383-385; Fowler, *Medieval Mercenaries*, 223-227.

of the Hundred Year War—perfectly encompasses the complexity of this phenomenon.[79] Despite violating Edward's truce with France and jeopardizing recent agreements, the military importance of Guînes castle and its proximity to English possessions on the continent shielded Dancaster from punishment.[80] In fact, Dancaster was not only pardoned for his actions, but also knighted by Edward and publicly praised, becoming something of a social icon. While it is difficult to measure the influence of Dancaster's rise to fame on the frequency of private actions in France, the king's generosity towards Dancaster more than likely inspired, rather than dissuaded such activities. Coincidently, in the months following the seizure of Guînes, there was an increase in truce violations and claims of service by private actors, with some parties claiming service to the English Crown while operating as far away as Burgundy.[81] Regardless of the inspiration for these incidents—as a continuation of previous private activities or imitators attempting to replicate Dancaster's success—the result was the same, an eventual resumption of hostilities between England and France. While it was ultimately Edward's choice to openly commit towards a resumption of hostilities in the mid-1350s, this decision was rooted in the actions of private parties, seeking to aggrandize themselves and live off the land. These incidents— initially to the benefit of the English crown—would eventually threaten the foundations of royal authority, prestige, and power, as regional conflict was rekindled not on the king's prerogative, but a private soldier—or their patron's—decision to advance themselves.

[79] Sumption, *The Hundred Years War. Trial by Fire*, 88-90.
[80] Sumption, *The Hundred Years War. Trial by Fire*, 90-91.
[81] Fowler, *Medieval Mercenaries*, 86-97; Sumption, *The Hundred Years War. Trial by Fire*, 49-58.

Despite the importance of material gain to some contemporaries, service in the king's war represented an opportunity for more than just plunder and ransoms, though those were certainly effective enticements. The acquisition of patrons, personal connections, and prestige—as seen in Dancaster's rise—made military service a potential pathway to a greater lifestyle.[82] When examining the actions of warrior-aristocrats or their non-noble equivalent, men-at-arms, the individualistic nature of chivalric thought must be considered. Young men-at-arms and nobles, even those serving as *routiers*, were often pushed to perform greater acts of chivalry on the battlefield, which in turn would grant them prestige and status.

As noted in *Le Jouvencel*, one of the great chronicles of the period, experienced knights would often incise them to "always to do well and to increase their prowess in the marvelous adventures of war."[83] When put into the context of chivalric thought and the drive for personal prestige, wealth, and connections, the desire for self-aggrandizement through private conflict becomes much clearer. Nobles serving at the personal summons of a king—thus acting under the accepted public war—could express this chivalric "desire to have honour and worldly praise" through "legitimate" mean, without necessarily straying towards criminality, though that frequently occurred.[84] In addition, other nobles, potential patrons, and prominent political leaders would be in close proximity while on campaign, allowing for easy access the "chivalric community," with the chance of displaying one's prowess in front of their peers also being close at hand.

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[82] Kenneth Alan Fowler, Peter Anthony Newton, and John A. Watt, *The King's Lieutenant: Henry of Grosmont, First Duke of Lancaster, 1310-1361* (Elek: London, 1969), 108-110, 227-228.
[83] Jean de Bueil, Craig Taylor, and Taylor Jane H M., *Jean De Bueil: Le Jouvencel* (Woodbridge, UK: The Boydell Press, 2020), 15; Wright, *Knights and Peasants*, 26.
[84] Jean de Bueil, *Le Jouvencel*, 13-27; Wright, *Knights and Peasants*, 26-38.

Lesser men-at-arms that attempted to replicate these chivalric practices—without the obligations, connections, or necessary wealth—would find it difficult to "legally" support themselves and their "pseudo-chivalric" lifestyles.[85] Nevertheless, this apparently clean divide between "traditional" chivalry and the "pseudo-chivalric" practices of some military communities quickly becomes muddled when several outliers are considered.

Non-noble *routiers* who managed to acquire noble titles or ingrain themselves in aristocratic society—such as Hugh Calveley and Bertrand du Guesclin—represent a small group of men who do not clearly fit into this model, as they participated in both realms of chivalry at one point.[86] This distinction becomes further obfuscated as the physical trappings of knighthood—primarily the horse, lance, barding, and armor—became more readily available. During the fourteenth century, improvements in metallurgy and metalworking drastically reduced the price of knightly equipment, enabling those without significant wealth to afford it. This financial change, alongside other factors, resulted in the creation of a unique class of soldier known as men-at-arms. This new class of soldier, which possessed all the military capabilities of a knight, but without the associated birth or social status, would come to dominant the armies of fourteenth century England and France. An increased royal reliance upon men-at-arms, the decline of aristocratic military power in France, and the aforementioned failure by the knightly classes to fulfill their military and social role, created an identity crisis of sorts. Aristocratic knights, who dedicated themselves to the pursuit of war and chivalry, would find themselves repeatedly matched by non-noble and distinctly unchivalrous men-at-arms.

[85] Jean de Bueil, *Le Jouvencel*, 24; Wright, *Knights and Peasants*, 27-31.
[86] Sumption, *The Hundred Years War. Trial by Fire*, 414-417, 529-531, 533-538.

During the fourteenth century, military service would undergo radical social, political, and economic changes. The rise of non-noble involvement in warfare and the dissolution of aristocratic monopolies on professional soldiery would reshape the essence of conflict in Western Europe.[87] The era of noble knights dominating the courts and battlefields of France—while peasant levies and mercenaries on foot fought in support—was coming to an end, with private men-at-arms quickly becoming the new staple of armies during the Hundred Years War. This reversal of traditional military practice and the rise of a warrior-class unbound from social and military norms, would have far-reaching consequences for all facets of late-medieval society.

Just as soldiery evolved to reflect the changes in military service, so too did their motivations. While many men-at-arms would adopt the "pseudo-chivalric" practices of some military communities—seeking out conflict in hopes of displaying their valor and honor—the adoption of this ideal would not temper their continued brutality or desire for material gain. Those who eschewed the trappings of knightly existence and refused to participate in the "pseudo chivalric" community, would continue much like their compatriots, freely engaging in looting, rape, and private war as they deemed necessary. Professional men-at-arms, unlike their noble counterparts, were not typically tied to land or the fate a specific kingdom, owing loyalty only to their patrons and themselves.[88] Following this shift in the nature of military service, the loyalty of professional soldiers could no longer be enforced through social pressures, codes of conduct, oaths of fealty, or

[87] Clifford J. Rogers, *The Military Revolution Debate: Readings on the Military Transformation of Early Modern Europe (History and WARFARE)* (Westview Press Incorporated, 1995), 43-57.
[88] Sumption, *The Hundred Years War. Trial by Fire*, 38-44, 471-476, 561-563; Fowler, *Medieval Mercenaries*, 31-43.

threats of land confiscation alone, being ineffective measures against itinerant soldiery that often lived outside the law and thrived on conflict.

Violence, Royal Power, and Secular Authority Structures

Despite the wealth of recent literature examining royal power and seigniorial authority, the importance of their interactions with violent actors demands a brief exposition in this thesis. Just like other facets of medieval society, royal power and seigniorial authorities had a unique connection with soldiery, one which evolved as regional and national circumstances changed. Unlike most ecclesiastical or popular interactions with soldiery, the relationship between violent actors and royal-seignorial authority was not solely negative, with the nature of their association oscillating from parasitic to symbiotic in function. In times of relative prosperity, the symbiotic nature of their relationship becomes evident, with royal powers—seeking to expand their authority or minimize their reliance on landed elites and urban communes—contracting military communities to reinforce their armies.[89] Seignorial powers pursuing their own private conflicts, against their vassals, rivals, or dissident assemblies, would find similar circumstances, with a plentiful supply of private soldiers willing to serve in their armies. Gaston III, count of Foix's, famous pursuit of a Pyrenean realm in southern France—in direct opposition to his liege lord—and his feud with the House of Armagnac, was notoriously fueled by the services of the free companies.[90]

In exchange for their services, private military communities would receive, theoretically, steady employment, wages, victuals, and the opportunity to legally

[89] Fowler, *Medieval Mercenaries*, 57-63; Sumption, *The Hundred Years War. Trial by Fire*, 512-520.
[90] Fowler, *Medieval Mercenaries*, 91, 103.

participate in the "marvelous adventure of war."[91] However, the continuation of this agreement was often contingent upon the resources of an employer, which were not always in abundance, and the continuation of public conflicts, which kings and nobles did not always desire.[92] In periods of state hardship—epitomized by the collapse of royal power in France—the state could not rely upon traditional means of enforcing its will, due to financial collapse and the decline of royal prestige, nor could they always provide an environment in which the *routiers* could legally ply their trade.[93] This failure on the part of royal power would ultimately translate into a national issue, as *routiers* could burn and pillage with impunity, adversely affecting the entirety of the realm. Thus emerges the parasitic nature of this relationship as free companies, able to pursue their own agendas almost without hinderance, could freely live off the land. While this parasitic life of open outlawry, private conflict, and brigandage would draw the ire of contemporaries—both spiritual and temporal—the movements persisted for several decades, only failing after state authorities regained a measure of their former strength and unity.

Many attempts would be made to ensure the continued employment of *routiers* abroad. From 1350 to 1370, more than twenty attempts would be made by state, religious, and regional powers to convince the mercenaries to abandon their positions in France, many succeeded. King Charles V of France (1364-1380) and his constable, the former *routier* Bertrand de Guesclin, would persuade many captains to become involved in affairs on the Iberian Peninsula.[94] Both the Castilian Civil War (1351-1369) and the War of the Two Peters (1356–1375) would draw thousands of *routiers* and several of the

[91] Jean de Bueil, *Le Jouvencel*, 13-27; Wright, *Knights and Peasants*, 26-38.
[92] Sumption, *The Hundred Years War. Trial by Fire*, 445-455; Wright, *Knights and Peasants*, 55-59.
[93] Fowler, *Medieval Mercenaries*, 118-125.
[94] Sumption, *The Hundred Years War. Trial by Fire*, 513, 516; Fowler, *Medieval Mercenaries*, 159-174.

free companies from southern France. Despite actively opposing the French crown for years—even defeating royal armies, like at the Battle of Brignais (1362)—these men readily supported the interests of the French state, for the right price.[95] Consequently, the symbiotic nature of this relationship reasserts itself, and the duality of interactions between military communities and royal-seignorial authorities becomes plain.

The long and duplicitous career of *routier* Captain Arnaud de Cervole embodies not only the parasitic and symbiotic realities of this relationship with the French crown, but also the need for professional soldiers, regardless of their dubious loyalty. During his sixteen years of employment as a mercenary, he repeatedly walked the line between "good service," criminal activities, and outright treason against his employers.[96] Cervole spent the opening years of his career drifting between public service under the Count of Alençon and the occasional criminal act. Following the French defeat at Poitiers (1356)—where he was wounded and ransomed—he turned from public service completely, in favor of outlawry. During one of his most infamous operations, it becomes clear that his greed was matched only by his capacity for treachery, as after ransoming positions taken in papal territory to Pope Innocent VI—a feat which earned him great renown among the companies—he abandoned his men and fled with the money intended for all companies operating in Provence.[97] Ironically, four years after his attack on the seat of Christendom, Cervole—a man known for his ruthless self-serving character and rapid rise to power among the companies—was selected by Pope Urban V to help

[95] Fowler, *Medieval Mercenaries*, 50-53.
[96] Fowler, *Medieval Mercenaries*, 61-64.
[97] Fowler, *Medieval Mercenaries*, 61-64; Sumption, *The Hundred Years War. Trial by Fire*, 360, 523, 524, 532-533.

organize and lead a crusade.[98] This scheme—one of the aforementioned plans to rid France of the *routiers*—intended to recruit thousands of mercenaries as crusaders and have them march through Germany towards Venice, where they would then find transport to the Levant. Unsurprisingly, the greed and depravity of the *routiers* destroyed this endeavor before they had even traversed western Germany. As the "crusading army" steadily looted its way up the Saône river valley—attacking and murdering their fellow Christians as they went—it was checked and eventually defeated by a coalition of German cities and princes at the rivers Rhine and Moselle. In the aftermath of his failure, Arnaud de Cervole—treacherous to the end—was murdered by his own men during the return to France after an altercation over pay became violent.[99]

It is worth noting that the brutal tendencies of the *routiers* were not dulled by their legitimate service in Spain or while on "crusade." In fact, those forays arguably made them deadlier, for it exposed un-spoiled and inexperienced lands to their attentions, as the companies merely shifted their area of operation and the populations they brutalized. During their march across France, Aragon, and Castille in 1366, companies serving under The Black Prince, Edward of Woodstock, were notorious for their cruelty, with one contemporary stating:

> They have dared to invade the kingdoms of France and Castille. They have unleashed and sustained terrible wars, despoiling churches, sanctuaries and other places in both kingdoms, but especially in France. Like Satan and his accomplices they have attacked, corrupted, polluted, violated and despoiled them, murdering men, women and children at the breast, and not even sparing young girls and holy nuns.[100]

[98] Fowler, *Medieval Mercenaries*, 61-64; Rollo-Koster Joëlle, *Avignon and Its Papacy, 1309-1417*, 98-102.
[99] Sumption, *The Hundred Years War. Trial by Fire*, 533.
[100] Fowler, *Medieval Mercenaries*, 181; Wright, *Knights and Peasants*, 63-72; Sumption, *The Hundred Years War. Trial by Fire*, 528-533.

Events in Spain would only worsen as more *routiers* flooded over the Pyrenees in 1367, as they searched for employment or sought to take advantage of the chaos. King Peter IV of Aragon (1336-1387), who had thus far managed to keep such "menacing devils" free from his realm, soon found his kingdom beset by "the largest army that had been seen in Iberia since the great crusades against the Moors, and probably larger than the combined military strength of Aragon and Castile."[101] Even *routiers* in the service of Peter IV felt little need to restrain their actions. At Barbastro in Upper Aragon, over two-hundred citizens were burned alive in a church tower after providing ransoms and supplies, but then refusing entry, to a company of *routiers* in Peter's employ. Alongside the complications of their "good service" in Aragon—as seen at Barbastro—were the terms of their contracts, which were invariably to their benefit. Many companies in Spain demanded wages in advance, sometimes up to six months, prior to employment—alongside compensation for personal injuries, lame horses, and damaged equipment at the conclusion of their service—which were ruinously, perhaps even prohibitively, expensive.

Despite their avarice and the insatiable need to engage in casual rapine plundering, royal-seignorial authorities were repeatedly willing to use *routiers* to further their own objectives, and for good reason. *Routiers*, for all their vices, were still professional soldiers and regularly demonstrated their ability to annihilate peasant militias, urban levies, and trained retinues with ease. In one event, the infamous "Navarrese Imbroglio" as Kenneth Fowler describes it, King Charles II of Navarre, known as "The Bad," engaged in open rebellion against his liege lord John II, with only

[101] Fowler, *Medieval Mercenaries*, 167-178; Sumption, *The Hundred Years War. Trial by Fire*, 521, 533.

the support of the free companies to aid him. Through the strength of the companies and good politics, Charles managed to not only openly defy the authority of the Valois and maintain his semi-independence for fifteen years, but also succeeded in having them removed from Paris during the Parisian uprisings.

Even royal lieutenants were not immune to the allure of private conflict and the rewards that could be reaped from employing *routiers*. In 1362, Henry, Count of Vaudémont and royal lieutenant of Champagne, engaged in his own conflict beyond the realm of France, supported by thousands of mercenaries gathered by Arnaud de Cervole. While moving to Vaudémont's domain, in support of his war against the Duke of Lorraine, the Count of Bar, and other German princes, *routiers* engaged in their usual practices. The whole of the Loire River valley, Orléans, and even the suburbs of Paris, would be attacked as the horde moved north to reach their employer. The resulting migration would leave such destruction in Normandy and Maine that one royal officer reported, "the bailage and district of Caen in destroyed," and that "every day and night the garrison of Aulnay penetrates into the suburbs of Caen, and the country around is so racked and wasted that no one ventures outside the walled places."[102] Even the Duchy of Burgundy, renowned for its successful defense against the companies thus far, would be troubled as several fortresses west of Dijon, the ducal capital, were seized.

In the end, the domestic wars, foreign conflicts, and crusades which occupied the *routiers*—either by diverting them to the frontiers of the realm or from France entirely—though useful in the short-term, would only delay the inevitable. Eventually, private wars ended, and the crusades deteriorated, drawing the *routiers* back to their old haunts in

[102] Sumption, *The Hundred Years War. Trial by Fire*, 381-386; Fowler, *Medieval Mercenaries*, 234-237.

France and perpetuating the cycle of parasitic and symbiotic existence. Interactions between military communities and royal-seigniorial powers were defined by this pattern, as it permeated through all agreements and became an expected, if not accepted, aspect of conflict during this period.[103] The continuation of this practice and the perpetuation of this cycle—viewed by some contemporaries as a necessary evil—would only be shattered once the state's reliance on *routiers* as a source of professional soldiery was broken, seen briefly during the reign of Charles V. The continued employment of men like Arnaud de Cervole and other disreputable captains reflects the desperation of state powers and the evident need for professional soldiers, regardless of their proclivity towards unrestrained violence and openly treasonous behavior.

The activities of *routiers* briefly discussed in this chapter highlight the ability of soldiery to act as an impetus for private conflict and a catalyst for regional change, as local politics, economics, and intraregional interactions reflected the presence of the free companies. Regional actors—typically restrained by their lack of resources in comparison to state authorities—could exercise greater military and political ambition when supported by the free companies. Overcoming this dependence on itinerant, warlike, and uncontrollable bands of *routiers*, while simultaneously destroying their ability to enable private conflict for seignorial powers, would be one of the greatest impediments to state-formation during the fourteenth century.

[103] Contemporary ecclesiastics, chroniclers, and commentators—for instance, Christine de Pizan—frequently noted this aspect of military service. For more information see, Christine de Pisan and Charity Cannon Willard, *The Writings of Christine De Pizan* (New-York: Persea Books, 1994) 43-56, and Norman Housley, "The Mercenary Companies, The Papacy, and the Crusades, 1356–1378," *Traditio* 38, (1982), 253-280. https://doi.org/10.1017/s0362152900009454.

CHAPTER II:

THE COUNTRYSIDE AFLAME: POPULAR AUTHORITIES AND VIOLENCE DURING THE HUNDRED YEARS WAR

In contrast to the experiences of ecclesiastics and other facets of society during the late-fourteenth century, peasantry and urban populations suffered more incidents of outright violence from institutional actors, participating the public war, rather than their private counterparts. At the same time, the belief in a "century of blood and violence," in which the peasantry was the chief victim of private war—popularized by historians of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries—diminishes the complexity of interactions between military communities and the whole of late-medieval society.[104] Using Nicholas Wright's model of public and private war, most interactions between soldiery and popular authorities can be generally divided into two categories: violence as a result of legitimate public activities by traditional actors—the *chevauchée* raids especially—and the use of force or the threat of violence by private actors to acquire ransoms, victuals, lodging, and other benefits.[105] By considering the last category, a reexamination of the relationship between military communities and popular authorities will call attention to the gradients of violence found within the operations of private actors, something which permeated throughout their *modus operandi* and economies of terror.

[104] Wright, *Knights and Peasants,* 26-27.
[105] Rogers, *War Cruel and Sharp,* 166-169; Wright, *Knights and Peasants,* 4-13.

The great raids which characterized the public war in France and defined English military strategy during the fourteenth century were a source of incredible suffering for the lower orders. Such raids—typically organized into wings which combed throughout the countryside— moved with the intent of punishing "those refusing to reside in service to their rightful lord." [106] Edward III, and his successors, would use the *chevauchée* to attack the foundations of France's military and economic capacity, primarily, its peasantry. Through the destruction and depopulation of the countryside—alongside the occasional attack upon major population centers—English leaders intended to simultaneously draw French forces into battle and attack or weaken their ability to continue the war.

The resulting destruction would be magnified by English monetary policy for military service on the continent, as it became standard practice for armies on a *chevauchée* to rely upon foraging and looting, rather than supply trains and fixed wages. This led inevitably to even greater depredations. Indeed, as noted in Clifford Roger's examination of Edward's military strategy during mid-fourteenth century, English armies would ravage a space roughly thirty miles wide between the wings of the army while foraging, equating to an average of nearly sixty miles of destruction while on the march. Reports from the Black Prince's *chevauchée* of 1355—which is believed to have destroyed roughly 500 towns, villages, and hamlets in Languedoc—highlights the impact of these raids. As Sir John Wingfield, chief administrator and financial advisor of the Black Prince, noted:

> I am certain that since the beginning of this war against the King of France, there has never been such destruction in any region as on this chevauchee. For the countryside and good towns which were destroyed in

[106] Rogers, *War Cruel and Sharp*, 151-156, 166-169.

> this chevauchee found more money each year for the king of France in support of his wars than did half his kingdom (excluding the annual devaluation of the money and profits and customs which he takes from Poitou), as I could show you from good records found in carious towns in the tax-collectors' houses. For Carcassonne and Limoux, which is as large as Carcassonne, find each year for the King of France the wages of a thousand men-at-arms and, in addition, 100,000 old ecus, in support of the war.[107]

Edward III's desire to "make *chevauchée* and harm his enemies" in war represents far more than just a military victory, as these attacks damaged not only France's ability to sustain conflict, but also the desire of its people to participate in it. Following the success of several English *chevauchées* in the late 1360s—which resulted in enormous swaths of destruction throughout southern France—popular authorities gradually adopted a strategy of regional defense, emphasizing the need for local fortifications. Cities and towns in afflicted regions became increasingly concerned with their own immediate needs, rather than those of the realm.[108] The diversion of taxes, troops, and other state necessities was commonplace, even by royal lieutenants, and these were instead directed towards refortification and bribes for any armies which attacked. Coinciding with this focus on self-defense and "city strongholds" was the depopulation the countryside, as rural populations fled to cities *en masse*, constricting regions under the effective control of public actors.[109] The development of this regional defense strategy—in combination with the collapse of French royal authority—would create circumstances well suited to the activities of *routiers*, as rural fortifications were incapable of offering effective defense and regions refused to support their neighbors.

[107] Rogers, *The Wars of Edward III*, 154-156.
[108] Wright, *Knights and Peasants*, 95-101.
[109] Wright, *Knights and Peasants*, 112-116.

While the claim that *routiers* treated peasantry more "leniently" than their legitimate counterparts may appear controversial—considering their proclivity towards casual rapine plundering—parasites, much like in nature, rarely desire the death of their host. For the *routiers* to persist as a movement and expand their operations, they required a prosperous and relatively populous peasantry, one which could continuously provide them with goods. While some *routiers* would eschew long-term profitability in favor of outright bloodshed and terror, this *modus operandi* was viewed by several contemporaries as "ill-favored" and impractical.[110] The practice of "living off the land" would eventually form the foundation of the free companies' ability to operate independently of "traditional" late-medieval military and political authorities.

To the companies, peasants served as not only a source of supplies—above all food—but also a wellspring of other more limited resources, such as tools, livestock, and building materials.[111] Without access to these supplies, the *routiers* could not sustain their fortifications in countryside or constitute a powerful military force in the face of resistance. At the same time, the companies could ill-afford to deplete a region too quickly, as wastelands offered little in terms of sustenance or luxury; forcing the *routiers* to abandon their castles and continue abroad for other haunts. This balance between brutality and long-term sustainability, or the lack of it, would the defining characteristic of many companies during the Hundred Years War.

The practice of ransoming a region—imposed through the communal ransom of towns and individual exchanges for the return of family members or property—would

[110] Wright, *Knights and Peasants*, 26-27.
[111] Wright, *Knights and Peasants*, 33-41; Fowler, *Medieval Mercenaries*, 31-54; Sumption, *The Hundred Years War. Trial by Fire*, 356-384.

come to typify interactions between *routiers* and popular authorities. In his examination of garrisons around Bergerac in Dordogne and Casteljaloux in the Lot-et-Garonne, Nicholas Wright notes that "seventy-two oxen and the same number of donkeys and asses, together with hundreds of horses, mules, goats, cows, and hens," were taken and ransomed, after only a few years of operating in the region.[112] The confessions of Geruad de Pardiac—a *routiers* who accepted royal pardon after two years of banditry—align with Wright's study, with Pardiac admitting to, along with other unspecified crimes:

> The capture of 130 head of cattle, fifty sheep, 157 goats, together with thirty-one men who had to ransom themselves for a total of more than 300 florins. One prisoner, called John, was castrated and his wife was also mutilated. Pardiac also confessed to burning down a total of seventy-three houses.[113]

The lower orders also provided benefits beyond material or martial value, such as labor from adult males, servants from the children of local communities, and carnal satisfaction from the abuse of their women and daughters. Despite such activities being to the enormous detriment of the peasantry and townspeople, they would rarely result in the outright murder and destruction of communities, often seen during the *chevauchée*s of the public war.[114] Violence against their "host," in this parasitic relationship, would typically be applied only following a community or individual's refusal to willingly participate in the *patis*, the ransom agreement between *routiers* and local communities. Responses to defiance by rural communities were varied, being largely dependent upon the leadership of a company, its composition, wealth, and the success of its recent endeavors. Upon encountering resistance, some captains—like as Seguin du Badefol—were willing to

[112] Wright, *Knights and Peasants*, 68-72.
[113] Wright, *Knights and Peasants*, 74.
[114] Rogers, *War Cruel and Sharp*, 246-253; Sumption, *The Hundred Years War. Trial by Fire*, 219-235.

enter negotiations to avoid the immediate application of violence, which would likely lead to the destruction of the very goods they were attempting to seize. At Nievre in 1359, negotiations ended peacefully, after local peasantry agreed to supply food to a local garrison, with the *routiers* receiving:

> From the local people fat, cheeses, eggs, and other victuals and necessities in order to be able to live peacefully in their homes and to go about their work without the constant threat and fear of the aforesaid enemies. For they feared that they might otherwise be killed and their buildings and goods be burned and destroyed.[115]

Even when negotiations for a *patis* failed, this did not always result in an all-out attack by *routiers*. A system of "limited reprisals" would be applied in order to persuade the defiant community to acquiesce with the desires of the company, typically seen in the form of kidnappings, rapes, and the destruction of homes. Contemporaries often describe the nature of such reprisals, referred to as *courses* by the *routiers*, with this application of "limited violence," extending anywhere from several weeks to years in length. For instance, when the town of Bergerac—situated in eastern Gascony—resisted efforts from nearby garrisons to enforce a *patis* for nearly four years, resulting in 168 citizens, 257 goats, ninety-two horses, and various other goods being kidnapped or seized and held for private ransom, rather than the outright destruction of the town.[116]

Alongside their persistence, the garrisons around Bergerac were infamous for their use torture on captured citizens in order to "persuade," city councils to give into their demands, resulting in deaths of over seventy people through starvation and physical injury.[117] If the record of Juvenal des Ursins can be believed, many men not only had

[115] Wright, *Knights and Peasants*, 73-74, 86-93.
[116] Wright, *Knights and Peasants*, 71-76.
[117] Wright, *Knights and Peasants*, 71-76.

their ears removed, but also were "bound in chains and locked into cages, while their wives were raped above their heads."[118] The application of these "injuries and inhuman tortures" by some *routiers*, and their use of this system as a "just" means of collecting their rightful dues, reflects the development of "pseudo chivalric" traditions in some military communities. As observed by Froissart, the *routiers* engaged in a cruel parody of chivalric ransoms—using the same structure, language, and form in their conduct with peasantry—corrupting it through their use of torture, which invalidated such agreements under the traditional laws of chivalry.[119]

In other instances of defiance, the result was even worse, as some communities—putting faith in their valor, city walls, or the divine—sought to fight off the companies and refused to give into their demands. While popular victories against the *routiers* were not uncommon—with cities having the greatest chance of success—the cost of such victories was prohibitively high and offered no guarantee of lasting safety, as other companies could freely migrate into the region. At Chartres in 1360—following their refusal to ransom themselves—the city managed to repel several attacks by local *routiers,* however, this success was bought at the cost of roughly 900 of their own citizens and the destruction of the city's suburbs.[120] Peasant communities in the countryside would have no such luxury, as their often poorly fortified churches—discussed in the next chapter—untrained militias, and small populations offered little resistance to bands of professional soldiers.

[118] Wright, *Knights and Peasants*, 77.
[119] Froissart, *Chroniques*, 57; Craig Taylor, *Chivalry and the Ideals of Knighthood in France during the Hundred Years War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 52-76.
[120] Sumption, *The Hundred Years War. Trial by Fire*, 223, 348-349.

Unsurprisingly, not all *routiers* shared such an economic approach to violence and its parasitic nature, for, as noted by one unnamed man-at-arms interviewed by Froissart, "the man who does not know how to set places on fire, to rob churches and usurp their rights and to imprison the priests, is not deemed fit to carry on war."[121] To the grave misfortune of the countryside, many *routiers*' desire for material gain was rivaled, if not surpassed, by their desire for destruction. While many violent incidents against peasantry were initiated following a refusal to accept ransoming or a rejection of *appatizment*—the practice of living off the countryside through "protection rackets"—others required no provocation at all and had no apparent strategy for negotiation.[122] The captains of the Great Companies—like Seguin de Badefol—were known to have understood their "agreement" with the peasantry, demonstrated through exploitation of the land for as long as possible rather than initiating swift bloodshed. Simultaneously, other *routiers* partook in a less sophisticated, but more brutal method of acquiring goods.[123] Yvain de Galles and Arnaud de Cervole—two of the most notorious *routiers* of their period—were strong proponents of this more direct style, with both men willingly participating in "all the acts of war," including murder, rape, theft, and the destruction of towns, while encouraging their men to do the same.[124]

During the fourteenth century, late-medieval society in France and England was subjected to a complex blend of public and private violence. When one examines the relationship between military communities and popular authorities, especially the

[121] Wright, *Knights and Peasants*, 64-69; Froissart, *Chroniques*, 72.
[122] Fowler, *Medieval Mercenaries*, 135-141; Wright, *Knights and Peasants*, 65-66; Green, *A People's History*, 45-48.
[123] Fowler, *Medieval Mercenaries*, 135-141.
[124] Wright, *Knights and Peasants*, 69; Sumption, *The Hundred Years War. Trial by Fire*, 489-509.

activities of *routiers* and their application of economies of terror, the complexities of this relationship become evident. This gradient of brutality within the companies—ranging from the "true enterprises" of the great captains to common outlawry and banditry—complicates less-nuanced representations of private military communities, demonstrating a movement generally filled with cunning, rather than animalistic brutality.[125] As shown in this chapter, the *routiers* were capable of a broad range of interactions with popular authorities, ranging from leniency and patience to sudden utter cruelty. The duality of this relationship with society—founded on the *routiers'* need to either parasitically engorge themselves or engage in acts of wanton bloodshed—would come to typify private military service during the late-fourteenth century.

Subjects in Defiance

In response to depredations of *routiers* and the devastation wrought by the *chevauchée* of English armies, popular authorities reacted erratically, heavily influenced by regional experiences with violence, local factors, and fear. Unlike other facets of authority examined in this thesis, popular authorities do not have a true hierarchy with clear distinctions between ranks or a specific leader, real or nominal. While the phrase "popular authority," sounds official and is organized in appearance, in reality it is a comprehensive term which refers the collective identity of the lower orders, including legitimate authorities such as city councils or provosts and unofficial sources of authority, for instance urban mobs and the leaders of peasant revolts. The haphazard nature of this "authority structure," was reflected in the lack of general unity across the communities of France— with different regions focusing primarily upon their own self-defense—and the

[125] Fowler, *Medieval Mercenaries*, 135-141, 168-175; Sumption, *The Hundred Years War. Trial by Fire*, 410-417.

lack of coordination in efforts to confront the *routiers*. In contrast to ecclesiastical and royal authorities, there were few over-arching plans or coordinated efforts on an interregional level.

When instances of intraregional cooperation did occur, they were frequently limited in scope and by the lack of material contributions, for without royal subsidies local assemblies were forced to fund operations themselves.[126] The siege of the *routiers'* stronghold at Semur highlights these troubles, as the regional assemblies of Auvergne—devastated by the operations of the companies—could not afford to continue paying troops besieging the fortress.[127] This financial failure resulted in many soldiers deserting, with some even joining the *routiers* inside Semur. These complications would result in a vicious cycle, as the operations of the *routiers* gradually destroyed local tax bases—resulting in less local income— thus removing any possibility of local agents removing the *routiers* with their own resources.[128] Many cities in the vicinity of such activities—rather than striking out in support of their neighbors—would focus upon reinforcing their own positions or gathering bribes, enabling the *routiers* to migrate and spread as a movement. Seguin du Badefol's ransom of the entirety of Auvergne demonstrates the lack of solidarity among regional Estates, as Seguin—granted a royal pardon, papal absolution, and 40,000 gold florins—departed from Auvergne, but left his captains behind to raid the rest of southern France.[129]

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[126] Wright, *Knights and Peasants*, 84-88, 116, 126.
[127] Wright, *Knights and Peasants*, 42-43, 68-69, 122-125; Sumption, *The Hundred Years War. Trial by Fire*, 382.
[128] Wright, *Knights and Peasants*, 97-98; Fowler, *Medieval Mercenaries*, 82, 106; Sumption, *The Hundred Years War. Trial by Fire*, 356-357.
[129] Wright, *Knights and Peasants*, 52-54; Fowler, *Medieval Mercenaries*, 37-44.

Even when cities coordinated in their efforts, it was no guarantee of success. When Burgundian cities hired the *routiers* captain Guiot du Pin to clear-out the countryside, he took their money and set about attacking them himself on a campaign of despoilation.[130] This lack of unity and general difficulty in the face of opposition was especially evident in the countryside, as those which refused to flee to the safety of cities were often incapable of offering effective resistance or deterring aggression on their own. When faced with aggression in the countryside, peasantry had few options, and none which were especially palatable. While brave stands against the tyranny of oppression and violence often stand out in popular imagination or literature, they are hardly realistic or practical when applied to circumstances found in the fourteenth century French countryside. Without prepared stone defenses, effective planning, or a well-trained militia, heroism in the countryside rarely prevailed in the face of seasoned pillagers.[131] The frequency with which attacks occurred in the countryside—ranging from theft or kidnapping to outright assault—and the fear of such encounters made the preparation of "hidden redoubts" and the practice of concealment common.[132] Some communities in Languedoc would take the risk of assault so seriously, that the arrival of any party "greater than a man and his servant," could warrant the emergency evacuation of the town.[133] This fear of raids by the enemy, the visceral human cost of subservience to *routiers*, and the "inhuman horrors" inflicted upon many in the countryside are apparent in contemporary documents. The following excerpt was found etched into the back-cover

[130] Wright, *Knights and Peasants*, 73; Fowler, *Medieval Mercenaries*, 88-98.
[131] Wright, *Knights and Peasants*, 113-115; Fowler, *Medieval Mercenaries*, 133, 230.
[132] Green, *A People's History,* 50-56; Fowler, *Medieval Mercenaries*, 72-75.
[133] Fowler, *Medieval Mercenaries*, 79-84; Sumption, *The Hundred Years War. Trial by Fire*, 471-483, 502-507.

of a manuscript belonging to the Prior of Yonne in 1358, and is a letter written by a local concerning the writer's many sufferings.

> Some they [*routiers*] shut up in dark dungeons, threatening them daily with death, and continually punishing them with whippings, wounds, hunger and want beyond belief. But others had nothing with which to pay ransom or they were unwilling to submit to the power of the English. To escape from their hands these made themselves huts in the woods and there ate their bread with fear, sorrow, and great anguish. But the English learned of this and they resolutely sought out these hiding places, searching numerous woods and putting many men to death there… I am writing this out behind our barn on Wednesday, the festival of St. Martin 1359, because I do not dare write elsewhere. Do you who live in cities and castles ever see trouble equal to my trouble? Farewell, Hugh.[134]

As noted by Thomas Basin, Bishop of Lisieux, hiding was the preferred method of many in the countryside for "it was a common and frequent thing, and seen everywhere, that oxen and horses which had heard the watchkeepers' signal and were detached from their ploughs, would, without further prompting and out of sheer habit, rush to the nearest place of safety."[135] Woods, caves, marshes, and wastelands made concealed positions readily available and provided a refuge until the intentions of interlopers could be discovered.[136]

Should sustained concealment fail to prove effective in dissuading enemies from remaining, three options were left to peasantry: negotiation, flight, and resistance. As mentioned previously, when *routiers* engaged in the process of *appatizment* with local populations—the mechanism used by *routiers* to live off the land—they frequently began with formal negotiations, either with the town or its chosen representative.[137] The value

[134] Rogers, *The Wars of Edward III*, 534-535.
[135] Wright, *Knights and Peasants*, 57-60.
[136] Wright, *Knights and Peasants*, 96-101.
[137] Wright, *Knights and Peasants*, 76-79, 97-98; Sumption, *The Hundred Years War. Trial by Fire*, 169-171; Fowler, *Medieval Mercenaries*, 228-236.

of a community's ransom varied immensely and the burdens of *patis* which followed were equally diverse, however, several general trends in the practice do exist. Local garrisons, upon establishing a *route*—a base of operations for a company—at a nearby castle or even within the village itself, would typically begin with the sale of safe-conducts, theoretically, offering safe passage to anyone passing through their territory.[138]

Once control of over nearby waterways, bridges, and roads was established, the garrison would send representatives to nearby communities to judge the worth of their "contributions" to the garrison—often paid in goods, livestock, and service, rather than specie—and demand an immediate ransom, the value of which could fluctuate enormously. To mitigate the damage of the *patis*, villages often equally distributed the burdens. However, such communities were rarely capable of sustaining large bands on their own, and records indicate that some were depopulated in as few as two months.[139] Of course, it is again worth noting that this process could be skipped entirely, should the company in question simply wish to take goods through force and violence, rather than terror. This gradient of violence applied by the *routiers*—and their approach to the application of economies of terror—would become a defining characteristic of the struggle in the countryside, as the peasantry often did not know how *routiers* would behave or how they should react.

Flight from the countryside was another method used by peasantry to avoid the struggle of living in the shadow of *routiers* or over-zealous garrisons, and contemporaries often describe conditions faced by those who sought the safety of cities. In 1358, Jean de Venette noted that:

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[138] Wright, *Knights and Peasants*, 102-103; Sumption, *The Hundred Years War. Trial by Fire*, 380-389.
[139] Wright, *Knights and Peasants*, 102-107; Fowler, *Medieval Mercenaries*, 72-74, 92.

> Losses and injuries were inflicted by friend and foe alike upon the rural population and upon monasteries standing in the open country. Everyone robbed them of their goods and there was no one to defend them. For this reason, many men and women, both secular and religious were compelled on all sides to leave their abode and seek out the city. There was not a monastery in the neighborhood of Paris, however near, that was not driven by fear of freebooters to enter the city or some other fortification, abandoning their building and, 'Woe is me!' leaving the divine offices unsung. This tribulation increased in volume, not only around Paris but also in the neighborhood of Orleans, Tours, Nantes in Brittany, Chartres, and Le Mans, in an amazing way. Villages were burned and their population plundered. Men hastened to the cities with their carts and their goods, their wives and their children, in lamentable fashion.[140]

While at first glance flight may appear to be a relatively simple method of avoiding violence, abandoning one's property and fleeing to the cities entailed a wide range of complications, economic, social, political, and military in nature. Indeed, refugees represented a significant burden on cities—in both space and food—and military leaders were often unwilling to risk the security of their positions for sake of foreign populations. Henry V's siege of Rouen in 1418 epitomizes these realities, as the captain of Rouen ordered any citizen who could not provide up to ten months of provisions for themselves and their family—after already suffering siege for six months—to be expelled from the city, regardless of the enemies outside the gates.[141] Several thousand citizens—and an unknown number of refugees from the countryside—would die of starvation as a result, after they were forced from the city and stranded between the besieging army.[142]

Should negotiations fail or become too burdensome to maintain—and if flight proved to be impossible—some peasantry would attempt to fight, using rural fortifications to resist siege and even sallying forth to attack in some instances. The

[140] Wright, *Knights and Peasants*, 89-94, 96-97.
[141] Wright, *Knights and Peasants*, 100.
[142] Wright, *Knights and Peasants*, 100.

construction of rural defenses typically centered around the fortification of parish churches—which will be discussed later in chapter three—as, noted by Jean de Venette, "The peasants in open villages, with no fortifications of their own made fortresses of their churches by surrounding them with good ditches, protecting the towers and belfries with planks as one does castles, and stocking them with stones and crossbows."[143] The desire to fortify one's immediate environs would become a defining characteristic of the war in the countryside, as many French peasantry stubbornly refused to submit to the *routiers* or abandon their homes and flee to the cities. In the region of Saintonge alone, over seventy town "citadels" would be constructed and ninety churches would be retrofitted into improvised "town fortresses." However, such preparations would be to ultimate detriment of all, as will be treated in greater length in chapter three.[144]

Local attacks against *routiers*—either through sallies during sieges or in raids on their redoubts throughout the countryside—was another method used by popular authorities to strike against their tormentors. Despite its scholarly emphasis on the role of class-conflict, the events, cause, and history of the *Jacquerie*—the most famous peasant revolt in late-medieval France—represented far more than an attempt at expressing rage over transgressions by nobility; for in allowing depredations on such a scale to occur, royal authorities revealed their utter inability to defeat enemies of public order. This failure on the part of the crown and nobility would serve as justification for "self-help" by peasantry and their decision to act independently of royal or seignorial authorities. Even royal garrisons, tasked with guarding citadel of many towns throughout France,

[143] Wright, *Knights and Peasants*, 102-103; Sumption, *The Hundred Years War. Trial by Fire*, 382-389.
[144] Sumption, *The Hundred Years War. Trial by Fire*, 446-452.

would not escape unscathed, as some communities took to arresting their own garrisons for a variety of crimes, both real and imagined.[145]

While efforts by peasantry were sometimes effective in mitigating attacks by *routiers* on a local and regional level, they were incapable of decisively defeating the companies and forcing their dissolution. It would not be until the late 1360s that some regions began to not only remove the shackles of the *patis* but also destroy the *routiers'* ability to persist as a movement.[146] Languedoc, Auvergne, and other southern regions—bolstered by cooperation, royal assistance, and coordination among local assemblies—gradually cleared the countryside of the companies, forcing them from their castles and driving them from the lowlands surrounding the *Massif Central*. However, due to limitations in source materials—as the lower orders often left little written record behind—it is incredibly difficult to evaluate rural contributions to regional monopolizations of violence. While it is possible to note when general shifts in the success of the companies occurred, understanding the nuances of all local and regional measures is incredibly difficulty, given the scarcity of source materials and the unique nature of each event.

[145] Sumption, *The Hundred Years War. Trial by Fire*, 385-395.
[146] Fowler, *Medieval Mercenaries*, 293-301.

CHAPTER III:

THE DILEMMA OF THE FAITHFUL: ECCLESIASTICAL AUTHORITIES AND VIOLENCE DURING THE HUNDRED YEARS WAR

Violence against ecclesiastics during the Hundred Years War did not consist simply of mindless acts of cruel and selfish debauchery, though that certainly did occur. Rather, it was a complex and multiform phenomenon, with private actors, peasants, kings, and even other clergy using bloodshed against the church to advance their agendas. The war-time protections which, theoretically, applied to men of the cloth during conflict—shielding them and ecclesiastical property from the horrors of war—were not respected and in the absence of strong secular supporters, violence was generally not deterred. Likewise, the legal and theologian sanctions prohibiting clerical involvement in warfare were also disregarded, with ecclesiastics from England and France taking up arms not only in defense of their homes, but also abroad against their enemies.

Violence against ecclesiastics—more so than conflict between laity, even that against the lower orders—represents a decisive expansion, in both quantity and variety, of exploitation and violence against the church, often against the ideal and romanticized understandings of warfare, chivalry, and proper conduct during the fourteenth century. The degree to which ecclesiastics were targeted by military communities, and the brutality demonstrated in many of their interactions, necessitates a greater emphasis on their relationship with violence as a victim, rather than their role in monopolizing violence as an authority structure. A reexamination of ecclesiastical interactions with

violence and some of their methods used to control bloodshed, will fill gaps in recent literature and push the study of late-medieval violence into a broader context, beyond the rigid structure of state-oriented examinations.

Despite its declining influence over the temporal rulers of Europe and rising political divisions within the hierarchy of the Church—seen through the emergence of the Avignon Papacy in 1309—ecclesiastical authority during the fourteenth century still constituted a powerful cultural, economic, and political force in society. Ecclesiastics, in all their forms, represented an incredibly diverse transnational organization which permeated all aspects of medieval culture, politics, and faith, regardless of political affiliation or status. Servants of the church came from all walks of life and served a plethora of roles within medieval society, from arbiters of peace, patrons, and community figures to almsgivers and litigators. In addition to their religious labors, clergymen were a foundational element within the administration and governance of late-medieval society, for their roles were not isolated to just matters of faith.[147]

Over the course of the fourteenth century, ecclesiastics—who had played, generally, an indirect role in warfare through patronage, spiritual sanctions and benefits, and financial support—became increasingly more exposed to "temporal" responsibilities, such as regional security, tax collection, royal government, and, often against their will, war.[148] Decades of intermittent conflicts between England, Scotland, and France, alongside frequent border skirmishes, and attacks by military communities of all degrees placed significant strain on ecclesiastical life. As a source of regional leadership, wealth,

[147] Green, *A People's History*, 66-72.
[148] Green, *A People's History*, 66-72; Daniel E. Thiery, "Plowshares and Swords: Clerical Involvement in Acts of Violence and Peacemaking in Late Medieval England, C.1400–1536," *Albion* 36, no. 2 (2004): 201-222, https://doi.org/10.2307/4054213.

and stability, the church was not spared. As seen in the previous excerpt from Jean de Venette, monasteries, convents, abbeys and other religious houses were regularly attacked without mercy by the commanders and soldiery of England, occasionally France, and roving bands of former soldiers. Contemporaries frequently describe the nature of violence against ecclesiastical personnel and land, lamenting damages against the church by legitimate royal actors and the "bad men," as one chronicler described them.[149] Attacks upon the life and wellbeing of the church were incredibly varied, with motivations, methods, and justifications for violence being equally complex.

Indeed, in Jean de Bueil's *Le Jouvencel*—a semi-autobiographical work used to teach young nobles about the chivalric principles of discipline, ethics, and leadership—one leader advises a young man to seize "tribute" from the king's subjects, even clergymen, "from which we are assigned our proper wages."[150] In addition to teaching the ideals of chivalric tradition, Jean de Bueil's captain also provides more practical advice to up-and-coming soldiers, such as how to organize a raid on a village or seize a fort by escalade, entailing the use of ladders to storm a position at night. The act of ransoming the countryside or seizing "tribute" for military service to the crown—often done with permission from the king's deputies—is described frequently in *Le Jouvencel* and was a fiercely debated aspect of military service, especially when such practices touched ecclesiastics.[151] The captain advising the young soldier in *Le Jouvencel* to seize wages from the king's subjects continues, stating:

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[149] Knighton, *Knighton's Chronicle*, 87; Wright, *Knights and Peasants,* 65-66; Green, *A People's History*, 72-81.
[150] Wright, *Knights and Peasants,* 40; *Le Jouvencal*, 97, 92-93.
[151] Frederick H. Russell, *The Just War in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge etc.: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 89-94, 188-214.

> If it please the king, our lord, to supply us with victuals and money to sustain us, we will service him in all his enterprises and obey all his orders—as indeed we must do—Without levying or exacting anything from the inhabitants of the countryside here. If, however, other affairs, or false counsel, prevent him from provisioning or paying us, we ourselves must raise victuals and finance both from out persons in our obedience and from enemies, as reasonably as we can. From those of our side we will demand as modest a collection as we can, telling them that their contributions will guarantee them against everybody.[152]

The regularity with which looting was used by soldiery and leaders compounds the difficulty of identifying perpetrators, further obfuscating violence against ecclesiastics and confusing contemporary understandings of a "just war."[153] Those recording incidents of violence against the church—often lacking information or military training—were sometimes incapable of discerning men in royal service from those engaging in freebooting, brigandage, and private seigniorial war.[154] The often vague separation between military service for the public war and participation in private conflicts for self-aggrandizement remains a continued source of frustration not only for contemporaries, but also historians as well. As noted in Nicholas Wright's study of violence in the French countryside, "A soldier could now reasonably claim that his service to the crown was not incompatible with the plunder of its subjects, and non-combatants might find themselves attacked by "just warriors" from all sides."[155]

Following the sharp-decline of royal authority and military power in France during the late 1350s—a direct result of French defeats in the field and civil strife following the uprising of the *Jacquerie*—ecclesiastical communities across France were

[152] Wright, *Knights and Peasants*, 40; *Le Jouvencal*, 83.
[153] Russell, *The Just War in the Middle Ages*, 89-94, 188-214; Phillip Gray, "Just War, Schism, and Peace in St. Augustine," *Ethics, Nationalism, and Just War*, 51-71, https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt2850st.9.
[154] Green, *A People's History*, 42-47.
[155] Wright, *Knights and Peasants*, 36-42.

left exposed and at the mercy of their assailants, be they English, Gascon, Breton or French. At the Benedictine priory of Arpajon, only thirty miles from the gates of Paris, over a thousand residents of the town were betrayed and killed, after its garrison set fire to the fortified priory with many inhabitants trapped inside. The French garrison, using the blaze and townsfolk as a diversion, retreated to a nearby gatehouse while attempting to save themselves, leaving the people within the priory to their gruesome fate.[156] The several hundred survivors who managed to escape this treachery and flee from the priory were indiscriminately put to the sword soon after by the besieging English army.

The betrayal at Arpajon and the construction of local fortifications in the countryside would come to typify violence against ecclesiastics in rural regions. Far from the cities and lesser urban centers—which were invariably the strongholds of regional power and authority—the countryside would be left largely to its own devices, forced to make their own preparations and negotiations with attackers. When garrisons were dispatched, they could cause just as many problems as the pillagers, for regional authorities often employed *routiers* and even local garrisons were known to engage in "self-help" on occasion. Merigot Marches, an English *routier* garrisoned in Gascony, often recounted to Froissart of the "good days," when "we rode out on adventure and might seize a rich abbot or a rich prior."[157]

The troops stationed at Comblisy engaged in similar activities, forcing local clergy to serve as their "chaplains" and "sing masses at dinner" in their castle.[158] In response to such widespread and devastating attacks, towns and other lesser population

[156] Sumption, *The Hundred Years War. Trial by Fire*, 315, 430.
[157] Wright, *Knights and Peasants*, 48-55, 63-65.
[158] Wright, *Knights and Peasants*, 73-78.

centers began fortifying their immediate vicinities—typically parish churches—with or without the approval of royal authorities.[159] Though officially belonging to the crown, the right of the king to whom "us alone belongs the right to build and defend fortresses of the land," was largely ignored during the mid-fourteenth century, even by royal supporters.[160] Ironically, not only was the fortification of churches in direct violation of royal laws, but also ecclesiastical canons.

Royal commissioners sent to inspect the *baillage* of Caen in 1371 discovered in that region alone over one hundred prepared positions—fortified without the approval of the crown— ranging from fortified abbeys and churches to town "citadels" and "forts" of varying strength.[161] Jonathan Sumption's examination of the defenses surrounding Gâtinais found a similar state of affairs, with "in this small region alone six castles, twelve forts, five towers, five fortified houses, twenty eight fortified churches, and a fortified bridge, an average of one fortified building every 3 miles."[162] The rapid fortification of parish churches and urban centers across France was not overlooked by contemporaries. During Charles of Navarre's period of brief success against the Valois in the Île-de-France, Jean de Venette noted that "everywhere, men were building timber platforms around the tops of their bell towers, digging ditches at the base, collecting stocks of food and piling up great stones to throw down on their assailants."[163] By the early 1360s—only a few years after John II's defeat at Poitiers—it is understood that most rural religious houses were fortified to some degree, however, most were of

[159] Sumption, *The Hundred Years War. Trial by Fire*, 378-392, 487-492; Wright, *Knights and Peasants*, 102-103.
[160] Wright, *Knights and Peasants*, 106-111.
[161] Sumption, *The Hundred Years War. Trial by Fire*, 386-395; Wright, *Knights and Peasants*, 99-102.
[162] Sumption, *The Hundred Years War. Trial by Fire*, 379, 380-382.
[163] Sumption, *The Hundred Years War. Trial by Fire*, 346, 386.

insignificant military value due to limited manpower, resources, and the defenders' lack of military experience.

Though less impactful than the outright destruction of church property by hostile actors, the fortification and garrisoning of religious houses presented unique obstacles to devotional life, forcing ecclesiastics to live near soldiery, accommodate their needs, and modify their edifices. In France, the inability of royal lieutenants and other regional leaders to effectively defend their provinces—often lacking the resources to defeat their foes in the field or properly fortify positions—forced rural populations to rely primarily upon self-defense. When castles and fortified manors were not available, local populations turned to religious houses. In one event near Orléans, at the church of St. Aignan, communities entered into an agreement with local monks, which allowed the fortification of the church in exchange for financial support and contributions to guard duty.[164] Fortified around 1356, the church of St. Aignan was described as having "a captain, a new well, a mill and baking oven, store-rooms filled with victuals, and a permanent garrison of thirty men."[165] While some rural regions would receive assistance from the crown—typically seen through the provision of a royal garrison, subsidies, or stone masons—often such endeavors were entirely self-funded, pushing local resources and manpower beyond their limits, with cities receiving the bulk of an already paltry sum of royal assistance.

Despite this show of initiative by the monks of St. Aignan, the decision to strengthen an ecclesiastical site was not always self-imposed. Royal commissioners and lieutenants, acting on behalf of the crown, often issued ultimatums requiring the

[164] Sumption, *The Hundred Years War. Trial by Fire*, 386-389.
[165] Sumption, *The Hundred Years War. Trial by Fire*, 389.

fortification of a position or its complete destruction. In late 1356, the royal lieutenant of Lower Normandy requested that the newly reconstructed Benedictine abbey of Bec either strengthen their position or destroy it.[166] By the end of the year they had dug ditches surrounding the entire perimeter, demolished a significant portion of the complex, and, using the recovered masonry, constructed walls surrounding the chapels as well as battlements on the church, belfries, and towers. In addition to their static defenses, the monks acquired a vast store of war materials and hired a standing garrison, the cost of which nearly exceeded their revenue and exhausted their food stores. According to the abbey chronicle, the fortification of the position left them in a dire financial situation and "without space to conduct any services."[167]

The financial and physical consequences of ecclesiastical involvement in regional defense would apply further stress to an already limited pool of resources. Isolated religious houses, many refusing demolition, would attempt to hold out in the countryside and fortify— with limited success—their positions at their own expense. The addition of this financial burden, despite the limited military value of these preparations—in combination with the general destruction of rural regions in France—would drive many religious houses into destitution, rendering them incapable of helping themselves or their communities.

Indeed, even major cities found it ruinous to re-fortify their sprawling eleventh and twelfth century walls. Following the Black Prince's *Grande Chevauchée* in 1355—which burned a path across southern France from western Armagnac to Narbonne—the city of Montpellier borrowed enormous sums of money to refit its defenses. Loans from

[166] Sumption, *The Hundred Years War. Trial by Fire*, 389.
[167] Sumption, *The Hundred Years War. Trial by Fire*, 389.

the papacy were organized, new taxes levied—despite the destruction of the city—and even funds earmarked for the reconstruction of religious houses and various urban charities within the city would be diverted.[168] Six years after beginning this program of reconstruction the city of Montpellier was effectively bankrupt, with the king seizing property from prominent citizens for failure to deliver taxes and the pope threatening excommunication to enforce the city's debts.[169]

As shown previously in chapter one, private conflicts and attacks upon the wellbeing of the church in France did not come solely from those seeking to despoil its ruins. However well-intentioned, the demolition of church holdings outside of city walls and in the countryside—though deemed a necessary and tested military measure by contemporaries—was equally destructive to church property. At the city of Sens alone in 1359, approximately fifteen church possessions were put to the torch after the *bailli* of Sens ordered the destruction of two monasteries, two churches, a Franciscan convent, a hospital, a pilgrims' hospice, several water mills, and various fortified religious houses, in order to prepare for siege.[170] No mention of recompense for the destruction of property was made at the time of demolition.

When one moves beyond the immediate environs of a city, the destruction of church property becomes even more evident. Following the events of the *Jacquerie* and Étienne Marcel's seizure of Paris, town councils and mobs alike took to destroying various "ill-prepared" positions and "*petites fortresses*" throughout the countryside of

[168] Richard Barber, *The Life and Campaigns of the Black Prince: From Contemporary Letters, Diaries and Chronicles, Including Chandos Herald's Life of the Black Prince* (London: 1979), 76-83; Sumption, *The Hundred Years War. Trial by Fire*, 394-395.
[169] Sumption, *The Hundred Years War. Trial by Fire*, 395-396.
[170] Sumption, *The Hundred Years War. Trial by Fire*, 380, 399.

northern France, often on their own initiative.[171] By mid-1358, the destruction of fortified churches and other positions became more formalized, with the Estates-General of Paris drafting the first program of regional demolition and other provinces, including Languedoc, Champagne, and Picardy, swiftly following suit.[172] It should be noted that the destruction of ecclesiastical possessions in the countryside—as with those outside city walls prior to siege—was generally viewed as a proper and tested measure to improve regional security. Froissart observes that French aides to the Castilian crown often advocated for the destruction of church property in the countryside, the advisors stating:

> We have been told that the people of your kingdom fortify churches and bell-towers and use them as refuges for themselves and their goods. You must know that this will be to the great loss and injury of your kingdom, for, when the English ride out, these little fortresses in churches and bell-towers will not hold out against them. Rather will they be sustained and nourished by what they find within them.[173]

Despite his tendency for embellishment, the truth behind this phenomenon and Froissart's intent in crafting this passage is clear. The proliferation of self-funded and locally constructed defenses across France—typically lacking the men, training, or means to effectively defend against professional pillagers—provided *routiers* bands with a continuous supply of semi-prepared positions throughout the countryside. The operations of *routiers* captain Raymond de Mareuil's company in Picardy highlights this problem as, after several years of ransoming the countryside, Raymond de Mareuil counted eleven fortified churches among his collection of rural positions in Picardy alone.[174]

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[171] Sumption, *The Hundred Years War. Trial by Fire*, 391-393; Wright, *Knights and Peasants*, 87-93.
[172] Sumption, *The Hundred Years War. Trial by Fire*, 391-393; Wright, *Knights and Peasants*, 87-93.
[173] Wright, *Knights and Peasants*, 68; Sumption, *The Hundred Years War. Trial by Fire*, 391-394.
[174] Sumption, *The Hundred Years War. Trial by Fire*, 393.

English ecclesiastics, though far removed from the depredations of the *routiers* and the terror of the *chevauchée*, also suffered from conflict. Franco-Castilian raiding along the Channel Coast and sporadic assaults by Scottish pillagers reaped a bloody toll during periods of English military decline. Neither the threat of Scottish incursions into northern England nor the fear of attack, though greatly diminished following David II's defeat at Neville's cross in 1346, ever completely dissipated, even during times of English strength. In response to these fears, drastic measures were implemented to ensure that northern England was in a state of martial readiness. The call for clerical musters by the English state, with the approval of regional ecclesiastics, would be a drastic shift in the relationship between violence and the church. Not only would men of the cloth be arrayed like their secular counterparts, but would also, theoretically, march alongside secular soldiery, like *routiers* and local levies.

Royal writs and prominent ecclesiastics called the clergy to muster several times during the late fourteenth century, even after the decline of Scottish military strength, ordering bishops to:

> Cause all abbots, priors, and men of religion and other ecclesiastical persons of your diocese whatsoever to be armed and arrayed, furnished with arms every man between the ages aforesaid according to his estate and means, and put in thousands, hundreds, and twenties, so that they shall be ready with other of the king's lieges to march against the said enemies within the realm, with God's help to overcome and destroy them, defeating and crushing their insolence and malice.[175]

Several ecclesiastics in England took the duty of regional defense even further. In Durham, York, Worcester, and in other northern counties, clerical involvement in armed

[175] Curry, *The Hundred Years War Revisited*, London: Red Globe Press, 2019, 92-93.

city watches was common and patrols into the countryside were organized.[176] Moreover, in 1369, 1377, and 1386 John Buckingham called for his own clerical musters. In addition to his calls for clerical arrays, Buckingham—serving as bishop of Lincoln—stipulated not only the training, equipment standards, and services required for clerks and clergymen within his diocese, but also their retinues, requiring ecclesiastics of a certain income to provide and arm additional fighting men.[177] While there are several key differences between clerical musters and other methods of military service during the mid-fourteenth century—for instance, their use in primarily defensive rather than offensive actions—secular influence on the mechanics and phrasing of clerical musters is still evident, seen primarily in the provision of additional "armed men" by affluent ecclesiastics. The aforementioned measures, and others, are similar—if not direct copies—of the retinue-based methods of secular military organization during the later fourteenth century.

In his study of the Lincoln diocese, *The Age of War and Wycliffe: Lincoln Diocese and its Bishop in the Later Fourteenth Century,* A.K. McHardy states that some of Buckingham's preparations for a clerical muster included:

> Any clerk having a benefice worth between 40 and 100 marks a year was to be armed with plates to protect both breast and back, a helmet with visor, protective armor for the stomach, arms, thighs, knees and lower legs, and with gloves of mail; but as a substitute for this expensive plate-armor he could wear a leather tunic and an over- shirt of chain mail. He was also to provide a lance, shield, sword, knife and three horses. A clerk with an annual income of 100 marks but less than 150 was to be accompanied by an armed man whose equipment was little different from his master's. Clerks whose income was between 20 and 40 marks were to be armed like their richer colleagues, or to send a similarly equipped man in their place, but they were not expected to provide a horse. Benefices

[176] Thiery, "Plowshares and Swords, Clerical Involvement in Acts of Violence and Peacemaking in Late Medieval England, c. 1400-1536," 18.
[177] Thiery, "Plowshares and Swords," 17-22.

> worth less than 20 a year would provide the equipment for an archer only, so the poorer clergy were ordered to prepare themselves for archery service, or to find a deputy. All chaplains skilled in the art of archery were to be ready to give the same service.[178]

Buckingham's preparations harken back to older manorial understandings of forced military service to one's lord or patron, a practice which had largely fallen out of favor by the mid-fourteenth century due to the unreliability of forced levies on the battlefield. The implementation of this system—which had not been previously applied so broadly to ecclesiastics—in response to the fear of violence, resulted in some dioceses being readied for war in a manner not unlike secular musters. While the application of secular military practice to clerical musters may appear minor—even reasonable—when isolated to the context of one incident, these actions would be duplicated across northern England, further blurring the distinction between those who "normally" participated in warfare and individuals apart from it. In creating clerical militias, and organizing them under the auspices of the king, the state not only contributed to the dissolution of this societal and religious division concerning violence, for it also tread upon many core tenets of ecclesiastical life and service in the church.[179] Ironically, such measures were understood to be against canon law, yet received significant episcopal support.

Though employed principally in defensive actions—apart from the Bishop of Norwich's invasion of Flanders in 1383—clerical musters in England represent a fascinating parallel to secular military service, typically seen in interactions with the *routiers* and other military communities during this period. Despite theological and legal prohibitions, some clerical participation in war-time activities was now being directed

[178] A. K. McHardy, *The Age of War and Wycliffe: Lincoln Diocese and Its Bishop in the Later Fourteenth Century* (Lincoln: Lincoln Cathedral Publications, 2001), 47-52.
[179] McHardy, *The Age of War and Wycliffe*, 32-39.

under the auspices of the crown; and even though it required the consent of the English clergy, it was Parliament and the king, not the diocesan leaders who were the impetus behind this movement.

In France, ecclesiastical participation in violence was less centralized and often done on the prerogative of an individual, rather than the state. It is important to note, that not all clerical interactions with violence were defensive. Alongside clergymen who restrained themselves to solely defensive actions—such as Abbot Haimo of Offington and Prior Lew of Suxxex's actions against French raiders—were more martially inclined ecclesiastics. In France, Guillaume de Melun, Archbishop of Sens, was known to have fought alongside his retinue under Jean II at Poitiers. In the Lowlands, Richard Courtenay, an English bishop, died of disease while participating in the siege of Harfleur, and in England, Thomas Hatfield, Bishop of Lincoln, was the first northern baron to fight overseas against the French.

The oratory of royal propagandists and fervent ecclesiastics would further obfuscate the distinction between martial clerics and secular soldiery. The rhetoric of national defense, so often applied by supporters of English and French royal power, would eventually expand to include the language of rebellion—seen in the Black Prince's punitive expeditions against "recalcitrant vassals" in Aquitaine—and holy war, culminating in the Bishop of Norwich's brutal Crusade against the supporters of Pope Clement VII in 1383. The language of rebellion would "legitimize" otherwise excessive punitive actions and enable a degree of violence usually only accepted during incidents of treason. Charles VI's letter of pardon and safeguard to the abbot of Saint-Léonard de Ferrières, who was "threatened with expulsion and having their abbey razed, they had to,

yielding to violence, take an oath of allegiance to the Prince of Wales," demonstrates the importance of receiving protections against such reprisals.[180] French ecclesiastics who swore fealty to the English, despite such oaths being given under the threat of violence, were sometimes treated as traitors—regardless of their status as clergymen—and were shown little mercy at times as a result. However, incidents involving the punishment of ecclesiastics for "treason"—on the authority of secular leaders—were the exception, rather than the rule. As seen in the Black Prince's conquest of Carcassonne in 1355, measures were taken to ensure the protection of ecclesiastical property during the "punishment" of "false vassals." Geoffrey le Baker noted that the Black Prince, after being offered a bribe to depart by the city to depart, said:

> That he had come to seek justice, not gold; to take cities, not sell them. Then, since the citizens remained in fear of the French usurper and did not wish to obey their natural lord (or else did not dare to do so because they feared the revenge of the aforesaid French usurper), the prince ordered the next day that the town be put to the torch, religious buildings being spared.[181]

Despite this trend, it is noteworthy that the fate of ecclesiastical possessions in the other, roughly, 500 "towns, places, and castles" destroyed by the Black Prince during this campaign, was left almost unrecorded, with only a few brief mentions being made.[182]

As with violence against ecclesiastics in France, not all attacks against the church in England came from enemies of the realm. In some instances, even English soldiers in royal service participated in attacks against church holdings, when pay was not forthcoming, delays in transport occurred, and, if one chronicler can be believed, because

[180] Rogers, *War Cruel and Sharp*, 318.
[181] Rogers, *War Cruel and Sharp*, 332-338.
[182] Rogers, *War Cruel and Sharp*, 337.

they were bored.[183] Following Edward III's invasion of France in 1355, men serving in garrisons along the Scottish border fled south to the Cinque ports in hopes of "enjoying a more glamorous and lucrative form of warfare under the King's eye."[184] However, upon finding transport across the channel delayed and after several months of waiting, some began turning to banditry. Moreover, in late October 1379, the English army of Brittany—bivouacked near the Solent while awaiting transport to the continent—took to intermittently looting the villages and churches surrounding Hampshire for nearly two months, until enough transports were seized for the king's service to successfully embark.[185]

Indeed, even agents of the papacy found themselves unable to travel unscathed during this time. Following the failure of papal peace mediations in late-1359, the cardinals of Périgord and Urgel were waylaid by an armed band while en-route back to Avignon, with their baggage train and personal possessions being stolen.[186] Even more daring were the attempts by *routiers* bands and confederations to prey upon the region of Provence and Avignon itself, the seat of the Papacy, and thus Christendom, during the Babylonian Captivity. From 1357 to 1375, no less than six attempts were made, with varying degrees of success, to establish strongholds within the vicinity of Avignon.[187] It was during this time that Arnaud de Cervole infamously managed to ransom papal lands from Pope Innocent VI, only departing the region after receiving a sum of 20,000 gold florins. Alongside the actions of Arnaud de Cervole, was the fall of Pont-Sant-Esprit to

[183] Rogers, *War Cruel and Sharp*, 372; Sumption, *The Hundred Years War. Trial by Fire*, 264, 387.
[184] Jonathan Sumption, *Hundred Years War Volume 3: Divided Houses* (London: Faber & Faber, 2011), 352-355.
[185] Sumption, *Hundred Years War Volume 3: Divided Houses*, 367.
[186] Norman Housley, "The Mercenary Companies, The Papacy, and the Crusades, 1356–1378," *Traditio* 38 (1982), 253-280, https://doi.org/10.1017/s0362152900009454.
[187] Sumption, *The Hundred Years War. Trial by Fire*, 361-362, 530-533.

the free companies in late 1360, following their infestation of Burgundy and the upper Rhône. Arguably one of the greatest threats to Avignon itself, the fall of Pont-Sant-Esprit exposed the constant traffic of courtiers, bankers, merchants, and prelates moving to and from the city—and the lucrative river traffic up the Rhône River—to the depredations of the *routiers*. The papal bull *Ad romane curie statum securum* indicates the severity of this problem and their activities would eventually persuade the papacy that even the seat of Christendom was not safe, with the city constructing new walls and refortifying shortly afterwards.[188]

In sum, regardless of their scale or intensity, attacks against the church—in all their forms—were a powerful challenge to not only ecclesiastical authority, but also that of their secular patrons. The failure of secular authority in France to protect clerical possessions and clergymen resulted in not only a period of significant personal autonomy, driven by necessity, but the growth of church influence on a regional level. The crown's inability to direct violence—in combination with an expansion of church autonomy—led to unique circumstances for ecclesiastical authority in some regions, where, in the absence of the state, it was in fact the church spearheading endeavors to control bloodshed. While attacks upon the church are not at all unique to the fourteenth century, the circumstances surrounding violent actors and military service during this period, makes interactions between ecclesiastics and other facets of society distinctive.

Attempts to mitigate violence against the church were not uncontested however, and conflicting reactions to these developments were common as other facets of society squabbled in the resulting power vacuums, seen previously in popular, seigniorial, and

[188] Housley, "The Mercenary Companies, The Papacy, and the Crusades, 1356–1378," 257; Fowler, *Medieval Mercenaries,* 119-125.

clerical disputes over the right to construct and destroy fortifications. The emergence of clerical musters and the general increase in ecclesiastical participation in violence would elicit similar reactions, as clergy were not only unable to avoid soldiery, but also acting as soldiers themselves.

The Church as a Power

Despite the plethora of trials and tribulations thrust upon the church during the fourteenth century, it did not solely play the role of victim. On a local level, parish priests and deacons were central figures in village life—much as they had been in previous centuries—serving as leaders in both spiritual and temporal matters, and a fundamental aspect of village economies. More prominent clergyman, primarily bishops, served a similar role on a regional level, attending to the spiritual and administrative needs of their dioceses, overseeing the tithe, and collecting taxes. In addition to their spiritual duties, some ecclesiastics possessed secular titles and, like their seigniorial counterparts, were responsible for the physical wellbeing of their domains, the protection of the king's subjects, and their obligations to the crown, both civil and military.

During the Hundred Years War, the resources of the church were essential to not only the continuation of the Anglo-French conflict, but also the effective governance of the realm.[189] As one of the largest landowners in England and France, the material, social, and political support of the church frequently played a pivotal role. In both kingdoms, grants of ecclesiastical taxation were a prized, though often fiercely negotiated, source of income for royal administrations.[190] By the latter half of the fourteenth century, ecclesiastical taxation in England nearly rivaled the combined value of state wool

[189] Green, *A People's History*, 65-67; Curry, *The Hundred Years War Revisited*, 87-92.
[190] Green, *A People's History*, 65-68; Curry, *The Hundred Years War Revisited*, 85-105.

incomes and revenue from indirect taxation on the laity for some years.[191] The clerical subsidy of 1371—an attempt by Edward III to expand ecclesiastical taxation beyond the established clerical tenth—managed to raise £42,000 in total, a sum nearly double Edward's total income at the beginning of his reign in 1327.[192] Though less successful and significantly more controversial, the clerical poll taxes of the later 1370's, loans from affluent ecclesiastics, the exploitation of vacant edifices, and the seizure of property from "foreign prelates" also provided a significant source of income for the English Crown.[193]

The contribution of church personnel to civil duties was another key element of ecclesiastical support during the fourteenth century. Experienced clerks, administrators, and state officials—though not always men of the cloth or acting entirely on the church's behalf—were essential for the collection of taxes, drafting royal legislation, preparing contracts, and the general maintenance of government. Many ecclesiastics also served as royal advisors. In France, Pierre de la Forét, archbishop of Rouen and former bishop of Paris, served as chancellor under Jean II, played a prominent role in Anglo-French negotiations of the 1350s, and helped maintain internal stability following the debacle at Poitiers. In England, Cardinal Henry Beaufort—former bishop of Lincoln and Winchester—played an equally important role, diverting personal funds to the king's war effort, providing him loans backed by diocesan assets, and serving as Chancellor under Henry V. The employment of skilled secular and clerical administrators played a crucial role in the development and implementation of more experimental taxation systems, such as the expansion of the *fouage* (hearth tax) and *gabelle* (salt tax) in France and the

[191] Green, *A People's History*, 65-68; Curry, *The Hundred Years War Revisited*, 85-105.
[192] Green, *A People's History*, 65-68; Curry, *The Hundred Years War Revisited*, 85-105; Sumption, *The Hundred Years War. Trial by Fire*, 47-62.
[193] Curry, *The Hundred Years War Revisited*, 92-95.

continued use of royal purveyance in England; the prerogative of the English sovereign to compel the sale of goods at reduced prices to maintain himself and his household, often including his armies.[194]

Of equal importance to the manpower and material support of the church, was its capacity for propaganda, religious authority, and societal influence. To ensure the continued support of the lower orders, the Plantagenets and Valois repeatedly enlisted the aid of clergymen.[195] The financial and physical cost of intermittent conflicts between England, France, and Scotland made the need for popular acceptance, or at a minimum tolerance, of the state's war-time needs essential.[196] In England, the preferred method of disseminating royal will was through writs to secular figures and ecclesiastics, who would in turn seek compliance with the crown's needs and convene regional assemblies as needed. Writs were used for a variety of purposes, both civil and military, though they often centered on legitimizing the king's actions and justifying his need for continued popular support. The importance of Edward III's relationship with the church cannot be underestimated, as it played a crucial role, not only in influencing the public's perception of the crown, but also through enabling him to wage war against a state with resources far beyond his own. As mentioned by the chronicler Froissart "to tell the truth, since they wished to make war, both kings found it necessary to make known to their people and to

[194] Michael Postan, "Purveyance and Peasants At The Beginning Of The Hundred Years War: Maddicott Reexamined," *The Hundred Years War (Part II)*, January 2008, 343-365; Michael Postan, "The Costs of the Hundred Years War," *Past and Present* 27, no. 1 (1964): pp. 34-53, https://doi.org/10.1093/past/27.1.34.
[195] W.R. Jones, "The English Church and Royal Propaganda during the Hundred Years War," *Journal of British Studies* 19, no. 1 (1979), 19-34, https://doi.org/10.1086/385745; Curry, *The Hundred Years War Revisited*, 85-105; Green, *A People's History*, 65-68.
[196] Jones, "The English Church and Royal Propaganda during the Hundred Years War," 19.

set before them the nature of their dispute, so that each would be the more eager to support their lord. And by this means they were aroused in each kingdom."[197]

During the mid-fourteenth century, Edward III issued writs concerning praying for the king, primarily *de orando pro rege* **(**prayers focusing on peace and the good government of the realm**)** almost annually, instructing clergy to hold prayers, sermons, vigils, and public processions for the welfare of the king's war on the continent.[198] Similar writs for prayers and public masses were used to announce royal victories in Scotland, the English Channel, and in France; others announced political incidents, such as the capture of John II, truces, and declarations of war.[199] Among the most common writs were those seeking to legitimize the king's claim to the French throne and assure the public of his "good intentions" for the "defense of the realm," justifying his need to repeatedly levy "various burdens, tallages, and imposts."[200] In some instances, bishops would go beyond simply dictating the king's will and incentivized the continued acceptance of royal policy through spiritual benefits, offering an "indulgence of forty days' relief from temporal penance for those Christians who obeyed the church's commands.[201]

Indeed, the need for public support was understood by many in the king's government, and contemporaries not only frequently described efforts to ensure its

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[197] Jones, "The English Church and Royal Propaganda during the Hundred Years War," 19; Froissart, *Chroniques*, 339-341.
[198] Green, *A People's History*, 63-64; Jones, "The English Church and Royal Propaganda during the Hundred Years War," 20-26.
[199] Green, *A People's History*, 65; Jones, "The English Church and Royal Propaganda during the Hundred Years War," 23.
[200] Green, *A People's History*, 63-64; Jones, "The English Church and Royal Propaganda during the Hundred Years War," 24-26.
[201] Curry, *The Hundred Years War Revisited*, 92-95; Jones, "The English Church and Royal Propaganda during the Hundred Years War," 24-26.

continuation, but also plainly stated it in some royal writs, which were also communicated to the higher clergy. In 1339, John de Stratford, Archbishop of Canterbury, was ordered to give, and gave, a sermon "so that by this means the people of the kingdom might be roused to esteem the king more fervently and pray more devoutly for his expedition in order that he may keep the people safe from Gallic machinations."[202] Generally, church assistance in the distribution of royal propaganda in England was most evidently seen during the early years of Edward's reign and in the opening decades of the war against Scotland, and eventually France. However, as noted in W.R. Jones's article, *The English Church and Royal Propaganda during the Hundred Years War*, the effectiveness of ecclesiastical propaganda—and the degree to which royal orders were carried out with any consistency or effect—remains unclear, with there being "little evidence for judging the efficiency or the conscientiousness of the lesser clergy in implementing the king's request or for assessing the impact of these services on the popular mind."[203]

In France, a similar system existed, with clergymen—alongside state officials—serving as a medium for the projection of royal propaganda and information. However, the collapse of French royal authority and the state's fiscal capacity in the mid-fourteenth century negatively impacted this system, reducing its scope and usefulness for several decades. As with royal propaganda in the English context, evidence supporting the efficacy of the French system prior to its decline is sparse.

[202] Jones, "The English Church and Royal Propaganda during the Hundred Years War," 28.
[203] Curry, *The Hundred Years War Revisited*, 92-95; Jones, "The English Church and Royal Propaganda during the Hundred Years War," 30.

Overall, the strength of the church did not reside in its capacity to marshal armies or clear out brigands in the countryside, but rather in its ability to apply religious, economic, social, and political pressures. This lack of direct military might, though certainly a weakness, did not leave ecclesiastics without recourse in the face of adversity. The church's involvement in the maintenance and governance of late-medieval kingdoms—alongside its active role in medieval society—extended far beyond the bounds of simply offering spiritual guidance; with the informal power of its institutions and prestige, rivaling—and at times even surpassing—that of their secular counterparts. However, these informal powers did not permeate throughout the entirety of the church, as is it was concentrated in the upper echelons of its hierarchy and tied to specific institutions, religious houses, and edifices.

Curtailing the Flames

Even with its enormous wealth, expansive territorial possessions, and political influence across Europe, the church's existence as an international non-state entity—divided by national possessions and regional divisions throughout the entirety of the Western Christian world—made it vulnerable, especially to military conflict. Indeed, in stark contrast to their seigniorial and royal counterparts, ecclesiastical authority almost invariably lacked military assets under its direct supervision and was often dependent upon secular support for the effective protection of clerical personnel and possessions. This lack of outright military strength, coupled with a doctrinal and theological opposition to violence, heavily influenced interactions between the church and violent actors within Christian society. Ecclesiastical attempts to control bloodshed and their contributions to regional monopolizations of violence were diverse; influenced by a

complex combination of political, economic, and social factors as well as personal agendas, resources, and the status of individual clergymen. Church measures can be generally divided between actions which were more spiritually or temporally inclined in their purpose, though this differentiation can be difficult to discern, as spiritual condemnations had associated social and cultural consequences.

While some ecclesiastics held a distinctly martial predisposition or possessed extraordinary secular titles—such as the Bishop of Durham's rank of Earl-Palatine and William la Zouche's title as Lord Warden of the Marches—the church as an institution was typically non-violent and without standing military resources. Most methods used by the church to restrain or control violent actors reflects this peaceable nature, with the church often using the threat of spiritual ramifications, political subversion, and diplomacy to limit violence.[204] The threat of spiritual sanctions and the incentivization of religious boons for obeying the church were among the most common expressions of ecclesiastical authority during the fourteenth century.[205] The use of the divine—by parish priests and bishops to the popes in Avignon—formed the foundation of many endeavors by the church to direct violence and restrain bloodshed. The most influential of these measures—and those which held the greatest geographic and political scope—came from the highest levels of the church's hierarchy, primarily, the papacy. During the Hundred Years War, Popes Benedict XII (1334-1342), Innocent VI (1352–1362), Urban V (1362-1370), and Gregory XI (1370-1378) would be at the forefront of ecclesiastical attempts to end to armed conflict in France, both public and private.

[204] Housley, "The Mercenary Companies," 257-262.
[205] Housley, "The Mercenary Companies," 257-262; Green, *A People's History*, 80-83.

From 1357 to the late 1370s, the papacy in Avignon and the whole of southern France struggled in the face of constant attacks and pillaging by *routiers*. The papacy would suffer extensively from these activities, for the lands of the Papal State, the Comtat Venaissin, and the papal court at Avignon would be continuously raided by the companies; Avignon alone would be threatened in 1357, 1360, 1361, 1363, 1365, 1366, and 1375. [206] In combating this threat, the church's chief tool, much like in previous centuries, was a combination of spiritual damnation and social isolation—seen through the penalty of excommunication—and an offer of indulgence for the repentant who "placed themselves in proper service" to the church.[207]

The foundations of this dual system of spiritual punishment and salvation are rooted in the peace movements of previous centuries, primarily, the twelfth century Peace and Truce of God; which promised indulgences to all who enforced the Peace of God by fighting against brigands.[208] Those who died "in true penitence in this endeavor," were guaranteed *indulgentia peccatorum et fructus mercedis aeternae* (an indulgence of all their sins and the fruit of an eternal reward) for protecting the *populus christanus*.[209] Those who persisted in their violent lifestyle and defiance of the church were placed under anathema, theoretically cut off from Christian society and denied the sacraments and the right to a Christian burial.

The first papal actions against the *routiers*, seen through the Papal Bulls *Ad reprimendas insolentias* and *cognit nos*—both issued by Pope Innocent VI in 1356—applied the aforementioned spiritual and social condemnations against the companies.

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[206] Housley, "The Mercenary Companies," 257-260; Fowler, *Medieval Mercenaries*, 129-137.
[207] Housley, "The Mercenary Companies," 263-280; Fowler, *Medieval Mercenaries*, 129-137.
[208] Housley, "The Mercenary Companies," 264.
[209] Housley, "The Mercenary Companies," 257-262.

Measuring the influence of these initial sanctions is difficult as secular pardons rarely mention spiritual condemnations. However, the *routiers* would attack Avignon only a short time afterword and several bulls would be issued in the months following, indicating the potential limitations of such measures. The spiritual and social severity of papal bulls following *Ad reprimendas insolentias* and *cognit nos*—which granted a plenary indulgence to all who died fighting the companies for the past two years—would be much greater. *Miserabilis nonnullorum*, issued in 1364 by Pope Urban V, ordered the *routiers* to "disband their companies, leave the places they had occupied, and repair the damage they had done, all within a month, under penalty of excommunication."[210] Alongside the expansion of divine punishment for the *routiers* in *Miserabilis nonnullorum*, it also attacked the employment of the companies and their ability to sustain themselves stating: "Clerics and laymen were forbidden to join, employ, or favor the companies" and that "the companies, their supporters, and anybody supplying them with food would be anathematized to the extent that only papal absolution could release them."[211]

The bull *Clamat ad nos*—issued by Urban V in 1365—would apply further force against the companies, as it targeted not only the rank and file, but also some of the land-owning leaders of the movement, such as Seguin de Badefol. Norman Housley, in his translation of *Clamat ad nos,* states that the bull directed "all towns, villages, and individuals found guilty of negotiating with the mercenaries to be threatened with the withdrawal of their privileges, liberties, and fiefs," and that "*routiers* and their descendants were to be ineligible for public office into the third generation; and their

[210] Housley, "The Mercenary Companies," 257-258.
[211] Housley, "The Mercenary Companies," 259-264.

vassals were released from their oaths of loyalty."[212] Coinciding with this measure, was an attempt at curtailing laxity among ecclesiastics who failed to properly dissuade the companies, with the decree stating that any church or graveyard which allowed the burial of a *routiers* was to be placed under interdict until the corpse was exhumed.

Evaluating the effectiveness of papal bulls and the threat of excommunication against the companies is incredibly difficult, as chivalric chronicles and state records rarely mention such matters, often exaggerating when they mention them at all. Records of daily life for excommunicated *routiers*—such as travel prohibitions or condemnations for the purchasing of victuals and arms—are equally sparse. Thankfully, records from the papal court in Avignon and local church chronicles do record such matters, however, it was often contradictory—as seen in documents concerning Arnaud de Cervole's stay in Avignon—fragmentary and embellished.[213] Nonetheless, several conclusions about the effectiveness of spiritual sanctions can be gathered. The abundance of *lettres de remission* (French royal pardons) and the plethora of court cases concerning *routiers* in the *Parlement de Paris*, roughly 100 in one entry alone, highlights that *routiers* may have preferred or had more access to secular pardons. In fact, the confessions of several repentant *routiers* state that while they frequently lapsed back into criminality after accepting papal indulgences, they ceased their activities once offered royal pardons. While such confessions may have been attempts at earning clemency from royal magistrates, royal justice towards captured *routiers*—who were proven to have violated their pardons—was certain, with public execution being the only fate afforded to them.

[212] Housley, "The Mercenary Companies," 257-258; Fowler, *Medieval Mercenaries*, 123-135.
[213] Housley, "The Mercenary Companies," 257-258; Fowler, *Medieval Mercenaries*, 123-135; Sumption, *The Hundred Years War. Trial by Fire*, 489-493.

For the application of societal and religious pressures to hold significant influence over an individual or group, the recipient of said pressures—and those living in the same sociocultural system—must respect the institution and those claiming authority. To individuals already operating outside established cultural, legal, religious, and military norms—for instance, *routiers*— such sanctions would often fall upon deaf ears; especially if vilification were not accompanied by more physical measures, such as violence or economic sanctions. The fear of royal retaliation by the companies in the 1370s—evident in the speed and frequency with which *routiers* would accept state pardons—and the continuation of mercenary operations after several papal bulls, demonstrates the limitations of using spiritual condemnation as a means of monopolizing violence without force.

Alongside their traditional tools of spiritual condemnation was the direct participation of the papacy in the peace process. Despite its limited effectiveness and ultimate failure, papal peace negotiations constituted a decades long endeavor, seen most evidently through their organization of diplomatic talks and their commitment to the implementation of ceasefires between England and France. While the Francophile nature of the Avignon papacy did influence its interactions with England—the notorious appointment of Guillaume de Melun, the militant Archbishop of Sens who fought under John II, as a papal legate being one example—it is erroneous to assume that it was subject to the political whims of the Valois. Even before open conflict between England and France, the papacy stood as an impediment to war between the two kingdoms.[214] In 1337 alone, Pope Benedict XII staunchly objected to Philip VI's (1328-1350) decision to

[214] John Gruber, "The Peace Negotiations of the Avignon Popes," *The Catholic Historical Review*, vol. 19, no. 2, 1933, 190–199.

confiscate Aquitaine, refused to grant his request for a 400,000 livres loan—which would undoubtedly be used for the coming conflict—and issued an ominously accurate warning to Edward III stating:

> You are undertaking a very rash and perilous adventure. You are as yet in possession of no part of the French kingdom. Even if it were established that the heirs of females could in law inherit the crown, there are other persons still living, the issues of the daughters of your uncles, who have a better claim than you. Your allies the men of Flanders cannot be trusted. Their dealings with their native princes have revealed an inveterate disloyalty. They will eventually lead you into disgrace. Their perfidy will become evident when your treasures are exhausted and in your embarrassment you will be left to make the best terms you can with an embittered and powerful adversary.[215]

The accuracy with which Benedict XII predicted circumstances that would eventually beset Edward was uncanny, belying a shrewd understanding of contemporary politics and banishing any belief in a church removed completely from the cares of the temporal world. By the early 1340s, Benedict XII managed to not only establish a nine-month armistice between England, Scotland, and France, but also laid the framework for a more permanent peace, though the death of Benedict in 1342 would destroy any possibility of a lasting settlement that year.[216] Despite constant attempts by royal powers to undermine the peace process or evade the terms of their agreements, the successors of Pope Benedict would continue to act in the interests of peace, managing to secure several truces and a few major peace settlements during the fourteenth century. However, in the face continuous royal obstinacy, such agreements were ultimately doomed to fail as the military situation and the desire to pursue their "legal rights" repeatedly push kings from the peace table back to the battlefield. The Black Prince's response to the Cardinal of

[215] Gruber, "The Peace Negotiations of the Avignon Popes," 192.
[216] Gruber, "The Peace Negotiations of the Avignon Popes," 192; Sumption, *The Hundred Years War. Trial by Fire*, 63-172.

Périgord's attempt at peace prior to the Battle of Poitiers summarizes this pattern of events, for upon hearing the Cardinal's offer the prince supposedly responded:

> Speak your proposal quickly, lest time be lost to preaching which would better be spent fighting. I rejoice that the King of Heaven, the King of Justice, will today show and declare to which claimant the inheritance of the realm of France rightly belongs![217]

Just as the nature of military service evolved during the mid-fourteenth century, so do did the diplomatic challenges facing the papacy. Pope Urban V, in contrast to Benedict XII's struggle to mediate royal stubbornness, would no longer be forging peace from a legitimate public conflict, but rather maintaining it during a period of intense private war, while simultaneously trying to return the papacy to Rome. The challenges emanating from the *routiers* and their employers across France—alongside the inability of secular authorities to contain them—would place the church in peculiar circumstances as, bereft of their secular protectors, they would be forced to divert resources and personnel to their own defense, seen during Arnaud de Cervole's activities near Avignon in 1358 and the construction of rural fortifications. Clerical involvement in such measures would, as discussed earlier in this chapter, complicate religious life and go against the foundational tenets of church service. Indeed, attacks upon the church by *routiers*—and the subsequent need for increased clerical participation in violence—would reach such a degree that some ecclesiastics, and even Charles V, called for the mercenaries to be declared schismatics. While this measure would never be implemented, it would lay the groundwork for additional indulgences, primarily to those who sustained injuries while fighting the *routiers*. Moreover, it unified efforts to combat the *routiers* in the Duchy of Burgundy, the Rhône River Valley, and Provence. Later issues of *cognit*

[217] Rogers, *War Cruel and Sharp*, 367.

nos reflect this renewed sense of unity between authorities and highlight the cooperation seen in the late 1370s:

> The wickedness of our age, in which the sons of iniquity have multiplied and, fired by the flames of their own greed, are dishonestly attempting to gorge themselves on the labor of others, and for that reason rage the more cruelly against the innocent peoples, compels us to draw on the resources of the apostolic power to counter their evil stratagems and to strive with ever greater energy and effectiveness to organize the defense of these peoples, especially of those whom these wicked men have so far attacked, and are now attacking.[218]

Ecclesiastical attempts to restrain violence through negotiation were not limited to the "great powers" and highest levels of the church. The papacy, despite its authority within the church, was not present within all interactions between ecclesiastics and violence. Local ecclesiastics played a crucial rule in the monopolization of violence on a regional level, serving as mediators between *routiers* and other laity during times of state difficulty. The plight of Agen, a town in Aquitaine, and its plea for church assistance epitomizes the role of local clergy in such settings. The town council of Agen, after being forced to pay *routiers* for their "protection," requested that the Bishop of Agen—with the approval of the king—should engage in negotiations for not only the town, but also the entire region. The request states,

> That, after license from the King is received, milord the Bishop of Agen should be charged with negotiating a protection treaty for the lands between the Lot and Garonne, and, if possible, after that one for the whole regions; for all the other towns and places in the duchy [of Guienne] except for us already have them. Every day our people are harmed, captured, and robbed, so that we do not dare work out lands, and the King does not defend us, nor can he defend us, from the bad men, and our people are abandoning the town every day. So, it would be best for the king as well as for us.[219]

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[218] Gruber, "The Peace Negotiations of the Avignon Popes," 196-199; Fowler, *Medieval Mercenaries*, 119, 286.
[219] Rogers, *The Wars of Edward III*, 145.

Requests for ecclesiastical mediation between the companies and other laity were incredibly frequent, with over twenty-five requests being made to the papacy during 1366 alone.[220] The efficacy of such mediations is questionable as the church—and those they were negotiating for— could not enforce the terms of their agreements, being dependent upon the good will of the *routiers*, something which was never in abundance or held in high regard. Nonetheless, the bleak prospect of success did not stop ecclesiastical attempts at negotiation, with the practice continuing until the dissolution of the companies in the late 1370s. Due to its geographic isolation, England suffered relatively minimal harm at the hands of non-state actors, limiting the need for clerical intervention with private actors in England. French naval raids against towns along the Channel coast did not result in negotiation with local populations, as their intent was destruction, not profit, nor did they remain after their attacks.

Regardless of their dubious long-term influence, ecclesiastical attempts—on every level of the hierarchy—constitute a significant effort to control violence in the absence of state authority. For three decades, the papacy as an institution and local ecclesiastics dedicated itself to the struggle of controlling violence in France and the region surrounding Avignon. The application of spiritual and social condemnations, diplomatic interventions, and the meditation of conflict between laity is representative of most attempts made by ecclesiastical authorities to directly impede conflict during the late fourteenth century. While other methods were used on a local level—for instance, religious houses hiring mercenaries to attack each other—they are ultimately a product of

[220] Rogers, *The Wars of Edward III*, 145-148; Gruber, "The Peace Negotiations of the Avignon Popes," 196-199; Housley, "The Mercenary Companies," 259-264; Fowler, *Medieval Mercenaries*, 123-135; Sumption, *The Hundred Years War. Trial by Fire*, 73-79.

unique circumstances and were not viewed as standard practice by contemporaries; nor did they occur with such frequency that they would have a measurable influence of regional monopolizations of violence.

CHAPTER IV:

CONCLUSION

The evolution of violence and military service during the fourteenth century highlights the complexity of interactions between war-making entities and late-medieval society. These relationships with violence did not remain static and were highly volatile, depending on an individuals' and group's status, wealth, and power, alongside shifts in the public war. While it is true that royal entities managed, at least partially, to control violence for significant periods of time, during times of state difficulty these monopolizations of violence would be challenged. Soldiery—once a humble cog in the bureaucratic and personal mechanisms used by kings and elites to exert power—ironically evolved into one of the foremost opponents to royal authority, as conflict made them grow numerous and the need for soldiery gave them the power to challenge and undermine their employers and patrons. Following the collapse of state power in France, the Valois lacked the financial and military ability to effectively control violence throughout the realm. During this time—despite legal, financial, political, and even military condemnations by the crown—the very tools by which kings asserted their power began asserting their own strength, often demonstrated at the end of a lance. Coinciding with the loss of royal control over violence, was the destruction of aristocratic monopolies on professional soldiery, as men-at-arms—non-nobles bearing the physical trappings of knighthood but lacking in its social and political attachments—became a force to be reckoned with.

The rise of this non-noble class of soldier—existing in greater numbers than their aristocratic counterparts and tied only to the whims of his patrons and himself—would have significant consequences for late-medieval society, as the very powers who organized and gave them practical military experience soon declined. In search of employment, plunder, food, and glory, these "rutters" as contemporaries would call them, would spread across western Europe, becoming a defining characteristic of warfare during the late-fourteenth century. From the Kingdoms of Naples, Portugal, and Castille to the Duchies of Brittany and Lorraine, *routiers* would become a staple of military service, offering their swords to the highest bidder, and fighting for any cause. However, to the detriment of thousands, the swords of *routiers* would quickly prove to be double-edged, cutting friends and allies—even their own employers—as often as their foes.

In the absence of royal-seignorial authority and following the erosion of national and regional monopolizations of violence, both ecclesiastical and popular authorities—alongside none state actors—began attempting to assert their power, left with little choice in the face of constant aggression or while seeking to aggrandize themselves. From the mid-1350s to the late 1370s, non-royal facets of authority began to experiment with means to combat this new form of violence or exploit its potential, means not restrained by chivalric, religious, or social values and capable of defeating royal armies in the field. From spiritual sanctions and local negotiations to near-suicidal attacks against the *routiers* and the destruction of castles using gunpowder, ecclesiastical and popular authorities would engage in attempts to control violence. At the same time, one must remember that the very individuals and institutions these authorities claimed to control often worked actively to undermine their power. As we have seen, lords and peasants

frequently acted against the interests of, and in violation of their loyalty too, the Crown. Nevertheless, while the church generally represented an irenic organization, not all clergy were immune to the desire to "indulge their martial tastes." Many individual ecclesiastics not only actively participated in conflict but also forced others to do against their will, seen in the clerical musters and fortified churches of the mid-fourteenth century. Consequently, just as their efforts influenced the *routiers*' ability to project violence, so too did they influence their own relationship with conflict, as individuals considered to be religiously and legally protected from the horrors of war became as if soldiers themselves.

Despite their limited long-term influence—being ultimately incapable destroying the *routiers* as a movement—ecclesiastical and popular means to control violence would at the forefront of local attempts to control or redirect violent actors. While it is tempting to conclude that failed attempts to control bloodshed, at least in the long-term, need not be considered in the greater study of violence, such methods represented a significant effort by powers in abnormal circumstances, operating in ways beyond understood social and cultural norms. In failing to properly examine interactions between military communities and all facets of society, not only obscures the evolution of violence as a phenomenon, but also the realities of interactions between war and society.

As this thesis has attempted to demonstrate, violence during the fourteenth century, the men who perpetuated it, and attempts to control it were not simplistic and must be examined as the complex and multi-form phenomena they were. The ability of a state—pre-modern or contemporary—to control violence represents a foundational aspect of government, the lack of which is an existential threat to its continuation. The

development of regional—and eventually national—monopolizations of violence would form the foundation of proto fiscal-military states seen during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. This struggle to monopolize violence is still felt keenly today, as many modern nations struggle to control the activities of its citizens or non-state entities operating within their borders. While it is true that non-state attempts to control violence during the Hundred Years War were generally unsuccessful, their contributions to the development of a larger state monopolization of violence would be essential in the absence of other powers. For in attempting to restrain those acting outside of Christian morality, law, and the ideals of chivalry, it truly was a question of control.

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