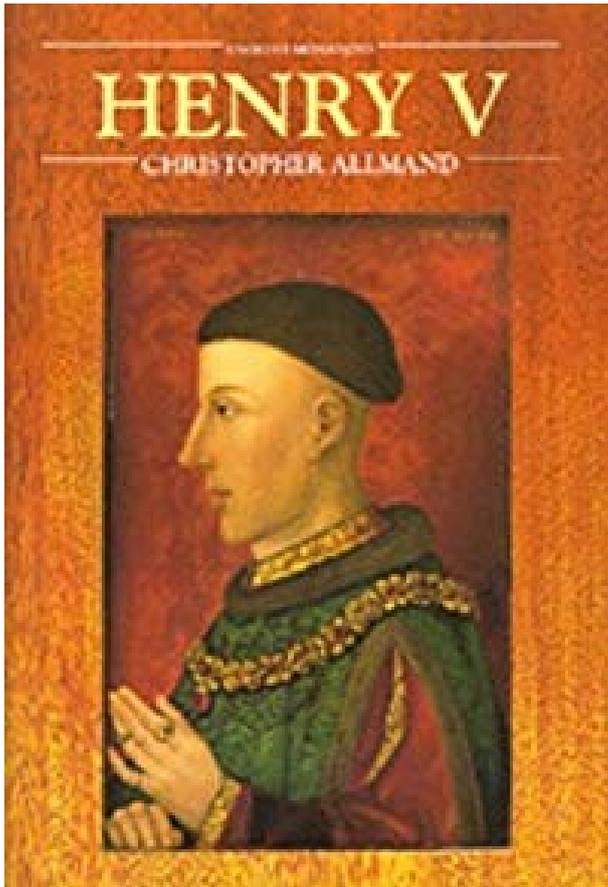


Henry V



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Thanks to Shakespeare, Henry V is one of England's best-known monarchs. Or is he? The image of the young king leading his army against the French and his stunning victory at Agincourt are part of English historical tradition. Yet to understand Henry V we need to look at far more than his military prowess. While Henry was indeed a soldier of exceptional skills, his historical reputation as a king deserves to be set against a broader background of achievement, for he was a leader and a diplomat, an administrator, a keeper of the peace and protector of the Church, a man who worked with and for his people. During the previous half century or so, England had been ruled by an old king in his dotage (Edward III), by a king with unusually autocratic views and tendencies (Richard II) and by Henry V's own father (Henry IV), a man never strong enough either morally, politically or physically to give a firm lead to his country. When Henry V came to the throne in 1413, England lived in hope of better days. This new study, the first full scholarly biography of Henry V, based on the primary sources of both English and French archives and taking into account a great deal of recent scholarship, shows his reign in the broad European context of his day. It concludes that, through his personality and 'professional' approach, Henry not only united the country in war but also provided England with a sense of pride and the kind of domestic rule it was so in need of at the time. Together, those factors form the true basis of the high regard in which he is rightly held.